

Study: The Joseph Story

Text: Genesis 46:1–27: Jacob Arrives in Egypt¹

I. Migration of Jacob's Family to Egypt (46:1–27)

A. Jacob's Descent into Egypt (46:1–7)

1. Sacrifice and Vision at Beersheba (46:1–4)

a. Jacob makes one final stop before proceeding into Egypt (46:1).

(1) Where does he stop?

(2) What does he do there? Why do you think he does this?

(3) Review these passages from Genesis; who worshiped God here as well?

Gen 21:33–34

Gen 26:23–25

(4) How is God described in 46:1?

b. Notice here that Yahweh's communication to Jacob (vv. 2–4) occurs *after Jacob's sacrifices*. Perhaps this is an indication that we should view the content of the vision as addressing the concerns and petitions that Jacob expressed to God about leaving Canaan for Egypt.

(1) Which name for this patriarch is employed by the narrator in 46:1 and 46:2a? In light of the promise at the end of 46:3, why do you think this designation is used?

¹ The outline of the passage we are following basically follows the outline provided in K. A. Mathews, *Genesis 11:27–50:26*, vol. 1B, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2005), 82.

(2) According to v. 2, how does the Lord decide to reveal himself to Jacob?

(3) Take note of the divine call and the human response in v. 2b. Compare that to another such episode in Jacob's life: Gen 31:10-13. What are the similarities between these two episodes? The differences?

(4) Acc. to v. 3, how does God designate or announce himself to Jacob? What does he tell Jacob not to do?

(5) The mention of Isaac twice in this passage (vv. 1, 3), along with instructions not to fear departing Canaan to go to Egypt, probably invokes an earlier event in Isaac's life where some similar circumstances face that patriarch. Read Gen 26:1-5.

(a) How are Isaac's and Jacob's circumstances similar?

(b) How are Yahweh's instructions to each different?

(c) How are Yahweh's promises to each similar?

(d) How does knowing Gen 26 help you to understand why Yahweh would tell Jacob, "Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt"?

c. In Gen 46:3-4, God makes four precious, specific promises to Jacob. What are they?

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

Application: Even though the text does not specify, which of those promises do you think is most precious to Jacob? Which of them do you find most encouraging in light of this story and how it intersects with your own life?

2. Journey to Egypt (46:5–7)

- a. What human “cargo” do the “sons of Israel” carry down to Egypt (v. 5)?
- b. Who has provided the means for their travel?
- c. What else do they carry down (v. 6)?
- d. Based on 46:1, 5–7, how many of their possessions do they leave behind in Canaan? How many living offspring are left behind in Canaan?

B. Jacob’s Descendants in Egypt (46:8–27)

1. Jacob’s Genealogy (46:8a)

- a. This section (vv. 8–27) spells out the descendants of Jacob. How does such a listing connect with 46:3?
- b. If you read vv. 8–27 carefully, you’ll see that there is a four-fold division of the list of descendants. What is the organizing principle of this list?

2. Leah’s Children (46:8b–15)

- a. Who are Jacob’s immediate children through Leah?

- b. How many descendants are there through Leah?
- 3. Zilpah's Children (46:16–18)
 - a. Who are Jacob's immediate children through Zilpah?
 - b. How many descendants are there through Zilpah?
- 4. Rachel's Children (46:19–22)
 - a. Who are Jacob's immediate children through Rachel?
 - b. How many descendants are there through Rachel?
- 5. Bilhah's Children (46:23–25)
 - a. Who are Jacob's immediate children through Bilhah?
 - b. How many descendants are there through Bilhah?
- 6. Conclusion (46:26–27)
 - a. Acc. to v 26, how many descendants moved with Jacob to Egypt?
 - b. Acc. to v. 27, how many descendants of Jacob were there in total?