

# Israel's Journey

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[ 0 : 00 ] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. It is our prayer that you will be blessed by the preaching of God's Word. Genesis chapter 46. Let's get something I'm sure about here. Genesis 46. We'll look at it in three parts tonight.

The first seven verses, the huge step of faith. It's the start of the journey for Israel. When I speak about Israel tonight, we're talking about a person. His name was Jacob, and now he's called Israel.

So when I reference Israel, I'm talking about that person. But God calls him by his old name, Jacob, in this chapter as well. And we'll talk about the significance of that. As all of you know what it's like when your mom calls you by your full name, it grabs your attention.

Well, it grabbed Israel's attention when Israel was called Jacob. Then we'll look quickly at the genealogies. We won't spend much time there, and you know why. And then we'll look at the last part, and it's the words that God gives unto Jacob.

Let's read these first seven verses and pray together. And Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices unto the God of his father Isaac. And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob.

[ 1 : 04 ] And he said, Here am I. And he said, I am God, the God of the Father. Fear not to go down into Egypt, for I will there make of thee a great nation. And I will go down with thee in Egypt, and I will make also surely bring thee up again.

And Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes. And Jacob rose up from Beersheba, and the sons of Israel carried Jacob to their father, and their little ones, and their wives, and the wagons which Pharaoh had sent to carry him.

And 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, his sons and his sons' sons with him, his daughters and his sons' daughters, and all his seed brought he with him into Egypt.

Heavenly Father, I pray that you'll be with us tonight. We looked at the example here of Jacob, the huge step of faith he was taking here, the comfort that he gets in your word.

Lord, make us like Israel in this situation, Lord. Help us be comforted in big steps of faith by your word. Help, Lord, tonight as you speak, Lord, that you'll use me to allow me to communicate your word.

[ 2 : 07 ] I won't stand between the message and the people you want to deliver it to. Thank you for this opportunity and your precious word. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen. As I said, it's a huge step of faith.

You know, Jacob, Joseph's dad, we had ended on Sunday afternoon how Joseph's brothers had the opportunity. Joseph surprised them by introducing grace into the story.

They thought at best case scenario they were getting food when they went to Egypt, and then they thought they were in trouble. And so they go back and they're just expecting mercy, expecting that maybe they won't die. And Joseph says it's so much better than that.

And he can't wait to tell them. He says he introduces grace. And he says, I am going to be, in chapter 50, he says, I'm going to be as God unto you. I'm going to act as God would act unto somebody who has done wrong to them and shows grace.

I'm going to make provision for you. I'm going to pour out blessings upon you. And it's amazing. And it's just not fathomable when you look at the way Joseph treated his brothers. But we know that God allowed him to do that because he was a picture of how God treats us.

[ 3 : 10 ] And we were reminded there, why would we ever go around carrying guilt of our sin? Why would we not run to our heavenly Father who is so gracious to us and he's working in our mess and he has a plan?

Now the brothers, he said, go, tell your dad and don't let nothing get in your way. And they went back and they told Jacob, they told Israel, and how did he respond? He responded with a faint heart.

But then they told him the words of Joseph and they showed him the wagons. And they said, truly, my son is alive. Joseph is alive. And we said that the wagons didn't mean anything to him materially.

It wasn't the hunger that he had, but it was that hunger to know that his son was alive. And so all the provision that went by him that day in those wagons was just evidence that God is still alive.

And we get excited about that because when we look at life like that, it gets so much more exciting. And we don't just see material things, but we get to see the hand of God in them. So now in verse 28 of chapter 45, he says, okay, I believe you guys, Joseph is alive, my son's alive.

[ 4 : 10 ] I'm going to go see him and then I'm going to die afterwards. And then we get to chapter 46 and Israel takes a journey. And he starts out his journey and he does it with a huge step of faith.

He does it because he says he knows he's going to die. Right. There's no, hey, I'm going to go out to Egypt and look around and see how it works out for him. If it doesn't work out, I'll come back to Canaan and end my life here. This is his last field trip.

He knows there's no turning back. He also knows that he's leaving the promised land, a land that had been given to him. He knows that there's uncertainty, just like Abraham was told to leave. And he didn't know, Abraham didn't know where he was going, but he knew he was going to a new land that God had prepared for him.

Now, Jacob is being told to leave a land that was given to him and go out to Egypt. And in some ways, this is a little bit more scary because there's an uncertainty there.

But what he does know doesn't seem that there's a lot of uncertainty. He knows his son's alive and he's going to be fed, but that's about all that he knows. Because he's learned a lot of bad things about Egypt. That's where his grandfather, Abraham, had been humiliated with the story there with his wife.

[ 5 : 13 ] His father had been forbidden to go there. Just don't go there at all. And that was individual to his dad. And you need to see this as an action of faith. He trusts in God because this isn't what he wants to do, but it's a simple act of obedience.

And it's clear. And he needed to hear it from God. He wanted to go see Joseph, but he finds a place and he goes to worship. Because he needed to hear from God that this is the step that he needs to take.

I hope you read our pastor's blog. This week he wrote how worship isn't a waste of time. Remember when the Egyptians saw that the children of Israel, they wanted to go out and they wanted to worship. They said, if you guys have enough time for worship, you have free time on your hand.

We need to work you harder. That's how a lot of people look at worship. On a Sunday we'd come together and worship. Or your time in the morning, they would think it's just a waste of time. Could you imagine if I didn't go and worship corporately with the church?

I would get that extra day of the week or that extra hour of sleep. But most people would see worship as a waste of time, but it never is. So he goes to this place of Eersheba, which is a significant place to him.

[ 6 : 19 ] It's the place where his father put away the biggest mistake that he had made in his life, that it brought shame and hurt to the family. It's a place that Abraham had called upon the name of God. It's probably where Abraham was when he heard that he had to take his son Isaac and offer him as a sacrifice.

That's chapter 22. It's where Isaac, his father, built an altar. Chapter number 26. Chapter 28, Jacob himself had left Eersheba when he met with God and his life-changing experience.

He wrestled there in the night and his name went from Jacob to Israel. Israel now, Jacob himself had this encounter there and he's going. And they're not going to get to be back.

The children of Israel are not going to come back to this place of worship for nearly 500 years. So they're stopping by there. You may have places like that, like real locations.

A place of worship isn't a real location. You have these moments driving down the road or at your home or at different places. And God isn't limited to the geography. But there's some places in your life that are just special to you.

[ 7 : 20 ] And so Jacob's getting to see that place for the very last time. It's a place that he should know that for nearly 500 years they're not going to get to come back to. It's significant. For me it's this small country church in Fair Dealing, Kentucky.

You can imagine what the slogan is for the one used car lot there in Fair Dealing, Kentucky. And I took the teenagers there a few years ago and I showed them where I was at the night that I heard the gospel preached on a Sunday night.

And I fell under conviction and I stood there and I wondered about my life. And I showed them and I showed them the Sunday school class that I got to teach my first lesson in. And things like that.

It meant something to me. If I went there and I knew I'd never get to come back to it, it would be sad for me. Well, think about that. Think about your places in life and then know this is where Jacob is at. He's leaving it.

Walking through it. His last time. And he's not wasting time. Worship is not a waste of time. He wants to go see his son. The provision's in Egypt. But he takes some time here in worship to God.

[ 8 : 20 ] Genesis 15, 13 through 18 is going to be important for us to know the night. It says this. And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs and shall serve them.

And they shall afflict them for four hundred years. And also that nation whom thou shalt serve will I judge. And afterward shall they come out with great substance. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace.

Thou shalt be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again. For the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full. Jacob here knew that Joseph's dream had been fulfilled.

And now he knew the other part of this promise is going to be fulfilled as well. His son told him when he was younger you're going to bow down to me and all these things. He didn't know how it was going to happen. But Jacob now says it's going to happen.

Israel says it's going to happen. But there's also a promise given that his people, his family was going to go into the land to be a stranger. And be there for those years. And then come out again.

[ 9 : 17 ] So this is going to be a hard journey for him. He's getting to see his son. But he knows what he's going to. Beersheba makes an apparent turning point in the family and their lives. And as I said it will be nearly 500 years before they get back to it.

And I ask you do you have a special place that you wait upon the Lord? Before you have a marriage or any business we should definitely seek the Lord. But before we make any big decisions.

Before we make any small decisions. Before we start any big days. Before we start a normal day. There ought to be a place where you go have a conversation with the creator of the universe.

I've said it many times before. But it's amazing how small things look in comparison to the fact that you just had a conversation with the creator of the universe. Before you left your house that day.

Psalms 127. Except the Lord build the house they labor in vain that build it. Except the Lord keep the city the watchman waketh but in vain. It is vain for you to rise up early. To sit up late.

[ 10 : 12 ] To eat the bread of sorrows. For so he giveth his beloved sleep. It's his vanity and a waste of time if we don't meet with the Lord throughout our days and ask for his guidance. We seek his guidance and help always but especially at starting something new.

And you need to find a time and a place. You know Israel was excited about seeing his son but he found time. He found time to offer thanks. Joseph is alive. Benjamin's not lost.

Simeon's returned to him. There's some things that he needs to stop and he needs to thank God for. He's going through a hard time with his family. They're going to become strangers in a land. And it's a time for him to evaluate his heart and go to God and pray as the psalmist David did and says, Search my heart, O God, and see if there will be any wicked way in me.

You know there had to be confusion in the family. He had four wives. Can you imagine what that was like? You men are afraid to even respond right now. Alright? The jealousies among the children, among the wives that are there, the wicked sins that had already been committed by a son, Judah that we had saw about.

There's a lot of things he can talk about. Pray for his children. We find Job prayed for his children. He needed direction. You know he feels like this is where he's supposed to go. His son is there. But just because it appeared logical didn't mean that this is what he needed to do.

[ 11 : 24 ] So he needed to be affirmed from God. You sure that I'm supposed to go over here? My dad wasn't supposed to be sure this is the direction that I'm supposed to go. And he was responsible for 70 people. And he knew he was going to be leaving a legacy.

That the decisions he was making was right now affecting 70 people. But it was going to affect generations to come. Our lives are a book that's even read by the illiterate.

My son Thatcher can't read, but he reads his dad daily. 2 Corinthians 3. You're an epistle written in our hearts known and read of all men. I really love this about Jacob here.

And I love that the Bible recorded that he stopped, spent time in worship before he moved forward. Because he knew the gravity of his actions for his family and for the legacies to come.

And how often are you too busy, not too busy, hurried about though we don't seek after God. When we make a decision about life or a job. And things have become more important than stopping the whole caravan to worship.

[ 12 : 23 ] Because we're on our way to do something great and success. Prayer often feels like a waste of time. Going to meet with people. To worship. To do family devotions. This takes time.

Because we become so pragmatic. We can't accomplish anything. Prayer doesn't get anything done. You know, you pray, I'll work. Is how we feel sometimes. But worship is never a waste of time.

And it brings us back to where we should be. And Jacob had his family where he needed to be. Going into this land, being a stranger. Recognizing that every decision he made had gravity behind it. Not only that, he prayed, he stopped, he worshiped there.

But there was comfort brought from the words of God. God calls Israel by his old name of Jacob. Jacob was this name of weakness. It was the name that he was born with.

It was the name that he had in chapter 25 when he was that supplanter. Born holding on to the brother's heel. You may have kids and they may fight. You know there's problems when they come out of the womb fighting.

[ 13 : 20 ] That's what my father-in-law told me about Stephen and Stephanie. And Stephanie was born first. Alright, make any connections you want there. Alright, she was born first. And so they came out fighting.

He came out working and deceiving and moving. He stole his brother's birthright as Jacob. He stole his brother's blessing in chapter 27. He was deceived and deceived his father-in-law to make himself rich.

All is Jacob. And that's who he was. Is that person always working, manipulating, trying to make things happen. Trying to make good things happen was that. But in chapter 32 verse 28 he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob but Israel for as a prince has thou power with God and with men and hast prevailed.

Your name Israel is going to be a title of strength that you have power with God. What a wonderful thing to have. What a wonderful thing to be told about you.

I said, Sergei a second ago had that special gift. He could speak Russian. What a great ability to have. But what another ability we have as children of God that we have power with God.

[ 14 : 23 ] That we get to speak to him and he hears us. The man who had wrestled with God and prevailed. The man who had God's power and promises. The one that he had been referred to. But in this moment of doubt, when he needed to hear from God, God spoke to him.

And he said, hey Jacob, I need to tell you a few things. Because if you don't listen right now, Jacob, you're going to go into the land of Egypt. Not as Israel. But you're going to go in there and begin acting like Jacob.

Because there's going to be a lot of temptation for you to manipulate and try to go ahead and to go ahead of me. But I need to remind you of a few things. That moment takes such a major step in life.

He's afraid and he lapses in this old weakness and this weak nature. And how often do we alternate between Israel and Jacob in our lives? We are and we are people of children of promise.

2 Corinthians 5.17 says that we're new creatures. Romans 6 tells us that we're dead in sin. Ephesians 1 said that we are accepted and the beloved. Yet we fail to live up to who we are.

[ 15 : 21 ] Sometimes it says that we're miserable creatures in Romans 7. Philippians 4 nails us when it says that we worry about everything. That the children of the Most High God, the Creator, we worry just about every little thing.

We let fear dominate our thoughts and our lives. We're reminded in 2 Timothy. We allow sin to dominate us. Not just our thoughts, but us. And we don't do things that we know God wants us to do.

We just simply act against who it is that God has made us to be. And God works in us to cause us to live always as Israel, as a prince with God.

So we must be people that believe His promises. We must be people that lift up the shield of faith. And we must bring every thought in the captivity to truth. 2 Corinthians 10.5. Casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalted itself against the knowledge of God.

Bringing in the captivity every thought to obedience of Christ. So why was Israel not wasting time? Because he needed time in worship. Because it was time to cast down thoughts. It was time for Israel to recognize that he was Israel.

[ 16 : 25 ] That he was the prince of God. He had power with God. That he wasn't Jacob. He needed to go into that land, even though the odds were against him. Holding his head up, knowing that God had provided for him.

And there was a real need for Israel to have God address the Jacob in his life. Proverbs 27 verse 8 tells us that we shouldn't be as a bird that wanders from their nest. It says that as a bird wanders from their nest, so is a man that wanders from his place.

And we have to be careful about wandering and let it never be away from God. Proverbs 21.16. So when we make decisions in life, when we make moves, sometimes it's moving homes.

Sometimes it's making a change of jobs. Sometimes it's making a change of schedule. Time in worship is not wasted. Time going to him and saying, God, I don't want to just be a wonder. I don't want to always be changing.

I want to move when you tell me to move. And I want to know that I'm reminded I have power with you. God brings comfort to Israel. Here's what he says to him. He says, I am God, the God of your Father.

[ 17 : 28 ] God himself is always our greatest comfort, is what he reminds him here. Verse number, and then he says unto him, he says, don't be afraid to go down into Egypt. He's giving him approval.

He says, I'll make of thee a great nation. He reminds him of that promise in Genesis 12.2. He says, I'll go down with you into Egypt. He promises that he will go down there with him along this journey.

2 Samuel chapter 7, when a temple was built and they were excited because now God will abide with us, he reminds them, guys, I was with you all the time. Before you had a temple, when you were in tents, I was in tents.

And when you didn't have tents, I was with you outside of the tent. I've always been with you. And what a wonderful comfort is being brought to him. He goes on to promise him, I'll surely bring you up again.

God is not going to leave Jacob's family in Egypt forever. Does he bring Israel? Does he bring the man out of Egypt? No, but he brings his family out of Egypt. And it's in this part of the story where we begin to see a transition between Israel being the man to becoming a great nation.

[ 18 : 36 ] We're told that he's going to be made a great nation. And in this part of the story, he just starts to become a nation. They go in as 70 as they go in there. And then we get to the genealogies here.

And it seems like it's a relatively small number. If you think about it, if you count and they go through that, there's 70 people. But when they come out of Egypt, it says that there's 600,000 fighting men, which people estimate that it could be 2.5 million people.

70 go in and nearly 2.5 million people come out. 70 go in as a nation. And they're weak and vulnerable. And God takes care of them. And they come out a great nation.

It's this group that we remember in Deuteronomy 7.7 when he says, I did not choose the mighty. It's a genealogy we go back to. But he says, I didn't choose you because you were great and strong. If you don't remember who you were, why don't you turn in your Bibles to Genesis chapter number 42 and let me tell you who you were.

And let me read those 70 to you. Because none of those people were great and they were noble. And one of them is the wife of one of the sons there in Canaan. And we'll look at a second what God did in protecting them in Egypt.

[ 19 : 45 ] And we should be glad when we are brought low. Because unless we are there, then God's mighty hand will not be seen when he makes things great again. And this is an exciting part of a story.

The scary part of the story, when you're not sure what's going to happen, when you look back on it, this is pretty exciting. Seventy people are going into the land. Verses 27 through 34, it's the reunion that is found here.

It says here, verse 27, And the sons of Joseph which were born in Egypt were two souls. All the souls of the house of Jacob which came into Egypt were three sworn to him. And he sent Judah before him and the Joseph to direct his faith on the Goshen.

And they came into the land of Goshen. And Joseph made ready his chariot and went up to meet Israel his father to Goshen and presented himself unto him. And he fell on his neck and wept on his neck a good while.

And Israel said unto Joseph, Now let me die since I have seen thy face because thou art yet alive. And Joseph said unto his brethren and to his father's house, I will go up and show Pharaoh. And he said unto him, My brethren and my father's house which were in the land of Canaan are coming to me.

[ 20 : 47 ] And the men are shepherds for their trade has been to feed cattle. And they brought their flocks and their herds and all that they have. And it shall come to pass when Pharaoh shall call upon you, he shall say, What is your occupation? That you shall say, Thy servants' trade have been about cattle from our youth even until now, both we and also our fathers, that you may dwell in the land of Goshen.

For every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians. So we see this precious care that our heavenly father has for an earthly father. I wish we could see more there.

You should read it and imagine it. Joseph rides up and he goes and he's reunited with his father and how excited he is. And we see that God not only cares for this great nation, but in this moment we see his care for the individual, for this person.

Every move God made with Israel, he moved to draw them closer to him. Kept drawing them closer and closer. Of all the things Israel carried with him on his journey, it was the promises of God that were most important to him.

Israel's having to lead a family. He has all these concerns, but he has the promises of God with him. Jacob had been very pessimistic, which we have seen, where he said, nothing good is going to happen. I lost Joseph, I'm going to lose Benjamin.

[ 21 : 56 ] I can't take it. Everything bad in the world is against me. But in that moment he realizes that God kept his promises and that now God is going to use his son to preserve their life.

God drew Israel closer to him on the journey to Egypt. It was not ultimately about Joseph and it was not about a journey, but it was about the joy of knowing that our God is worthy to be worshipped.

That's what we see in the story there. It's not just the story of a man being reunited to his son, which is a wonderful story, but we'll let Hallmark tell that story. This is God's story. This is about God doing something.

And Jacob recognized that. You know, you can go to a baseball league or a soccer, where my son lost 18-0 in his first game, and they said, adversity builds character. You know, bad things in your life build character.

And we act like this is just some kind of universal truth. You know, if your life goes off script, you'll learn something. Bad things teach good things, it builds character. And that's what people think. Inside the church and outside of it, it's that adversity builds character.

[ 22 : 56 ] And that's not true. God builds character and he uses adversity to do it. It's not some abstract world view like karma that's doing this to you.

It is that the God of heaven has orchestrated and allowed this thing to happen. And he's done it for your good and for his glory. And Jacob recognized that. And I love that it happened before he goes to Joseph, not afterwards.

That he got the stop and he says, God, I see what's happening here. It is God specifically and personally working to shape the character of his people individually and collectively. And when life goes off script, it is God who has taken it there.

He has taken you off your script, but by no means has he taken you off his script. And Jacob recognizes that. And he says, I don't know what all was said in those prayers there, but in that time of your Sheba where he goes back and he says to God, he says, you know what, I'm going to go see my son.

The worship is never wasted. God, I want to praise you right now. I want to remember what you have done in my life. And I want to remember that you always had a plan even when I doubted you.

[ 24 : 01 ] Remember that you cannot think and plan like the world or regular people because God does things backwards and not according to the way that we see them. His thoughts are higher than ours.

And we should learn that we should live life based on the promises and not based upon worry there. I love this story so very much. And we see that there. And what a tribute to our wonderful God.

It was never about Joseph. It wasn't about Jacob. It was about them recognizing that God was good and working in their lives. And as a father who doesn't lead 70 people there.

Brother Mize doesn't lead 70. He's the closest in the room. But none of us lead 70 people. You know, every one of you, man and woman, your decisions affect people. It affects your legacy. It affects your children right now.

And we are foolish when we act quickly without talking to our God. It doesn't mean that we have to move slowly. But it means that before we make a decision, we've got to go to Him.

[ 24 : 59 ] And we've got to have confirmation that what we're doing is right. We go to God's Word. Brother Stephen mentioned we talked about God's will. People always want to know about the specific will. God had told him many things.

He said, you go to Egypt. And he told his dad, don't go to Egypt. But 99% of everything that those two men did were the same. And it would be found in this Word. And he wanted to make sure he was living life according to his Word.

So God, I challenge you in here tonight. It's a slow down decision making. In here, people that have influence is to recognize the big decisions that you make and how they affect other people.

And to realize that God is working in your life in a very wonderful way. And that you are not the center of the story. And you never will be. And it's such a wonderful thing. And that to take some time and to look at Him and to say, God, I don't know how in the world I got here right now.



But I am so thankful. And every one of us can think about that. You can think about the decisions that you were made. And God worked in your life. And you can think about the decisions you make that were not pleasing to God.

[ 26 : 01 ] And that should have completely taken you off of script for God's life. And He couldn't use you. But He's still using your life today. Because He is wonderful and He's a masterful artist in taking our mess and bringing us today.

And we should praise His holy name for that. Heavenly Father, thank You so much for Your Word. Thank You for the life of Jacob. Lord, I want to be like that Israel in my life. I want to be a person that knows that worship is not wasted.

I want to come to You and worship and seek in Your face in times of big decision making. Because I know my life has an influence upon other people's lives.

Thank You for the example that is set here before us. But I want to live life based upon worry, but the promises that You have given me. This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfredo, Georgia.

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