

4. Jacob's family followed wise counsel (v.31-34)

a. They waited for Joseph's direction (v.31)

- 1) Most likely, Joseph told his family where they should pitch their tents until further notice. I can see him commanding his servants to show the shepherds where they could find water and food for their animals.
- 2) Once he settled all these trivial yet important matters, Joseph told his father and brothers that he would go and tell Pharaoh that they had arrived.

b. Joseph told his brothers not to be ashamed of the fact that they were shepherds (v.32-34)

- 1) Some commentators find deceit in the words of Joseph, but a closer look reveals that such thoughts are unfounded. The word "cattle" is a generic word that includes all kinds of domestic animals, including sheep. The brothers DID say they were shepherds (Ge 47:3).
- 2) Why did Egyptians dislike shepherds? Though the Egyptians had sheep (Ge 47:6, 17), it is likely that Egyptian men left the care of sheep to the women and children while the men busied themselves with the cultivation of their fields. They may have also disliked the nomadic life of shepherds. (Ellicott)
- 3) Joseph, who was now experienced in the culture of Egypt, told his brothers not to be ashamed of their occupation. This was wise counsel.

❖ *Whenever we are making a major move, we are wise to seek and accept counsel from experienced, wise people. Not all who offer counsel fall into this category. We must be prudent in the choice of our counsellors.*

Conclusion: If the Lord does not return soon, all of us will make major moves of one sort or another. If we will stop and pray, not move rashly, seek guidance, and accept wise counsel, we will be more likely to make good moves that will please the Lord. I urge you to take these points seriously.

Song: Teach Me Thy Way, O Lord - 337

Making a Major Move

6 February 2022 PM – Genesis 46 – Ge2022 – Scott Childs

Introduction: In your lifetime, you will likely make several major moves. Those moves may include marrying a spouse, changing jobs, purchase of a house, moving to another area. During a major move, our difficulty is knowing what we ought to do.

Transition: In this chapter, we find four things that Jacob did while making his major move to Egypt. The same four things can help you and me when making any kind of move.

1. Jacob stopped to pray (v.1-4)

a. He began the trip stirred by emotions.

- 1) His closing words in Ge 45:28 were charged with emotional excitement. (Gen 45:28) "*And Israel said, It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die.*"
- 2) He travelled 40 km from Hebron to Beersheba. Beersheba was on the southern border of Canaan. Though Jacob was excited about seeing Joseph again, the thought of leaving Canaan brought fear to his heart. He knew God's promises to Grandfather Abraham and to Father Isaac that Canaan was to be their land. "*He would call up to mind the boding prophecy in Gen 15:13, that the descendants of Abraham were to be reduced to slavery, and suffer affliction in a foreign land for four hundred years.*" Ellicott, Commentary for English Readers. There was no better place to stop and commune with God than Beersheba, since it was there that both Abraham and Isaac had built altars to God (Gen 21:33; 26:25).

b. Fear drove Jacob to his knees.

- 1) Jacob stopped in Beersheba and offered sacrifices unto God.
- 2) That night, God spoke to Jacob (v.2-3).
- 3) God calmed his fears of going down into Egypt.
- 4) God assured him that He would make of his family a great nation.

❖ *We learn a very important principle from Jacob in this section.*

It is always wise to seek God's approval before we make a major decision in life. Rather than speaking to us in a night vision, God the Holy Spirit can give peace, direction and insight as we pray and carefully study of the Bible. God will never lead us contrary to his Word.

2. Jacob did not move rashly (v.5-27)

a. After God's assurance, he again moved on.

- 1) Jacob did not proceed until God had given him peace.
That is a gem for us to learn.
- 2) We must learn to wait on the Lord, but this can be very difficult when we are excited, anxious, worried or fearful. (Ps 27:14) "*Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.*" (Isa 40:31) "*But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.*"

b. Jacob's family advanced slowly.

- 1) It was a 350 km trip from Beersheba to Goshen in Egypt. Though the elderly and little ones road in wagons, most of them were walking, guiding sheep, goats, cattle and camels. The flocks needed pasture and water, which were difficult to find during the third year of the famine. Tents were pitched each evening for the night.
- 2) They formed a huge caravan. There were 67 male family members (plus Joseph and his two sons in Egypt, making 70) and many wives. Daughters and scores of little children from the 11 families were not counted. Hundreds, likely thousands, of servants accompanied them.
 - a) We remember that Abraham had 318 men servants trained to fight (Ge 14:14). He may have had at least that many women servants.
 - b) Isaac's possessions increased with God's blessings (Ge 25:11).
 - c) Jacob had many servants. Very likely, each of the 11 sons had scores of servants and maidens. This was a

wealthy family.

- 3) Travelling 350 km with this huge company was not an easy or speedy journey.

❖ *If you are an impatient person like me, this part of the trip can be frustrating. Instead of fretting and fussing, we ought to spend more time praying and meditating on Scripture.*

3. Jacob sought guidance of others (v.28-30)

a. He sent Judah ahead to get directions from Joseph.

- 1) As they neared Egypt, Jacob sent Judah ahead of the caravan. Judah had stepped up as the leader when they needed to seek food in Egypt the second time (Gen 34). Evidently, he was trustworthy and Jacob chose him to get directions.
- 2) Since the brothers had been there before, why did they need directions? With their huge family, scores of servants, and thousands of animals, they could not just enter the big city where Joseph lived.

b. This enabled Joseph to prepare to meet them (v.29).

- 1) He took his chariot to the place where they awaited. Judah likely rode in Joseph's chariot with him. If Manasseh and Ephraim were at home when Judah arrived, they probably begged dad to let them go in the chariot as well. What a ride that must have been. I can imagine that Joseph had his servant drive the chariot with speed.
- 2) Joseph *presented himself* to his father. Before the dust of the chariot settled, Joseph jumped from the chariot and stood open-armed before his awaiting father. They hugged and cried for a good long while. Joseph had longed for this moment for nearly 22 years.
- 3) Jacob was satisfied at last (v.30).

❖ *There will be times along the way as we make major moves in life when we will need guidance. When we are unsure, it is wise to seek guidance. If we are too proud to ask for help, we will often make poor choices.*