

GENESIS 44-46

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Genesis chapter 44 as we continue our study through the Word of God.

Let me fill in some of the details from our last study to set the stage for what we will be looking at this evening here in Genesis.

In our last study we saw the ten sons of Jacob, including Benjamin, return to Egypt to buy more grain during this famine.

Keep in mind that Simeon was placed in prison by Joseph until they returned with Benjamin like they were told to do, and he may have been locked up for several months!

As we finished up our study last time, we saw Joseph prepare a meal for his brothers, even though they did not recognize him yet. But Joseph knew who they were!

And when he seated them, he did so according to their birth order, from the oldest to the youngest. And, as you can imagine, that troubled them greatly.

There is no way that he could do that by random chance. In fact, the odds of anyone doing this with eleven brothers were 1 in 40 million!

Thus, they just couldn't understand how this man could do that, not knowing it was Joseph, their brother.

He also gave Benjamin five times more food than the other brothers, putting him in a place of honor.

Why did Joseph do this for Benjamin?

I think Joseph wanted to see how the brothers would respond, if they would envy Benjamin or treat him differently as they did Joseph many years earlier.

But as we read, they continued to eat and talk, no animosity at all. And now they are preparing to return home to their father, in the land of Canaan and that is where we will pick up our study this evening, in Genesis chapter 44, starting in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word.

GENESIS 44

VERSES 1-5

For the brothers of Joseph, things seemed to go well, and I bet they left feeling good. They not only received Simeon back, but they are also leaving with Benjamin, which should bring joy to their father's heart, seeing that nothing bad happened to him.

But Joseph has a plan that some might see as a type of revenge towards his brothers for what they had done to him, but I don't see it that way.

Why do I feel that way?

Because that is not the character of Joseph, not at all.

And what we see Joseph do is that he has his steward place his silver cup in the bag of Benjamin along with the money Benjamin brought to buy the grain, and they did not know this.

Now, as bad as that does sound, Joseph is going to use this to break his brothers of their sin so that they can repent and get restored. Brokenness is not bad because it will cause us to draw close to God, at least it should!

Now, what about this silver cup of Joseph's that we are told he used for divination, isn't that wrong?

Of course it is and in Deuteronomy 18:10-13, which was after this but I am sure the Lord spoke to Joseph about this, we see it is wrong. We are told in Deuteronomy, **“There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. For all who do these things are an abomination to the Lord, and because of these abominations the Lord your God drives them out from before you. You shall be blameless before the Lord your God.”**

I believe that Joseph did not use this cup for divination, he drank from it, but his brothers didn't know that and thus, he is playing along with the practices of that culture so they would not get suspicious of him.

I believe that is all that is going on here.

VERSES 6-10

Look how confident they are. There is no way any of them would do such a thing.

They are basically telling this servant of Joseph's, ***“We're all men of fine character. Look at the good things we did in bringing back the money we found in our sacks. And we know we did nothing wrong but if you do find any wrongdoing in us, we will take our punishment gladly.”***

Isn't that the heart of man. They think they are good, that they have done nothing wrong and yet, all our righteousness is like filthy rags before God. There is none who does not sin, not one.

It is interesting that they did not remember how Joseph treated them the last time. He told them that he thought they were spies. He placed them in prison for three days. Gave them the money back secretly for the grain that they bought.

But, because of this confidence they had they told the steward that whoever's sack the silver cup is found in, let that person be put to death!

They had no idea that it would be found in Benjamin's.

But the steward repeats what Joseph had told him to say, that the person where the silver cup is found will become the salve of this man, Joseph. Everyone else will be set free, but not the one that has the cup.

VERSES 11-13

Can you imagine how they felt upon seeing the silver cup in Benjamin's sack!

Their father's favorite son and now he will become a slave to this man in Egypt, never seeing his father or family again! He will never be allowed to go home again.

Some twenty-two years earlier they had no concern for what they did to Joseph. But notice what they do here.

Instead of returning home, like they did when they sold Joseph into slavery, they go back to Egypt to see the man, to see Joseph.

They were willing to stand with Benjamin and possibly sacrificing their own freedom or life.

This was a far different attitude from years earlier.

VERSES 14-17

As they come before Joseph, they bow before him, just as he told them that they would do over twenty-two years earlier! Remember the dream Joseph had and how his brothers were so mad at him because they were not going to bow before this punk. But now that dream that God had given to Joseph is coming to pass.

And as they come before Joseph, they now acknowledge their sin before God. Yes, they tried to cover it for these past twenty years or so, but God has brought it to light, and they are broken and willing to sacrifice their own lives for their brother Benjamin.

God always brings our sins to light. We are told in Hebrews 4:13, “**And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.**”

In regard to this, George Williams writes the following,

He acted so as to bring their sin to remembrance, to make them confess it with their own lips . . . His detention of Simeon, and afterwards of Benjamin, was skillfully designed so as to find out if they were still indifferent to the cries of a captive brother and the tears of a bereaved father. His plan succeeded admirably; his sternness and his kindness both conspired to disquiet them; and his goodness helped to lead them to repentance.

- George Williams

Can you imagine how they are feeling and then Joseph tells them that they are free to go, only Benjamin will stay, and he will become his slave.

What are they going to do?

Let's read on because you will see how they truly have changed over the years as God is working in them so He then can work through them.

Again, I don't believe Joseph actually practiced divination. He is simply pretending to be an Egyptian and saying to his brothers that, as an Egyptian judge, he knows all things so there's no sense trying to hide anything from him.

VERSES 18-32

At this point Judah launches into the most heartbreaking, impassioned, selfless plea for his brother found anywhere in the Bible.

In regard to these words of Judah, F. B. Meyer wrote: ***"In all literature, there is nothing more pathetic than this appeal."***

H. C. Leupold wrote, ***"This is one of the manliest, most straightforward speeches ever delivered by any man. For depth of feeling and sincerity of purpose it stands unexcelled."***

Barnhouse called it ***"the most moving address in all the Word of God."***

You see, a broken man who is no longer concerned about his welfare, but he is concerned for his brother Benjamin as well as his father Jacob. Judah is a changed man!

Remember what we saw in our study that some twenty-two years earlier he allowed his father to believe that Joseph was dead, eaten by wild animals.

Now he can only say that is what Jacob believed, it is not what really happened.

Judah is broken and I believe so too were his brothers. They knew what they did and now conviction has led to confession of their sin and ultimately restoration.

And listen to what he is going to tell Joseph, the plan to resolve this problem.

VERSES 33-34

Judah was willing to lay down his life for his brother and his father.

Interestingly enough, from the tribe of Judah will come the Messiah, Jesus who did lay down His life for us by paying in full the penalty for our sins and He has given to us everlasting life with Him.

It is as Jesus said in John 15:13, “**Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.**”

That is what Judah was willing to do here.

Not only that but look at how the hearts of Joseph’s brothers have changed and like I have said, Joseph’s actions were to bring about brokenness over their sin, which would lead them to repentance and be restored.

Here are those changes that we have seen:

- They did not resent it when Benjamin was given the favored portion (Genesis 43:34)
- They trusted each other, not accusing each other of wrong when accused of stealing the cup (Genesis 44:9)
- They stuck together when the silver cup was found. They did not abandon the favored son and allow him to be carried back to Egypt alone (Genesis 44:13)
- They completely humbled themselves for the sake of the favored son (Genesis 44:14)
- They knew their predicament was the result of their sin against Joseph (Genesis 44:16)
- They offered themselves as slaves to Egypt, not abandoning Benjamin, the favored son, their brother (Genesis 44:16)
- They showed due concern for how this might affect their father (Genesis 44:29-31)
- Judah was willing to be a substitutionary sacrifice for his brother out of love for his father and his brethren (Genesis 44:33)

As Joseph hears all this, as he sees their brokenness, how much they have changed over the years since they sold him into slavery, it is just too much for him. Listen to what we are told as we move into Genesis chapter 45.

GENESIS 45

VERSES 1-3

As some read this story of Joseph, they see his actions as one of revenge. That he is getting back at his brothers for what they did to him, as I have said.

But think about that for a minute. If Joseph was out for revenge, he would not have responded like this.

Look at what is taking place here. Joseph ordered all the Egyptians out of the room and then was alone with his brothers.

We are told that Joseph “**... wept aloud, and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard it.**” Genesis 45:2.

His great emotion showed that Joseph did not cruelly manipulate his brothers. He was directed by God to make these arrangements, and it hurt him to do it.

He wept, he wailed, he was so overwhelmed by not only seeing his brothers but also by seeing how they have changed.

And thus, he reveals himself to them.

Their response, “**... But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed in his presence.**” Genesis 45:3.

I bet this was a shock to them!

In fact, that word “**dismayed**” in Hebrew is BAHAL, (baw-hal’) and it carries with it the idea of being amazed, or frightened, even to the point of being terrified!

But why were they afraid?

Can you image?

They knew what they did to Joseph, how he pleaded with them to let him out of the pit, but his cries fell on deaf ears, and they sold him into slavery!

Now Joseph is in a position to do whatever he wanted to them!

How will Joseph respond to them?

Let’s read on and see.

VERSES 4-8

Can you imagine how terrified they were, so much so they backed away from Joseph.

That phrase in Genesis 45:4, “**... Please come near to me. ...**” carries with it the idea that the brothers cringed back in terror.

That is why Joseph tells them to “**... Please come near to me. ...**” and they do.

Why did they come forward now?

Because they were comfortable now; maybe they saw the love and forgiveness in Joseph.

Joseph was rejected by his brothers the first time, when he had his dreams and, in a sense, was put to death by them.

Now, the second time they recognize him for who he is, their deliverer!

Folks, Joseph is a type of Christ and the Jews rejected Jesus in His First Coming and they put Him to death. But when He comes the second time, they will recognize Him as their Messiah!

In Acts 7:9-13 Stephen tells us this, **“And the patriarchs, becoming envious, sold Joseph into Egypt. But God was with him and delivered him out of all his troubles, and gave him favor and wisdom in the presence of Pharaoh, king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house. Now a famine and great trouble came over all the land of Egypt and Canaan, and our fathers found no sustenance. But when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent out our fathers first. And the second time Joseph was made known to his brothers, and Joseph’s family became known to the Pharaoh.”**

It is as we are told in Zechariah 12:10, **“And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.”**

It is during the Tribulation Period that the Jews, as a nation, will turn to Jesus as their Lord and Savior, as their Messiah!

Yes, Jewish people are receiving Jesus today, but the nation has not turned, but they will for Jesus said, **“for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!’”** Matthew 23:39.

So just like with the children of Israel not recognizing Joseph until the second time, so too do we see it with the nation of Israel not recognizing Jesus until His Second Coming!

Let me ask you this, why was Joseph in Egypt?

Was it because of the sin of his brothers or the plan of God?

The answer to that question is both.

God used their sin to fulfill His plan. It did not negate the sin of his brothers, but Joseph also saw the hand of God in this. That God was going to save His people and to do that Joseph needed to be down in Egypt!

It is as Spurgeon put it, *“How wonderfully those two things meet in practical harmony – the free will of man and the predestination of God! Man acts just as freely and just as guiltily as if there were no predestination whatever; and God ordains, arranges, supervises, and overrules, just as accurately as if there were no free will in the universe.”*

Absolutely. No one can blame God for making them do something that they don't want to do. What God does is use what man will do to fulfill His purposes.

Let me add this about Joseph. Remember what Paul wrote in Romans 8:28, **“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”**

Joseph personified what Paul would put on parchment so many centuries later. Joseph saw that all things are working together for good to those who love God and are the called according to His purpose.

Now let's apply that to our own lives.

Where are you this evening?

Do you feel that life is not fair?

Do you feel that things are not working out like you thought they should?

Do you feel that you are a victim?

You see, if you do then you have taken God out of the picture.

Please understand that I am not minimizing what you are going through or trying to downplay what you are going through. But understand that God is in control, and He is aware!

Rabbi Harold Kushner wrote a remarkably wide-selling book titled *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*.

It sold more than a half a million copies before going to paperback and was on the New York Times best-seller list for a whole year.

The whole point of his book is to say God is all loving but not all powerful, that God is good, but not sovereign.

So, when bad things happen to good people, it is because events are out of God's control.

Kushner advises his readers to *“learn to love [God] and forgive him despite his limitations.”*

This certainly is not the God of the Bible!

Joseph understood that God is in control and thus, we must learn to trust in Him for He will work out all things for good in our lives!

We may not see it. We may not understand it. That was Joseph all those years. He did not see the good that would come out of what was done to him. He did not understand it. But he knew that this was working out for good and now, some twenty years later he sees it and he understands it.

VERSES 9-15

Why was Joseph in such a hurry to bring his father down to Egypt?

Keep in mind that Jacob is old, and it is possible that Joseph wanted to see him before he died. I believe that is the reason.

And Joseph tells his brothers to bring everyone with them, the entire family, and they will be able to dwell in the land of Goshen.

Goshen was located in the northeastern part of Egypt and was one the most fertile areas in the world covering some 900 square miles.

What I want you to see here is that Joseph is not angry with his brothers. Joseph is not holding a grudge against them for what they did to him.

What we do see is the love, the forgiveness Joseph has towards his brothers, and not just Benjamin who was not involved in the plan of selling Joseph into slavery.

It doesn't matter how cruel they were to him, he reached out in love, and they responded back.

What an example for us to learn. To forget and forgive and that is then manifested in our actions, that *AGAPE* love we show, as Joseph did!

And if we are struggling in this area, then we need to remember what the Lord has told us in His Word about forgiveness and His love.

Remember what Paul wrote in Ephesians 4:30-32, **“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.”**

We can grieve the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives by holding onto bitterness, wrath, anger and the like. We are to love, to forgive as Jesus has forgiven us and when we look at it that way, there is no excuse for us not to love!

Joseph had many reasons why he could have been angry and bitter and filled with hate, but he let that go and let love flow and so must we!

VERSES 16-24

As you read how Pharaoh and his household, and the servants, responded to the news about the brothers of Joseph, the only conclusion you can come to is that Joseph was really loved in Egypt.

Why?

First of all, they realized that if it weren't for Joseph interpreting Pharaoh's dreams and storing up the grain, they'd probably all be dead.

Not only that, but Joseph worked hard, and whatever he did God blessed him and the people were blessed by it.

So whatever made Joseph happy made them happy.

So when Pharaoh heard that the brothers of Joseph were in town, he blessed them.

He tells them to return with their father back to the land but not to bring their things back with them, for he will provide for them. They only needed to bring their belongings, all the other things would be supplied for them.

Thus, they are sent away with carts and animals, all kinds of things so that they can bring their families back to Egypt with them.

Boice gives us this insight. He wrote, ***“To return to Canaan with ‘carts from Egypt’ was the cultural equivalent of landing a jumbo jet among a tribe of isolated savages. It would be the stuff legends are made of.”***

Can you imagine what Jacob thought when he saw them coming with all these things loaded on these royal carts! They went down to Egypt only to bring back grain for them to eat, and now this!

In Jacob's mind he is probably thinking, "*Oh no! What have you done? What kind of trouble did you get into now? Where is Benjamin!*"

I also have to mention this. As they begin to leave for the land of Canaan, Joseph tells them, "... 'See that you do not become troubled along the way.'" Genesis 45:24.

What is that all about?

It means that they should not get into a fight, they shouldn't quarrel over this. They shouldn't blame each other or point the finger, because this was the plan of God.

Yes, they sinned but God used their sin to save a people. It is as Joseph will say in Genesis 50:19-21, "... 'Do not be afraid, for am I in the place of God? But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive. Now therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones.' And he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.'"

Yes, they sinned as I have said, but that is forgiven, and they need to move on.

How about you? If you have repented, you need to move on because God has forgiven you! Don't hold onto past failures, past sins, give them to the Lord and move on.

You are a new creation in Christ, that old life has passed away and you are new in Him!

Paul put it like this in Philippians 3:12-14, "Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.'"

May we do the same, **PRESS ON!**

VERSES 25-28

Can you imagine Jacob, sitting outside his tent, just watching and then seeing all these Egyptian carts loaded and coming towards him. Not only that, but his sons are there with them. I am sure he was thinking, *“What did these kids of mine get into this time? What mess have they made for me!”* as I have said!

And then, when they start to talk with their father, they tell him that Joseph is alive! Not only is he alive but he is governor over all of Egypt!

Can you imagine what was going through Jacob’s mind when his sons told him that Joseph was alive?

First joy and then maybe, *“I’m going to kill you kids! Did you do this to Joseph?”*

Jacob was shocked by all this, and he tried to take it all in. What is interesting to me is that he is called Jacob throughout this chapter and then, in Genesis 45:28 he is called Israel!

And as Israel or governed by God he was able to say, **“It is enough. Joseph my son is still alive. I will go and see him before I die.”** Genesis 45:28.

You see, when he heard the words and saw the blessings, he believed!

Folks, we must do the same. Tell people that Jesus is alive, that He is risen, share the Word of God with them and let them see how God is working in our lives, the blessings, that they too may believe!

Remember what Jacob said in Genesis 42:36, **“And Jacob their father said to them, ‘You have bereaved me: Joseph is no more, Simeon is no more, and you want to take Benjamin. All these things are against me.’”**

Who said, **“All things are against me.”**?

It was not Israel but Jacob and when he is called Jacob he is walking in the flesh. When he is called Israel, he is walking in the Spirit.

And who said, “... **‘It is enough. Joseph my son is still alive. I will go and see him before I die.’**” Genesis 45:28.

It was Israel who said this! A man who was governed by God!

Again, your perspective in life will be based on you being Jacob the schemer or Israel, governed by God!

And like Jacob and Israel, sometimes we are walking in the flesh and sometimes in the Spirit, walking in faith!

The thing we need to remember is that God is for us just as He was with Jacob and Israel. Remember what the Lord said in Jeremiah 29:11, “**For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.**”

That is our God, and thus, may we walk by faith, may we walk governed by God!

GENESIS 46

VERSES 1-4

So as Israel and his family begin their journey to Egypt, Israel seeks the Lord, he offers a sacrifice to the Lord in the land of Beersheba. Beersheba was on the southernmost border of the land of Canaan. After Beersheba you're in the desert.

Spurgeon gives us this insight regarding Beersheba. He wrote, *“It was, therefore, a memorable spot in the history of his family, and it was just then a turning-point in his own career, and therefore it called for special waiting upon the Lord. He was to break new ground, and enter upon a way which he had not trodden heretofore; and so we read that he offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac.”*

It is here that the Lord tells him not to be afraid.

Why was Israel fearful?

Like I have said, Beersheba was on the edge of the Promise Land and now there is only desert before them.

Israel is old, they have to carry him, and his eyesight is poor, so he could have been fearful because of this tough journey.

Not only that but Israel may have remembered that Abraham had gone to Egypt in a time of famine once before, and it was an expression of his unbelief, and much evil eventually came from it (Genesis 12:10-20).

He also may have remembered God told his father Isaac not to go down to Egypt. The Lord told his father Isaac back in Genesis 26:2, **“Then the Lord appeared to him and said: ‘Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land of which I shall tell you.’”**

They all may play a role in Israel being fearful.

With all that information he had and now the Lord is telling Israel, He is encouraging him to go down to Egypt and it is there that God will bring forth a great nation, the nation of Israel!

Yes, they will go down to Egypt, but God will bring them up again into the land of Canaan.

Remember that the Lord told Abraham in Genesis chapter 15 that they will be down there and face affliction for 400 years and their total time down in Egypt will be 430 years.

You see, 30 of those years they will not face affliction but enjoy a time of peace living in the land of Egypt. (Exodus 12:40-41, Galatians 3:17).

In Exodus 1:8-14 we see this played out as we are told, **“Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. And he said to his people, ‘Look, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we; come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and it happen, in the event of war, that they also join our enemies and fight against us, and so go up out of the land.’ Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh supply cities, Pithom and Raamses. But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were in dread of the children of Israel. So the Egyptians made the children of Israel serve with rigor. And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage - in mortar, in brick, and in all manner of service in the field. All their service in which they made them serve was with rigor.”**

Thus, there is no discrepancy, in fact, the Scriptures are very accurate, they are very detailed with the time frame of how long they were down in Egypt and how long of a period of time they were oppressed down there!

They will enter the land with 70 people and leave Egypt with over 2 to 3 million people. In other words, a nation will be born!

Let me ask you this. We see him called Israel but when God speaks to him in Genesis 46:2 He calls him Jacob, why?

I think it was because of the fear that he had. Fear is the opposite of faith and God recognized this in his life and thus, called him Jacob instead of Israel.

One more point here. That phrase, “**... Joseph will put his hand on your eyes**” in Genesis 46:4 is an expression that speaks of Joseph and Jacob seeing each other and that when Jacob dies, Joseph will be there and he will die in peace, something he was not enjoying before he saw Joseph! In other words, Joseph would close Jacob’s eyes in death!

So they are on their way to Egypt but had a short stop in Beersheba.

VERSES 5-7

Can you imagine the excitement for Jacob as he is going to be reunited with his son Joseph once again. Yes, it was a long trip but what a trip this must have been.

And Jacob is a man of faith, he takes everything with him, all his family, he did not leave one behind. And now, as they are on their way to Egypt, we will see some of the people who came with him as we look at the children and grandchildren of Israel that are traveling to Egypt.

Keep in mind that Jacob was to bring all his family, but Pharaoh told him not to bother with their possessions because he would take care of them. All the wealth of Egypt was at their disposal. (Genesis 45:20)

Now they did bring their livestock, that would have been crazy to leave them behind since there was a famine in the land.

And I am sure they brought some of their personal possessions as well. But that was it.

VERSES 8-15

These are the descendants of Jacob through Leah, 33 children in all.

Some feel the Job in verse 13 is the one who is spoken of in the book of Job. It could be.

The time frame is correct.

VERSES 16-18

These are the descendants of Jacob through Zilpah, 16 in all.

VERSES 19-22

These are the descendants of Jacob through Rachel, the wife he loved, 14 in all.

VERSES 23-25

These are the descendants of Jacob through Bilhah, 7 in all.

VERSES 26-27

We are told that “**. . . All the persons of the house of Jacob who went to Egypt were seventy.**” Genesis 46:27.

Now, we need to deal with this.

Why does Genesis 46:26-27, Exodus 1:5 and Deuteronomy 10:22 all say 70 people and Stephen says 75 people in Acts 7:14?

Is that an error?

Did Stephen get it wrong?

No, Stephen did not get it wrong, and they are both correct. Let me explain.

The reason for the difference is because the Septuagint text, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, says that Genesis 46:27 is 75 people and thus, Stephen, being a Hellenist Jew would read the Septuagint text.

But why the difference then between the Hebrew and the Greek?

It seems like the 75 included Joseph's descendants born in Egypt.

Gleason Archer put it this way regarding this issue. He wrote,

We therefore conclude that both totals [from the Hebrew Masoretic text and the Septuagint] are correct, though they were calculated differently.

Jacob's own sons numbered twelve; his grandsons by them numbered fifty-two; there were already four great-grandsons born in Canaan by the time of the migration, for a total of sixty-six.

Manasseh and Ephraim, born in Egypt, increased the total to sixty-eighty; Jacob and his wife (whichever she was) brought it up to seventy.

But the Septuagint added the seven grandsons of the prime minister [Joseph] and omitted Jacob and his wife from the tally.

This brings us to the result that Stephen correctly reported the number seventy-five, according to the Septuagint in Gen 46:27 and Ex 1:5.

Likewise, Gen 46:27; Ex 1:5, and Deut. 10:22 in the Masoretic text are correct with their total of seventy.

Either figure is correct, depending on whether Joseph's grandchildren are included. (Four great-grandchildren of Jacob were included even in the Masoretic text tally of seventy.)

VERSES 28-30

So as they get to Egypt Judah goes and gets Joseph who can point out the land of Goshen, where they were to live.

Keep in mind that Goshen was a very fertile section in Egypt near the delta of the Nile River.

Now, why does Judah lead the way to the land of Goshen?

The word “**Goshen**” means, “*to draw near*” and “**Judah**” means, “*praise.*”

It is as Psalm 100 tells us, “**Make a joyful shout to the Lord, all you lands! Serve the Lord with gladness; Come before His presence with singing. Know that the Lord, He is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture. Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, And into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name. For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting, And His truth endures to all generations.**” Psalm 100:1-5.

We are to enter into His presence, come before the Lord with praise and that is what Judah was doing as he led the descendants of Israel to draw near to God through praise!

Remember back in Genesis 42:36 where Jacob said, “. . . **‘You have bereaved me: Joseph is no more, Simeon is no more, and you want to take Benjamin. All these things are against me.’**”

Now he sees things differently. He sees Joseph and he can rest in peace; he could die in peace. Not that he is going to die yet, he still has many years in him. But what a comfort, what joy this meeting with Joseph must have been for Jacob!

We tend to do that.

In the midst of a trial – all things are against us!

But then, as we go through that trial, as we are on the other side, we see that all things were not against us, but God was working for us, for our good.

May we learn to rest in Him in the midst of our trials, that is what God desires!

VERSES 31-34

Keep in mind that the Egyptian society was based on a caste system, much like we see in India today.

Thus, shepherds were on the bottom of the ladder. You might say that they were the untouchables of India today!

In fact, Joseph tells us that to the Egyptians, shepherds were an abomination, they were disgusting, looked down upon and thus, they stayed clear of them!

Now why would God do this?

Why would Joseph make the point of telling his family to say to Pharaoh that they are shepherds?

Because God wanted them to be separated from the Egyptians. He did not want them to be assimilated into the Egyptian culture.

It was going to be through the tribe of Judah that the Messiah would come.

Not only that, but down the road, some 430 years from this point, a nation would be born, and they would return to the land of Canaan just as God had promised.

We need to understand that what God desired of the children of Israel back then, it is what He desires for us today.

Think about this for a minute as I read to you what Paul wrote in II Corinthians 6:14-18,

“Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: ‘I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people.’ Therefore ‘Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you.’ ‘I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the Lord Almighty.’”

In other words, the world will avoid us. We are detestable to them.

Thus, don't become like them or be assimilated into their lifestyle, but as Paul said, **“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”** Romans 12:1-2.

May we be wise because who knows the things that God will birth from our lives as we walk with Him!