

JACOB! JACOB!

WHY DID GOD SEND JACOB AND HIS WHOLE FAMILY TO EGYPT?

God has perfect foreknowledge. God knew that for four hundred years the children of Israel would be enslaved and mistreated. God knew that the children of Israel would toil in the hot Sun and become the property of the offspring of Ham, the burnt one.



1

If God loved Jacob and his children, why would he do such a thing? For surely it is written:

“Jacob I have loved. Esau I have hated.” (Romans 9:13; Malachi 1:2-3)

This is the account of Jacob going down to Egypt:

“Israel said ‘I am convinced! My son Joseph is still alive. I will go see him before I die.’” (Gen. 45:28)

“So Israel set out with all that was his and when he reached Beersheba he offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. And God spoke to Israel in a vision at night and said ‘Jacob! Jacob!’ ‘Here I AM’ he replied. ‘I AM the God of your father’ he said.

‘Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you into a great nation there.’

¹ Source of image: www.worldaffairsjournal.org

I will go down to Egypt with you, and I will surely bring you back again. And Joseph's own hand will close your eyes'. (Genesis 46:1-4)

Why did God send Jacob to Egypt? Why did he not warn Jacob of the enslavement of his people?

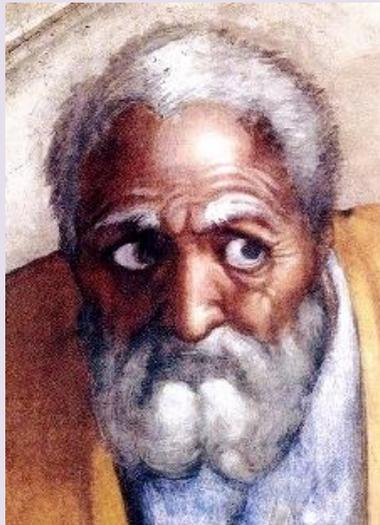
God had already spoken to Abram and said:

"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." (Genesis 15:13-14)

Jacob stopped in Beersheeba to offer sacrifices. Did he recall God spoke to Abram concerning his descendants being enslaved and mistreated for four hundred years? Did Jacob stop because he was concerned Egypt might be the place of enslavement? Or, did Jacob begin to doubt himself and to suspect his sons were lying to him about Joseph being alive in Egypt?

Why did God address him as Jacob? Jacob means 'Leg Puller' or 'Heel'. By some translations: 'Supplanter', 'Usurper', one who takes what is not his. Or: 'Deceiver'; 'Liar'. Why did God call him by his birth name?

"Deceiver! Deceiver!" or "Liar! Liar!"



Source: Michaelangelo's Sistine Chapel

Didn't the man that wrestled with Jacob tell him he would no longer be called Jacob?

"Then the man said 'Let me go, for it is daybreak'. Jacob replied 'I will not go unless you bless me'. The man asked him 'What is your name?' 'Jacob' he answered. Then the man said 'your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome.'" (Genesis 32:26-28)

His name was changed to Israel, which mean 'Prince of God' (KJV). If his name was Israel, why then did the God of his father Isaac address him as Jacob?

Let's review the events of Jacob's life until he reached Beersheeba. Perhaps it will give us a clue why God would send Jacob and his whole family to Egypt.

SOJOURNS OF JACOB

Rebekah his mother became pregnant. Two babies jostled in her womb. The LORD said:

“Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger.” (Genesis 25:23)

The first child she delivered was hairy and red so they called him Esau (which means 'hairy'). After Esau was born his brother came out, with his hand grasping Esau's heel; so he was named Jacob (which means 'grasps the heel'; figuratively 'he deceives'; the same sense in which we say 'someone is pulling your leg' to mean they are fooling you).

Esau was the elder. According to the prophecy that meant he would serve Jacob. However, according to custom the elder received a double share of the inheritance and was entitled to be the head of the family when the father died. Esau was in line for the birthright (inheritance) and the blessing (authority).

Jacob was crafty. One day Esau came in very tired from the field and famished for food. Jacob bought the birthright (share of the inheritance) from Esau for a pot of red stew (or lentils):

“He said to Jacob ‘Quick, let me have some of that red stew! I’m famished!’ Jacob replied ‘First sell me your birthright’. ‘Look, I am about to die’ Esau said. ‘What good is the birthright to me?’ But Jacob said ‘Swear to me first’. So he swore an oath to him, selling his birthright to Jacob.” (Genesis 25:30-33)



² Source of image: doubleportioninheritance.blogspot.com

So far, this crafty business was turning a profit for Jacob. He had scooped all the inheritance from his father Isaac and Esau had nothing!

There was one thing left for Jacob to get from Esau and that was the blessing.

One day Isaac told Esau 'I am an old man and do not know the day of my death'. He told him to go into the field to hunt some wild game and bring it back to him so he could give Esau his blessing. Rebekah was listening so she told Jacob to get some young goats from the flock and bring them to her to cook for Isaac. Rebekah took some of Esau's clothes and dressed Jacob in them. She also covered the smooth parts of Jacob's arms and neck with goat skins. Jacob brought his father bread, wine, and the cooked young goat his mother prepared.

"Are you really my son Esau? Isaac asked. 'I am' he replied. Then his father said, 'My son, bring me some of your game to eat, so that I may give you my blessing. Jacob brought it to him and he ate; and he brought some wine and he drank. Then his father Isaac said to him 'Come here, my son, and kiss me.' So he went to him and kissed him. When Isaac caught the scent of his clothes, he blessed him and said 'Ah, the smell of my son is like the smell of a field that the Lord has blessed...'"



After Isaac had finished blessing him and Jacob had scarcely left his father's presence, his brother Esau came in from hunting. He too prepared some tasty food and brought it to him.

"His father asked him 'Who are you?' 'I am your son, your firstborn Esau'. Isaac trembled violently and said 'Who was it then that hunted game and brought it to me? I ate it just before you came and I blessed him – and indeed he will be blessed!' (Genesis 27:32-33)

Esau was consoling himself with plans to kill him after Isaac died. Rebekah advised Jacob to flee for his life and he fled the country. Inheritance and authority in the family was worth nothing if you were dead!

Jacob stayed in Paddan Aram with the relatives of Rebekah for around twenty-one years. While he was there he married two wives and had eleven children. He decided to return to his homeland.

At the Jabbok River Jacob wrestled a man, whom Jacob believed was God, who changed his name to Israel. After crossing the river **Esau came to meet him with four hundred men on horseback**. Fearing the worst, Jacob divided his family into two. This was unnecessary because he was greeted warmly by Esau



3

Following the reunion, Israel found a secluded spot at Sukkoth and sheltered his animals there, a safe distance out of Esau's sight. When Israel felt the danger had passed, Israel moved to Shechem in the midst of a land full of foreigners, albeit ones who knew and respected his grandfather Abraham.

Soon after his arrival, the son of a **local king raped his daughter Dinah** but claimed he loved her. Israel pleaded with his sons not to take revenge. His sons made a deal for the son of the local king to marry Dinah on the condition all the men in the town would be circumcised. While they were in pain, **Israel's sons killed every single man in the town**, laid waste to the place, and looted whatever they could carry.

Israel moved to Bethel. On the way his beloved **Rachel died** outside of Bethlehem giving birth to Benjamin. Israel moved again to Migdal Eder and **his son Reuben was caught in bed with his concubine Billha**, mother of two of his sons Dan and Naphtali. Finally Israel reached Mamre (Hebron). His father **Isaac died** and was buried.

While Israel was wandering around not sure of what to do with his life, his brother Esau had established a kingdom in the hill country to the South and East of Canaan in a place called Seir – which means 'Prince'⁴. **Esau was a wealthy powerful king** and had many sons through marriage with Canaanite women.

At a later time, in the vicinity of Shechem again, Israel sent young Joseph on a mission to report back on the flock his older brothers were shepherding. **His brothers threw Joseph into a pit** and would have killed him but the opportunity arose to sell him for 20 pieces of silver to a caravan of Arab traders going down to Egypt.

³ Source of image: betteroffread.com

⁴ Seir means 'Prince' in ancient Egyptian. It is related to the star Sirius in Canis Major. From this word we get the English title 'Sir' with which we greet people of higher station. In Hebrew Seir means 'rough' or shoddy coated, a goat.

Following this **Judah decided to rebel**. He left his brothers and went to live with locals in another community. There he married a Canaanite girl named Shua. All his sons born through Shua died. Years later, by deception, Judah slept with one of the widows (Tamar) of the sons that had been born from Shua. From Tamar came twin boys.

Israel's situation was miserable. His reputation in the local community was damaged. He could not bring himself to trust his closest relative. His wives bickered and fought. His sons treated him with disrespect and would not keep his command. His beloved wife Rachel died a painful death. His eldest son was immoral. His favorite child Joseph was killed at a tender age by wild animals (or so he thought). His next favorite son Benjamin had no mother to love him. He suffered with grandchildren of mixed race who would be ostracised within their family. Woe upon woe. On top of all these things, **there was a famine in the land**.

So now we are back at Beersheeba. Israel has heard a report from his sons that Joseph is alive. He prays for guidance. The Lord answers him saying:

“Jacob! Jacob!” (his birth name – a painful reminder of the sins of his youth: Liar! Liar!)

“Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you into a great nation there. I will go down to Egypt with you, and I will surely bring you back again.”

SO WHY DID GOD SEND THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL TO EGYPT?

God packed the whole tribe of Israel and sent them off to Egypt under the protection of Joseph. Four hundred years later they were the lowest slaves of a cruel Egyptian Pharaoh. They toiled and sweated in the agony of slavery under a hot Sun. All of Israel was in the possession of the sons of Ham, the burnt race.

So, why did God send Israel and all his children down to Egypt to ultimately become slaves?

Was it because of all the sins and mess-ups of their lives while living in Caanan?

The murder of the Shechemites? Israel's sons selling their brother into slavery?

Incest in the family? Marriage to Canaanites? Did God give up on this wasp's nest of a family?

The answer is none of these things.

Jacob put on Esau's clothes and proclaimed under solemn oath "I am Esau". He lied to his father's face to steal the blessing from Esau. **What Jacob did not realise is when he took Esau's blessing he also took his brothers' destiny**. Jacob was renamed Israel at the Jabbok which means "Prince of God"(KJV). **Jacob's destiny was to be a ruler and a prince**. Esau's name means "Hairy". Esau was a rough fellow who loved to hunt and kill game. **Esau's destiny was to be a slave in Egypt**. **When Jacob took Esau's clothes and proclaimed Esau's name, the destinies were exchanged**. Esau became a prince and a king. **Jacob and all his children became slaves in Egypt. That is why God did not address him as Israel – that title now belonged to Esau in the country of Seir – 'The Prince'. The deed was done!**

When did Esau figure out what happened? Our guess is not long after Jacob fled. Why else would Esau send a guard of four hundred horsemen to meet Jacob? Wasn't this a clever hint he knew Jacob would fulfill God's prophecy to Abram that his people would be slaves in a country not their own for four hundred years? Why didn't Esau kill Jacob when he had the chance? Why did Esau warmly greet him, if in fact he had been sorely wronged? **Esau's behavior indicates he felt he was on the winning end of the bargain.** His destiny was to become a Prince and Jacob's destiny was to become a slave. **Jacob stole the blessing, but he also stole the curse.** Jacob had tried to raise the issue of a curse with his mother, but Rebekah lied to him:

“What if my father touches me? I would appear to be tricking him and would bring down a curse on myself rather than a blessing.” His mother said to him, **‘My son, let the curse fall on me. Just do as I say’** (Genesis 27:12-13)

Now we know how Jacob became a deceiver. His mother!

How could Esau be so smug? What did he know that Jacob did not know? Esau reckoned that a promise of God was of greater effect than man's guile. **Man may arrange affairs to set himself in the position of best advantage, but God's will settles everything.** While Jacob was scheming to accumulate material things (the inheritance) and to climb the social ladder (the father's authority in the family), Esau reasoned those things don't matter if God is against you. **Was not Esau a spiritual man? Evidently he believed the prophets (his grandfather Abraham) concerning the coming slavery. Esau sold his inheritance for a pot of lentils.** Esau demonstrated he wasn't trusting in man (his human father) – he was trusting in God. Esau knew at the end of his days he was going to die, so earthly things did not matter a great deal.

“Look, I am about to die’ Esau said. ‘What good is the birthright to me?’” (Genesis 25:32)

Pity Jacob was so focussed on material things he did not learn spiritual things from his older brother!

How the words of Esau must have caused his father Isaac to ponder. Is this what prompted Isaac to be in a rush to bless Esau? ⁵ He recognized his spirituality. Do we hear an echo of Esau's words in Isaac's words?

“I am an old man; and I do not know the day of my death” (Genesis 27:2)

Ironies of ironies: **the one God hated became loved and the one God loved became hated,**

“Jacob I have loved. Esau I have hated.” (Romans 9:13; Malachi 1:2-3)

What is the moral of the story?

Please read on...

⁵ The blessing was rushed – It took place decades before Isaac actually died. If Isaac was truly spiritual and of a mind to prefer the true Esau, he would have realised the best way to bless the true Esau was to allow the curse to fall on Jacob when he pretended to be Esau. See our other paper **“I Am Esau”** which presents evidence Isaac knew without a doubt it was not the true Esau who he blessed. We propose Isaac and Rebekah were both in on the deception – but for different reasons. Rebekah thought Jacob was the winner. Isaac knew he was not. We invite you to read our paper and judge for yourself.

HOW CAN YOU OBTAIN THE BLESSING OF GOD?

Let us suppose for a minute, dear reader, that you are a spiritual person like Esau.

You know that the blessing of God is worth more than the blessing of man – even the blessing of your father.

Esau relied on another person taking the curse that was supposed to fall on him.

The Bible says the whole world is under a curse:

“The earth dries up and withers, the world languishes and withers, the exalted of the earth languish. The earth is defiled by its people; they have disobeyed the laws, violated the statutes and broken the everlasting covenant; therefore a curse consumes the earth; its people must bear their guilt.”

(Isa. 24:4-6)

Why are the people of the earth guilty? All are guilty because all have sinned against God.

This is the standard God holds up for our relationship to him and to each other:

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and with all your strength.” (Deut. 6:5)

“And love your neighbor as yourself.” (Lev. 9:18)

Can any of us say we have lived those commands every moment of every day of our lives?

No, we have fallen short of God’s standard. We are guilty before God, our Maker.

Who will take the curse that is supposed to fall on us?

“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law [God’s standard] by becoming a curse for us.

For it is written: ‘Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.’ [The Cross]” (Galatians 3:13)

How do we receive the blessing of God?

“He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit” (Galatians 3:14)

How can we know we have received the blessing?

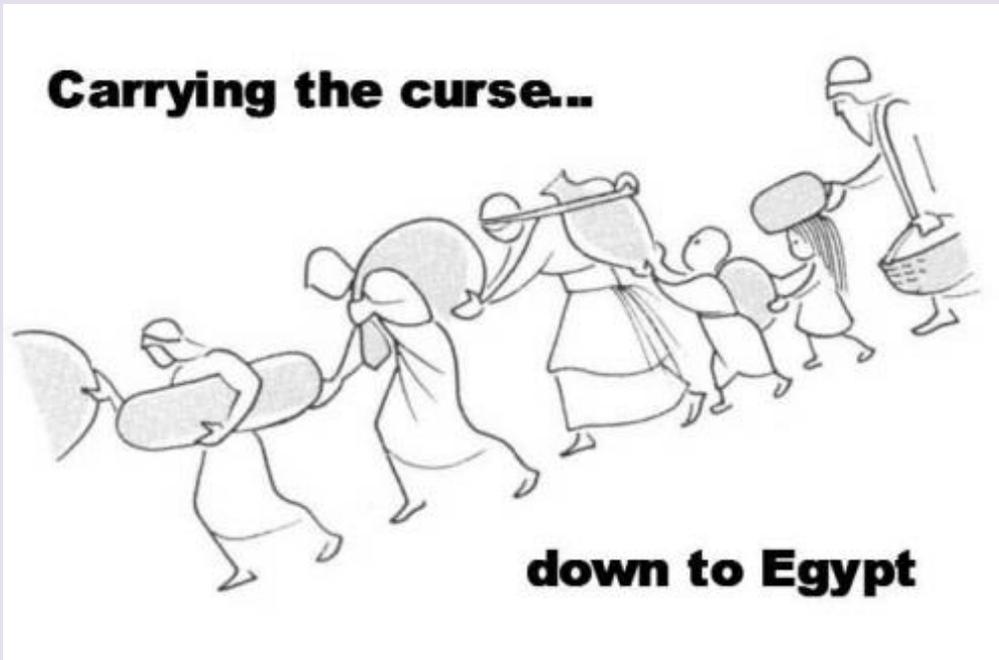
“This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.” (Rom. 3:22)

“If you confess with your mouth ‘Jesus is Lord’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead – you will be saved.” (Rom. 10:9)

Yes, it is that simple. Tell God you believe in Jesus by confessing out loud so all heaven can witness it.

Please read on...

JACOB BEARS THE SIN



SO ESAU MAY ENJOY THE BLESSING...



JESUS OFFERS YOU AN EXCHANGE OF DESTINIES

What did the Lord say to Jacob?

“I will go down to Egypt with you, and I will surely bring you back again.” (Genesis 46:4)

We are all sinners before an angry God.

We are all schemers, deceivers and liars – we are all like Jacob.

Our destiny is hell.

The Son of God came down from heaven.

Being found in likeness as a man, he humbled himself and obeyed God. He was found without sin.

The destiny of Jesus was to return directly to heaven.

But Jesus died on a Cross. He took the punishment of sin that we deserved.

Jesus put on the clothes of our sin, the rags of our lies, and God judged that sin on the Cross.

Now, if we approach God confessing to Him the Name of Jesus,

God will put the clothes of Jesus upon us, which is the blessing of Abraham: righteousness.

God raised Jesus from the dead.

God will raise us from the dead.

Jacob and all of Israel went down to Egypt and became the lowest slaves.

He raised that nation from the dead and they returned to Canaan.

And the nation of Edom, the descendants of Esau, was destroyed.

This is proof the power of God is greater than all.

Put your trust in Jesus.

If you are a sinner, come to the Cross, confess your sin, and exchange destinies with Jesus.

Before it is too late!

For all sinners are doomed to go down to Egypt (hell)!

Unless they exchange destinies with the Righteous One

JESUS CARRIED OUR SINS



SO WE COULD RECEIVE HIS BLESSING...

