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So Isra’el Took All His Offspring with Him to Egypt

46: 1-7

So Isra’el took all his offspring with him to Egypt DIG: What concerns Isra’el as he leaves his homeland of Canaan? As he prepares to meet his long lost son Joseph? As he goes where he has never been before, an alien, likely never to return? How did God reassure Jacob about going to Egypt?

REFLECT: If ADONAI were calling you, rather than Yosef, what would He be asking you to leave behind? Why? What would God want you to keep for your journey? When the Lord wants you to alter your lifestyle, what does He do? How does He get your attention? What might God be asking you to change about your lifestyle now?

Isra’el probably thought **he** was going **to Egypt** for only a few years, and even then it was with some reluctance and hesitation that **he** consented. **God** had instructed **his** grandfather **Abraham** and **his father Isaac** (Hebrew: **Yitz’chak**) to stay out of **Egypt**. **He** was going, but **he** felt uncomfortable about it. Until then, each time **he** had made an important move in **his** life, **God** had spoken to **him** directly. When **he** left **his** parents to **go** to Haran, **God** had appeared to **him** at Bethel (**28:13-15**), when **he** had been with Laban long enough, **God** instructed **him** to return to **Canaan (31:3)** and even when **he** left Shechem, **God** had appeared to **him (35:1)**.⁶⁹⁹ **He** needed a little more encouragement than the invitation from **his** son **Joseph** or even from Pharaoh. **He** needed a green light from **God**.⁷⁰⁰



Nevertheless, **Isra’el set out with all that was his, and** as he journeyed south from Hebron **to Egypt, he stopped** just before leaving **the Promised Land at Beersheba**. It was the southern border of **the Land** and the “point of no return” before entering **Egypt**. It was there that **Abraham** had a special revelation from **God (21:33)**, and where **he** lived after the offering of **Yitz’chak (22:19)**. **Jacob** had grown up there, but even more, it was a significant location in the life of **his father Isaac**. It was at **Beersheba** that **God** had appeared to **Isaac** in the **night** and spoken to **him** words of promise and comfort. In response, **Isaac built an altar there and called on the name of the LORD (26:23-25)**. Now, perhaps on the same **altar, Jacob offered sacrifices to the God of his father Yitz’chak (46:1)**.

And then, the **God of his father Isaac spoke to Isra’el in a vision at night**. The inspired author Moses commonly used the name **Isra’el**, when referring to **Jacob**. Therefore, **God spoke to him** and said: **Ya’akov ! Ya’akov!** The repetition was for emphasis. **And Jacob** replied: **Here I am (46:2)**. Then for the third time, **God** comforted **Isra’el** by reaffirming the Abrahamic Covenant. **He** said: **I AM God, the God of your father**. There is no doubt who was speaking to **Isra’el**. **Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt (46:3)**. **This is the only time that God approved of the family leaving the Promised Land**. Previously, **God** had told **Jacob’s** grandfather **Abraham not to go down to Egypt**, but **he** disobeyed, and in the process acquired **an Egyptian maidservant named Hagar** with disastrous consequences **(16:1-15)**. Likewise, **the LORD** appeared to **Isaac** and told **him, “Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land where I tell you to live” (26:2)**. But like **his father Abraham, he** did not listen and almost had **his** wife taken from **him**. Even **Jacob** himself had fled to Haran against **God’s** wishes after deceiving **his father**. But here, for the first time, **God** approved of **Ya’akov** leaving **the Promised Land** with **his** family.

Then the reason is given. **God** said: **For I will make you into a great nation there (46:3)**. This was a foreshadowing that **his** journey to **Egypt** would **not** be a

short one. **The Holy Spirit** knew that **Jacob’s** family was in fact leaving **the Land** of promise and entering **a land** of slavery. In **Egypt, the Israelites** would multiply without intermarriage with the *goyim*. They **were fruitful and multiplied greatly, and became exceedingly numerous, so that the land [of Egypt] was filled with them (Exodus 1:7; Psalm 105:24)**. Eventually their **slavery** would accomplish **God’s** purposes just as **Joseph’s slavery** had been used to **His** glory. **The Israelites** would eventually escape from **Egypt** because of **God’s** mighty acts (**Exodus 7:1 to 14:31**), and by **His** grace **they** would enter **Canaan** as a **great nation**.⁷⁰¹

I will go down to Egypt with you, as **He** was in Haran and in **the Promised Land**, and **I will surely bring you**, singular **you** meaning **Ya’akov**, **back again (46:4a)**. Is this an absolute singular or a collective singular? If it is an absolute singular, it means that **Jacob** will be carried back to **the Land** and buried there, but if it is being used as a collective singular, it means that the sons of **Isra’el** will be brought out of **Egypt**, and therefore **God** promises the exodus. But either way, **his** going down to **Egypt** will fulfill **God’s** covenant with **Abraham**. Earlier **ADONAI** said to **Abraham**, “**Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own, and they will be enslaved and mistreated four hundred years. But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves, and afterward they will come out with great possessions. You, however, will go to your fathers in peace and be buried at a good old age. In the fourth generation your descendants will come back here, for the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure**” (15:13-16).

And Joseph’s own hand will close your eyes in death (46:4b). How comforting for **Jacob** to know that the one **he** thought dead will be with **him** at **his** death.⁷⁰² **He** now knows that **his** life will end in **Egypt**, and indeed, **he** would spend the next seventeen years there. But there was no turning back once **God** spoke to **him**.

Therefore, at **Beersheba**, **God** encouraged **Ya’akov** about going **down to Egypt**. Identifying **Himself** as **the God of his father Yitz’chak**, **He** assured **Jacob** that **He** (*El, the strong Creator and Sovereign of all men*) would protect and bless **him in Egypt**, even as **He** had in **Canaan**.⁷⁰³ That was the green light **Ya’akov** had been looking for!

No longer hesitant, **Jacob left Beersheba**, and **Isra’el’s sons took their father Ya’akov and their children and their wives in the carts that Pharaoh had sent to transport him. They also took with them their livestock and the**

possessions they had acquired in Canaan, and Jacob and all his offspring went to Egypt. He took with him to Egypt his sons and grandsons and his daughters and granddaughters. All his offspring were included in God’s divine blessing (46:5-7). Jacob’s family had certainly had as much, if not more, friction as that of **Abraham** and of **Yitz’chak**. Yet **Ya’akov** had no Ishmael, as **Abraham** had, and no Esau, as **Isaac** had. **Jacob’s** decidedly dysfunctional family was on the verge of coming together again, but this time in peace.⁷⁰⁴