

# LIFE GROUPS

## Genesis 46

### INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**ICE BREAKER QUESTION:** When do we usually need to hear a word from the Lord most? How has God spoken to you when you needed it most?

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. **What is your biggest takeaway? How was your experience with the Life Tool's this past week?**
  
2. **READ GENESIS 46:1-7. What was the point of God's message to Jacob at this time? Why do you think Jacob needed to hear from God?**

Note the three parts of God's promise: 1. God promised to go down with him to Egypt—He would offer protection. 2. God promised to bring Jacob back—he would be buried near home. 3. He promised that "Joseph will put his hands on your eyes," signifying Joseph would be by his side at his death. Jacob wanted to see his son Joseph before he died, having only recently discovered he was alive. To see Joseph however, Jacob had to face the apprehension of a major life adjustment.

At once Jacob learned that the revelation was in continuity with that given to his father and that he must not fear going down to Egypt for four divine reasons.

First, do not be afraid, "for there I will make you into a great nation." But the fresh revelation to Jacob was that his family would become a great nation "there"—in Egypt. Astonishingly, Israel would *not* become a great nation in the land of promise but on the

pagan Nile! This was amazing but encouraging. Great things would come out of his move to Egypt. Thus he must not fear.<sup>1</sup>

Second, do not fear because, “I myself will go down with you to Egypt.” God knows no territorial constraints. He was with Jacob in Mesopotamia and likewise in Canaan (cf. 31:3; 35:3), and now in Egypt it would be the same. Not to fear.<sup>2</sup>

Third, do not fear because “I will also bring you up again. Jacob may have not made the connection, but as time passed, his descendants saw it clearly and took heart.”<sup>3</sup>

Fourth, do not be afraid because “Joseph’s hand shall close your eyes.” So Jacob learned that his long-standing fear of a sorrowful death was groundless because his beloved Joseph would be at his side for his peaceful homegoing and would gently close his stilled eyes.<sup>4</sup>

By faith everything and everyone near and dear to him would be transported to Egypt. By faith he would entrust his drought-stricken family to the offices of Egypt. By faith he would abandon the land promised to Abraham and Isaac, leaving it to the Canaanites until the cup of the Amorites was complete (cf. 15:16).<sup>5</sup>

As a full family unit, Israel settled in Egypt. There they would become the great nation that God had promised. He had brought them to Egypt through supernaturally controlled circumstances and by wise actions of spiritual leaders who understood the meaning of the circumstances. The family entered Egypt convinced that that was where God wanted them and that the fulfillment of the promises would follow.<sup>6</sup>

“The Lord will not allow His people to sin without facing His corrective hand ([Gal. 6:7](#)). Yet our Father tempers His discipline with grace so that it will not destroy us, as [Genesis 46](#) reveals. God could let Jacob die without knowing Joseph is alive. But this is not what happens; the Lord tells Jacob that “Joseph’s hand shall close your eyes” (v. 4). In other words, the patriarch will see his beloved son again and will precede him in death. Joseph will shut his father’s eyes at his death, and Jacob will not have to endure the tragic sight no father wants to see — the passing on of the child before the parent.” – Ligonier Article

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<sup>1</sup> R. Kent Hughes, [Genesis: Beginning and Blessing](#), Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 526–527.

<sup>2</sup> R. Kent Hughes, [Genesis: Beginning and Blessing](#), Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 527.

<sup>3</sup> R. Kent Hughes, [Genesis: Beginning and Blessing](#), Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 527.

<sup>4</sup> R. Kent Hughes, [Genesis: Beginning and Blessing](#), Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 527.

<sup>5</sup> R. Kent Hughes, [Genesis: Beginning and Blessing](#), Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 527.

<sup>6</sup> Allen P. Ross, [Creation and Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998), 680.

**3. How can worshipping God—as Jacob did by offering sacrifices—remind you of God’s promises? What is one area of life in which you need to be reminded of God’s promised faithfulness like Jacob?**

**4. In what ways has your faith in God and His promises enabled you to deal with fear of change? How has God brought you joy through transitions in your life?**

God has a way of bringing overwhelming joy into the lives of those who trust Him and follow His leadership.

**5. READ GENESIS 46:8-30. What is so significant about these verses? What do we learn from the comparisons of Jacob’s family reunion and their journey to Egypt to other places in scripture?**

Despite everything their family had been through, this reunion between father and son resulted in joy for the entire family. Jacob realized the hopes and wishes of 20 years when he wept and embraced Joseph. Judah again played an important role, going ahead of his father to prepare the way. That Joseph went out to meet his father shows his willingness to step down from his lofty place and embrace his past identity.

It had been twenty-two years since Jacob had been told that Joseph was dead. Now word sped ahead that Jacob’s seventy were in Goshen. Both father and son must have welled with joyous anticipation and possibly some trepidation.<sup>7</sup>

So it was that Israel began the journey into the unlikely safety of the ark of Egypt.<sup>8</sup>

Israel, then, was God’s covenant people in round numbers—the hope of the world in microcosm to be lodged in the ark of Egypt.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> R. Kent Hughes, [\*Genesis: Beginning and Blessing\*](#), Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 528–529.

<sup>8</sup> R. Kent Hughes, [\*Genesis: Beginning and Blessing\*](#), Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 528.

<sup>9</sup> R. Kent Hughes, [\*Genesis: Beginning and Blessing\*](#), Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 528.

Virtually all of Jacob's recorded words after the supposed death of Joseph had been about death, but after the revelation that Joseph was alive, that all changed (cf. 45:28). Jacob's words are the Old Testament *Nunc Dimittis* that aged Simeon in the Christmas story would voice when he held baby Jesus: "Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace" (cf. Luke 2:29ff.).

Here Jacob beheld his son, his temporal savior, and said he could now die. Later Simeon would behold *the* Son, his eternal Savior, and knew he would die in peace.<sup>10</sup>

**6. READ GENESIS 46:31-34. How do we continue to see God's provision in these verses? How have you seen God's provision in your own life?**

"As one commentator notes, this reality is a striking reminder that God's promises are not achieved by human effort. Jacob, who wrestled the Lord to a standstill (32:22–32), cannot by himself go to Egypt where he will be made into a great nation. God must guide him there providentially, directing the events that bring Joseph to power so that Jacob can stay there safely. Truly, the Lord's will is accomplished by His Spirit, not our might or power (Zech. 4:6)." – Ligonier Article

Egypt had been miraculously opened up for the sake of Israel's family because though the Israelites were never permitted to eat at the table of an Egyptian, they were given the very best part of the land! Thus they were afforded both separation and prosperity. What a grace the ark of Egypt was. There at the fertile borders of Egypt, the people of Israel benefited from the prosperity and protection of Egypt without surrendering their distinctives. There they honed their spiritual and national identity.<sup>11</sup>

The ark, the sojourn, the deliverance were all from God. So it is with the second Moses, the Messiah, Jesus. Just as there was no salvation outside Noah's ark, there is none outside of Christ (cf. the *Second Helvetic Confession*, chap. 27). In Christ there is salvation and deliverance in the second exodus: " 'Out of Egypt I called my son' " (Matthew 2:15). Now, as then, it is all of grace.<sup>12</sup>

This is the mighty God of our salvation.  
This is Christ our redeemer.

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<sup>10</sup> R. Kent Hughes, [\*Genesis: Beginning and Blessing\*](#), Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 529.

<sup>11</sup> R. Kent Hughes, [\*Genesis: Beginning and Blessing\*](#), Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 530.

<sup>12</sup> R. Kent Hughes, [\*Genesis: Beginning and Blessing\*](#), Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 530.

This is the gospel!<sup>13</sup>

**7. READ Philippians 4:19 & Matthew 7:9-11. What do we learn about God's provision in these verses?**

"When you put your faith in Christ, God commissions himself to protect, provide, and care for you (Philippians 4:19). God always provides for his children, though often it is not in the way we expect or hope" – Matt Brown

"God is always doing 10,000 things in your life, but you may be aware of three of them."  
– John Piper

"This lesson has spoken to me over the years. Ask God to provide for you in whatever way he deems fit. Don't grumble against God's supernatural, unexpected ways" – Matt Brown

John Piper has asked, "What is the deepest root of your joy? What God gives to you? Or what God is to you?" God graciously guides us into a greater realization that our ultimate need is for more of his word, more of his ways—more of him.

"We may not receive healing in this life, but we will receive perfect healing in eternity. We may not see answers to our greatest prayers in this life, but we will receive fully in eternity. Some days God's provision and care may seem distant, but it will be ever-present in eternity. We long for our world to stop raging and be at peace, but ultimate peace will only come in eternity" – Matt Brown

"Recently, one Christian leader rhetorically asked a conference audience: "When will we believe the power of God is where He says it is?" Basically, he was saying that though our efforts are important, our cleverness or respectability in the culture do not grow the Lord's kingdom. We must learn to depend on the Spirit just as Jacob did and seek to follow the simple directions of God's Word in our everyday lives. Only then will our impact be profound and lasting." – Ligonier Article

## **PRAYER**

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<sup>13</sup> R. Kent Hughes, [\*Genesis: Beginning and Blessing\*](#), Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 530.

Close in prayer, thanking God for His providence over our lives, from the smallest details to the biggest transitions, in the good and the bad. Ask Him to develop in you a Christ-like attitude of love and forgiveness as He works all aspects of your life—conflicts, circumstances, and relationships—for good.



## **FURTHER STUDY**

<https://www.ligonier.org/learn/devotionals/move-canaan>

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/sermon/preservation-in-egypt/>

<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/four-truths-about-gods-provision>