

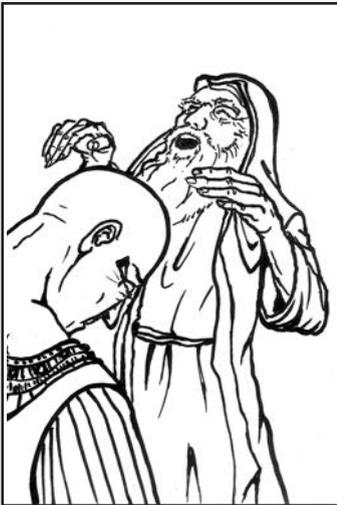
Israel in Egypt



SABBATH—JUNE 18

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Genesis 46; Genesis 47; Genesis 48; Genesis 49:1–28; Genesis 49:29–Genesis 50:21.

MEMORY VERSE: “Israel stayed in Egypt. He lived in the land of Goshen. His family grew and became very large. They became landowners there and did very well” (Genesis 47:27, ERV).



When Jacob gets to Egypt, he blesses Pharaoh (Genesis 47:7–10).

THE BOOK OF GENESIS shows us the final years of Jacob with Joseph in Egypt (Genesis 47). He will die there (Genesis 49:29–Genesis 50:21). Even so, we see that the hope of the Promised Land is an important part of the story.

When Jacob gets to Egypt, he blesses Pharaoh (Genesis 47:7–10). This blessing helps us remember the promise that God made to Abraham. God promised Abraham that his future children will bless the people on this earth. Later, before he dies, Jacob blesses the sons of Joseph (Genesis 48). Jacob also blesses his own sons (Genesis 49:1–28). Jacob tells his sons what will happen to their family groups in the future (Genesis 49:1–27).

The children of Israel live in Egypt as strangers. When Genesis ends, they are still there. But the words of the dying Joseph show us the hope of the Promised Land: “When Joseph was near death, he said to his brothers, ‘My time to die is almost here. But I know that God will take care of you and lead you out of this country. God will lead you to the land he promised to give Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob’ ” (Genesis 50:24, ERV).

JACOB TRAVELS TO JOSEPH (Genesis 46)

Read the story in Genesis 46 about Jacob leaving Canaan. What important Bible truths does this story show us?

When Jacob leaves Canaan, he is filled with hope. He will no longer be hungry. Better than that, his son Joseph is alive! For sure, this good news makes Jacob, an old man, feel strong enough to travel to Egypt.

This story helps us remember the experience of Abraham. Abraham traveled to Canaan, the Promised Land. Jacob is leaving Canaan, the Promised Land. But we see in both stories the same promise from God. God will give Jacob many future children. These children will become a mighty people (Genesis 46:3; compare with Genesis 12:2). Also, God tells Jacob “ ‘Do not fear’ ” (Genesis 46:3, NKJV). God said the same thing to Abraham (Genesis 15:1). Then God makes both men a promise about future glory.

Next, we read a list of all the names of the children of Israel who went to Egypt, including his daughters (Genesis 46:7). This list helps us remember God’s promise to Abraham that he will have many children. The number of the children of Israel is 70. This number also includes Joseph and his two sons. The number 70 in the Bible shows us that something is complete or total. So, all Israel goes to Egypt. The number 70 also helps us remember the 70 family groups in Genesis 10. This connection helps us see that the future of all people depends on the journey of Jacob to Egypt. Later, we will see this idea again when Jesus dies on the cross for all people everywhere.

This idea helps us to see that the stories in Genesis are more than interesting stories. They are written down to show us important spiritual truths. They are part of the history of the plan of God to save us. And not only us, but also as many people as possible on this planet.

“The Jews and other people are alike. The same Lord is Lord of all people. He richly blesses all who call out to him. The holy writings say, ‘Everyone who calls out to the Lord will be saved’ ” (Romans 10:12, 13, WE). How do Paul’s words show us that the Good News about Jesus is for everyone? Also, how should we work together as one church to share the Good News with other people?



The number 70 in the Bible shows us that something is complete or total.

JACOB SETTLES IN EGYPT (Genesis 47)

God gives Jacob dreams (Genesis 46:2). In the dreams, the Lord commands Jacob to leave the Promised Land for Egypt. Later, Egypt will become a word picture for the one place on earth that the people of God do not want to go to (Deuteronomy 17:16).

Read the story in Genesis 47. What spiritual rules and Bible truths do we find in this story?

“Joseph brings five of his brothers to visit Pharaoh, king of Egypt. Pharaoh will give the brothers land for their future home. Pharaoh is happy to give the brothers of Joseph important jobs in his government if they wish. But Joseph is loyal to God. So, he wants to protect his brothers from life at the palace of Pharaoh. There are many things there that can lead a person to sin. So, Joseph tells his brothers to tell Pharaoh about their jobs. The brothers of Joseph obey his advice. They also are careful to say that they are only visiting Egypt. They plan to live in Egypt only a short time. They want the king to know they can leave anytime. That way, they can leave anytime they choose. The king gives the men a home in the land of Goshen. This land is the best part of Egypt.”—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 233, adapted.

Pharaoh asks the brothers how they earn money (Genesis 47:3). Pharaoh also is interested in giving them work to do. He suggests that the brothers may serve him as the chief shepherds of his own flocks (Genesis 47:6).

Next, Jacob stands in front of Pharaoh. Pharaoh is a very powerful man. Jacob is a stranger in the land of Egypt. But Jacob blesses the leader of Egypt anyway (Genesis 47:7). Why does that happen?

Genesis 47:7 gives us a hint: “Then Joseph brought his father Jacob to Pharaoh” (NLV). The verb “brought” is “**amad lifney**” in the Hebrew language. In the Bible, this verb is used to show us priests, or religious leaders. When we remember that Pharaoh also is a chief priest in Egypt, then we start to understand why Jacob blesses Pharaoh. As a priest of God, Jacob stands high above the most important high priest in Egypt and above Pharaoh himself.

We “are priests to your king. You are a holy nation. You are God’s very own people” (1 Peter 2:9, WE). Why must we always remember this important Bible truth?



Pharaoh suggests that the brothers may serve him as the chief shepherds of his own flocks (Genesis 47:6).

JACOB BLESSES THE SONS OF JOSEPH (Genesis 48)

Jacob will die soon. At this time, he remembers his trip to Bethel (Genesis 35:1–15). There, God gives Jacob the promise again of Canaan. This land will belong to Jacob and his future children forever (Genesis 17:8). The hope of the Promised Land comforts Jacob. Then Jacob blesses the two sons of Joseph.

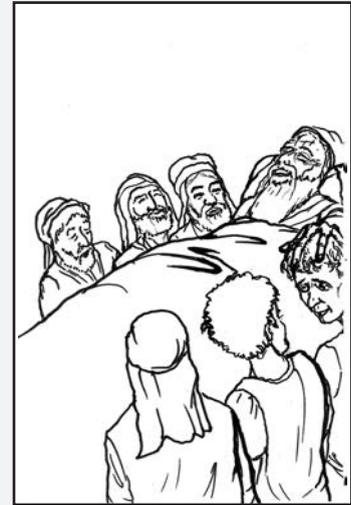
Read the story in Genesis 48. Why does Jacob bless the two sons of Joseph in this story and not his other grandsons?

Manasseh and Ephraim are the only grandsons that Jacob blesses. This blessing names Manasseh and Ephraim as sons of Jacob, and not as grandsons (Genesis 48:5). Manasseh was born first and Ephraim second. The blessing of Jacob shows that the family group of Ephraim will be stronger than the family group of Manasseh. At the same time, we see that the blessing is really about Joseph (Genesis 48:15).

The blessing shows that God keeps His promises to His people. God always kept His promises in the past. God will keep them in the future. Jacob talks about the God of Abraham and Isaac (Genesis 48:15). God gave them food and protected them. This same God saved Jacob out of all his troubles (Genesis 48:16). Jacob also remembers at this time his fight at night with the God of Bethel (Genesis 31:13; Genesis 32:29). There, God changed the name of Jacob to Israel (Genesis 32:26–29).

All these experiences show us how God changes evil into good. Jacob shows his hope that God will take care of his grandsons, just as He took care of Jacob and Joseph in the past. Jacob also thinks about the future when his future children will go back to Canaan. This thought gives him hope. We see this hope when Jacob talks about Shechem (Genesis 48:22). Shechem is special in the history of Israel. Jacob bought land there (Genesis 33:19). Joseph's bones also will be buried there (Joshua 24:32). Later, the Promised Land will be divided at Shechem and given to the family groups of Israel (Joshua 24:1).

Read Acts 3:25, 26. As we see from these verses, how does Peter show that God keeps His promise in Genesis 12:3? How have we also gotten this blessing?



Jacob shows his hope that God will take care of his grandsons, just as He took care of Jacob and Joseph in the past.

JACOB BLESSES HIS SONS (Genesis 49:1–28)

Read about the blessings in Genesis 49:1–28. Why does Jacob bless his sons? What spiritual truth do these blessings show us?

The blessings show the future history of the 12 family groups of Israel. At the same time, the blessings also are about Jacob's hope in the coming Savior. We see this hope in the first words of Jacob: "in the future" (Genesis 49:1, ERV) or "in days to come" (Genesis 49:1, NIV). These words show us that Jacob is talking about the coming of the promised Savior-King (Isaiah 2:2; Daniel 10:14).

Then Jacob talks about the experiences of the future family group of each of his sons. These experiences show us the personality of each son and what their future children will do. God knows what we will do before we do it. That knowledge is not the same thing as His making us do it.

Read Genesis 49:8–12. What special message about the future do we see in these verses? Why is this message so important?

God knows the future. So, God arranged for the future Savior to be born from the family line of Judah (Genesis 49:8–12). The lion is Judah's symbol, because this tribe leads Israel (Genesis 49:9). This lion is a word picture for royalty and praise. King David will come from the family line of Judah. Shiloh will come from this line, too. Shiloh is the One who will bring "shalom," or peace (Isaiah 9:6, 7). The people shall obey Him (Genesis 49:10).

For a long time, the Jews have believed that this special message shows the coming Savior. Christians believe that this special message shows us Jesus. When He comes, "many people will obey and serve him" (Genesis 49:10, ERV). This special message helps us see this New Testament promise: "Every person will bow down to honor the name of Jesus" (Philippians 2:10, ERV).

As Ellen G. White writes: "The lion is the king of the forest. So, he is an excellent word picture for the family group of Judah. David came from this family line. The Son of David is Shiloh. Shiloh is the real Lion of the family group of Judah. All people shall bow down to Him in the end. Everyone will worship Him."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 236, adapted.



"The lion is the king of the forest. So, he is an excellent word picture for the family group of Judah."

HOPING FOR THE PROMISED LAND (Genesis 49:29–Genesis 50:21)

What important ideas about hope do we see at the end of Genesis? For the answer, read Genesis 49:29–Genesis 50:21.

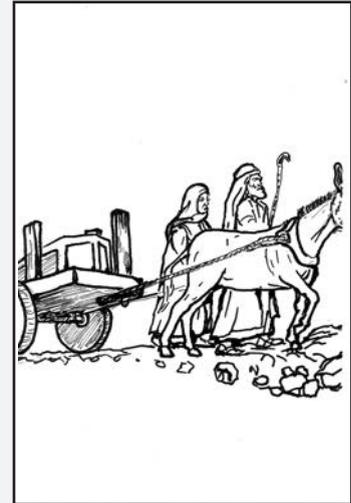
The end of Genesis has three parts. Each of these three parts fills us with hope.

First, we see the hope that the children of Israel will go back to the Promised Land someday. When Jacob and Joseph die, we remember the Promised Land. When Jacob finishes blessing his sons (Genesis 49:28), Jacob commands his sons to bury him in Canaan. Jacob wants to be buried in the cave of Machpelah. There, Abraham and Sarah are buried (Genesis 49:29–31). So, Jacob’s sons travel to Canaan to bury Jacob. This story shows us the time when Israel will leave Egypt several hundreds of years later.

Second, we see the hope that God will turn evil into good. After Jacob dies and is buried, the brothers of Joseph are worried about their future. They are afraid that Joseph will now try to punish them for the wrong they did to him. The brothers come to Joseph. They bow down in front of him. They are ready to be his servants (Genesis 50:18). Their bowing to Joseph helps us remember again Joseph’s dreams. Joseph tells his brothers not to be afraid (Genesis 50:19). Yes, Joseph’s brothers did evil to him. But God let the evil happen and brought something good from it (Genesis 50:20; read also Genesis 50:19–21; compare with Genesis 45:5, 7–9). That is, God is always in control of everything that happens. None of our mistakes can stop His plans.

The third hope we see is that God will save sinners who turn to Him. The story about the death of Joseph shows us this Bible truth. Joseph does not command his people to bury his bones in Egypt. He tells his people to remember the time when God will lead them out of Egypt. Joseph says, “ ‘Promise me that you will carry my bones with you when God leads you out of Egypt’ ” (Genesis 50:25, ERV). Hundreds of years later, the Israelites keep their promise to Joseph (Exodus 13:19). They carry Joseph’s bones to Canaan. Canaan is a word picture for our biggest hope of all: the New Jerusalem on a new earth.

Read Revelation 21:1–4. How do these verses show us the biggest and best hope that we have?

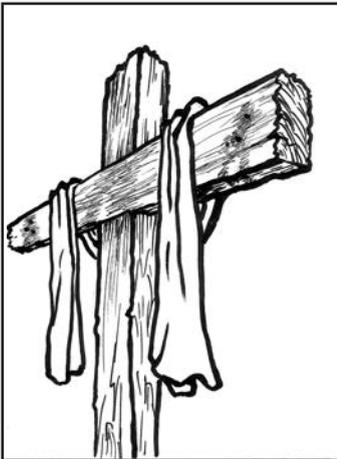


The sons of Jacob travel to Canaan to bury Jacob.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Read Ellen G. White, “Joseph and His Brothers,” in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pages 233–240.

“The life of Joseph shows us the life of Jesus Christ. The brothers of Joseph are jealous of Joseph. So, they sell him as a slave. They hope to stop him from becoming more important than they are. When Joseph is carried to Egypt, the brothers feel that his dreams will not trouble them anymore. They believe they have stopped his dreams from ever happening. But God is in control. Remember Joseph's dreams that his brothers would bow to him? Joseph's brothers try to stop Joseph by selling him as a slave. God causes good things to happen from the evil behavior of the brothers. Joseph is now the leader and his brothers bow to him. So Joseph's dreams come true. In the same way, the Jewish priests, or religious leaders, are jealous of Jesus. They fear that Jesus will turn the attention of the people away from them to Himself. So, they kill Jesus to stop Him from becoming King. But God causes good to come from the evil behavior of the religious leaders.

“In Egypt, Joseph becomes a savior to the family of his father. But this surprising news does not remove the guilt of his brothers. In the same way, the enemies of Jesus put Him to death. But the death of Jesus makes Him the Savior of all humans. He is the King of the whole earth. But this Bible truth does not remove the guilt of his killers or make their crime right.”—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 239, adapted.



“The enemies of Jesus put Him to death. But the death of Jesus makes Him the Savior of all humans.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① When Jacob dies, Joseph's brothers fear that Joseph will punish them for the wrong they did to him in the past. How does Joseph answer his brothers when they come to him with their fears? What does the answer of Joseph teach us about why we need to forgive the guilty?
- ② What other connections do you see between Joseph and Jesus?
- ③ Think some more about this idea: God knows the future. At the same time, we are free to make our choices. How do we understand these two different ideas? That is, can both of these ideas be correct at the same time? Explain.