

Bi121 Old Testament

Lesson Bi121- 17 Jacob in Egypt (Gen 46-50)

People in every culture love to give gifts. Gifts are a way of showing love and respect for someone. Usually the gift itself does not last too long, but the message it conveys does. Pharaoh gave a gift to Jacob and his family that was beyond imagination.

Pharaoh sent this message to Joseph when he heard about his family. “Tell your brothers to go back to Canaan and get your father. Bring him here, as well as your families. Take wagons from Egypt so you can travel in comfort. Leave your belongings behind, because I will give you the very best of Egypt.” This gift of land would be their home for the next 400 years. Joseph gave each of his brothers new clothing, but to Benjamin he gave five sets of clothes and 300 shekels of silver. To his father he sent 20 donkeys laden with the best things of Egypt and provisions for the journey back.

Can you imagine the conversation when the brothers arrived back home in Canaan? “Father, you’ll never guess who the master over all of Egypt is!” Would you believe it is your lost son? Joseph is still alive! It is true!” Jacob was stunned when they told him everything that had happened! At first he could not believe that Joseph was actually living. But he became convinced as he listened to the stories about Joseph and all he had done.

So Jacob and all his family headed for Egypt—more than 60 direct descendants plus his sons’ wives. At Beersheba, he stopped and offered sacrifices to the Lord in the place where Abraham and Isaac had also worshipped. That very night God appeared to him in a vision saying, “I am God, the God of your father. Do not be afraid to go to Egypt. I will go with you and make you a great nation there. And in time, I will bring all your descendants back to this land.”

During the years of famine the situation for most in Egypt was extremely difficult. The Egyptians spent all their money to buy grain, for the famine was severe. To keep from starving they sold their animals, then their land, and finally themselves as slaves to Joseph in exchange for grain. Meanwhile the children of Israel had plenty of food. They acquired property and increased greatly in numbers. Pharaoh provided everything Jacob’s family needed because of Joseph’s position. They received the land of Goshen for their families and herds. This was an area in the southeast part of the Nile River delta.

Jacob lived in Egypt 17 years and he knew he was about to die. He called Joseph to his side, saying, “Do not bury me in Egypt. Promise that you will bury me in Canaan with my fathers.” And Joseph agreed to do as he asked. As he grew more ill, Jacob told Joseph, “Your two sons are now my sons. Ephraim and Manasseh are as much my sons as Reuben and Simeon. They will receive their part of my inheritance and be counted as the sons of Israel. I never expected to see your face again, and now God has allowed me to see your children too.” He kissed them and embraced them.

Joseph took his sons from his father’s knees and bowed before him. Then he put Manasseh next to Jacob’s right hand and Ephraim next to his left. But Jacob crossed his arms

and placed his right hand on Ephraim. Joseph tried to move his father's hand, saying "Father, Manasseh is the firstborn; he should receive the blessing of your right hand."

Jacob said, "Son, I know what I am doing. Manasseh will become a great people, but the descendants of Ephraim will be even greater." So he put Ephraim ahead of Manasseh as he blessed them. Jacob then called in all his sons and gave each one of them a unique blessing. He said Judah would be the kingly tribe, and that the Promise of God would come from among his descendants.

When Jacob died, Joseph and all Egypt mourned. Joseph requested Pharaoh's permission to go back to Canaan and bury his father, as he had sworn to do. All Pharaoh's dignitaries, all Joseph's household, all his brothers, and his father's household traveled back, accompanied by chariots and horsemen. Jacob was buried in the same cave near Mamre, in Canaan, where Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, and his wife Leah had been buried.

After returning to Egypt, the brothers of Joseph feared, thinking, "Joseph has been kind to us only because father was alive. Now he will pay us back for the wrongs we did to him." They were afraid that now Joseph would take his revenge. So they sent a message to Joseph saying, "Father asked you to forgive us for our great sin we committed against you. Please, forgive the sins of the servants of the God of your father."

When he received their message Joseph cried. His brothers came and threw themselves down before him, crying, "We are your slaves."

He answered them kindly, "Do not be afraid. I cannot act in the place of God. It is true you intended to hurt me, but God intended it for good. He was in control all the time and planned this to save the lives of many people. Listen to me and don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children."

Joseph lived to be 110 years old and saw the third generation of Ephraim's children. Before he died he said to his brothers, "God will surely come to help you and take you back to the land He promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. When He does, you must carry my bones up with you to be buried there in the Promised Land!"

This story is **important** because God's purpose for the nations is life. He led Joseph to save not only his own people, but all the Egyptians and others affected by the famine. God wants His people to be channels of blessing today too. In the process, Christians must forgive those who wrong them, believing that God is working out His perfect plan. He knows the end from the beginning, and He has a purpose for each of us.

The main **truth** of this story is that God provides for the needs of his people above and beyond what they can imagine, as they are faithful to follow Him through the ups and downs of life. God is in control of history.

To **review** this lesson, answer these questions.

1. What promise did Pharaoh give to all the families of Jacob?

- A. [Pause for 5 seconds.] If you said, “Pharaoh promised to give them the best of Egypt,” you are correct.
- 2. What promise from God did Jacob receive on his way to Egypt?
 - A. [Pause for 5 seconds.] If you said, “In time I will bring your descendants back to this land,” you are correct.
- 3. Why were the brothers fearful after their father died?
 - A. [Pause for 5 seconds.] If you said, “They thought now that Jacob was dead, Joseph would try to get even with them,” you are correct.
- 4. What was Joseph’s last request before he died?
 - A. [Pause for 5 seconds.] If you said, “Carry my bones up to Canaan when God takes you back there,” you are correct.

Your **assignment** for this lesson is to listen to the story at least three times. As you hear the story each time, imagine how it happened; see the events in your mind. Then tell the story in your own words as you remember it. Then listen to the story again and retell it until you feel sure you are repeating the circumstances and actions correctly. You should spend at least 45 minutes in learning the story. You may need to have someone check that you are telling the story correctly.

Tell this final part of Joseph’s story to the same person who heard the first three parts. Then ask them, “What is the point of this story?” There are several possible answers, including God providing for his people, but perhaps the most important is the power of forgiveness of enemies, even when they are a part of your own family. Discuss the answer your friend gives with them.