



**Sermon Notes: Steve Stanis,
“Jacob in Egypt”**

06 July 2025

Readings: Genesis 46-47, Corinthians 1:18-22, John 14:23-27

Introduction: The Personal and the Transcendent

One of the hardest yet most beautiful truths of our faith is this: the God of the Bible is both transcendent and personal.

When I say transcendent, I mean He is beyond and separate from the world and human experience, existing outside of, and superior to, the limitations of the world we know.

He is above space and time, utterly sovereign and yet he is also intimately present. He rules the universe, but he also meets with us in our fears, speaks to our hearts, and holds our hands through the darkest valleys. And the more we follow him, the more we learn how essential it is that both these truths hold together. To pull them apart is to lose the revelation that is God.

To see God only as personal but not transcendent reduces him to a kindly companion who cannot save.

To see him only as transcendent but not personal leaves us with a cold, unapproachable deity who may be powerful but is not loving.

Our text this morning, *Jacob in Egypt*, gives us a profound window into this dual reality of God's nature. In Genesis 46–47, we meet a very old man at a turning point. A man who has loved and lost, who has known God's promises, but who has also known confusion, grief, and long waiting. And at this hinge moment of his life, God speaks again.

And in that voice, Jacob hears the heart of a personal God and glimpses the hand of the sovereign one.

Part 1: The Backstory of a Broken Heart (Genesis 45:25–46:4)

The story opens with news Jacob could hardly believe: *Joseph is alive*. This is the same Joseph whom Jacob once clothed in a coat of many colours. The same Joseph who was the son of his beloved Rachel. The same Joseph, Jacob had mourned as dead for over twenty years. Now, after famine has ravaged the land, Jacob's other sons return from Egypt not just with grain but with this impossible story.

Joseph is alive. And not only alive, but the second most powerful man in Egypt.

The old man's heart stops. He doesn't believe it until he sees the wagons. Until he sees the evidence.

And then he believes.

But here's the tension: Jacob has spent his life trusting that the land of Canaan is not just where he lives, but where God has promised blessing. Remember Genesis 12:1-3

The Lord had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you.

"I will make you into a great nation,
and I will bless you;
I will make your name great,
and you will be a blessing.
I will bless those who bless you,
and whoever curses you I will curse;
and all peoples on earth
will be blessed through you."

Canaan is the land given to Abraham, Isaac, and to Jacob himself. And now, in order to see his son, he must leave it. He must go down into Egypt. Egypt, the land of foreign gods. Egypt, the place Abraham once fled from. Egypt, the place that in the generations to come will enslave Jacob's descendants. It is no small thing to leave the land of promise. It is no small thing to walk away from the place where God has revealed himself before. And so, Jacob stops in Beersheba. He offers sacrifices. He waits on the Lord.

And God, who is both above space and time *and* present in the cry of one man's fear, answers.

From (*Genesis 46:3-4*)

"I am God, the God of your father.
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.

And Joseph's own hand will close your eyes."

These few lines are packed with reassurance. God meets Jacob's fear with three personal promises:

1. "I will make you into a great nation there."

God hasn't forgotten the covenant. He hasn't misplaced his plan. Egypt is not outside the boundary of blessing.

2. "I will go down to Egypt with you."

This is the miracle of God's personal presence. He is not confined to a place or a land. Wherever Jacob goes, God goes too.

3. "Joseph's own hand will close your eyes."

God sees the longing of Jacob's heart; not just the large-scale promise of a nation, but the personal hope of a father's reunion with his son which will bring peace at the end of his life. Jacob, the deceiver-turned-pilgrim, obeys. He goes.

Part 2: God's Sovereignty in the Midst of Suffering (Genesis 47:1–12)

Jacob arrives in Egypt with all his household, seventy in total. This is no mighty nation yet. But it is a seed. A remnant.

In chapter 47, we see the extraordinary power of Joseph on full display. He secures land for his family. He ensures Pharaoh's favour. He arranges provision in the midst of famine. His political genius is a gift from God and it is a vital part of the unfolding plan of salvation.

But if we zoom out, we begin to see more. We know where this story is heading. Egypt will not always be a safe refuge. The children of Israel will be oppressed. The Pharaoh who now welcomes them will be replaced by one who forgets Joseph.

And in the generations to come, God will raise up Moses, send plagues, part the Red Sea, and draw his people out with a mighty hand. This is the wonder of how God works behind the scenes. He brings Jacob to Egypt not just for a family reunion, but to begin the next part of His great rescue plan. This journey isn't the end of the story, it's the beginning of something bigger. It's the ground where God will grow a greater future for His people.

From seventy people to a nation.

From slavery to deliverance.

From wilderness to the Promised Land.

From law to gospel.

Jacob does not live to see all of this. But he walks in faith.

And the story he walks by faith, becomes the foundation for the gospel of Jesus, the birth of the church, and the unfolding of God's rescue plan that is still gathering people to Himself, now and forever.

Part 3: The Seal of the Spirit and the Advocate Who Never Dies (2 Corinthians 1:18-22)

Fast forward many centuries from Jacob's journey to Egypt, and we hear the apostle Paul affirm a profound truth about God's faithfulness:

From (*2 Corinthians 1:20–22*)

"For no matter how many promises God has made, they are 'Yes' in Christ.

And so through him the 'Amen' is spoken by us to the glory of God.

Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.”

All of God’s promises, including the ones he made to Jacob, to Abraham, to all of Israel, find their ultimate fulfilment in Christ.

They are not cancelled by famine, not derailed by Pharaoh, not undone by exile.

They are “Yes” and “Amen” in Jesus. And not only are they fulfilled, but they are also *sealed*. The Holy Spirit himself becomes the down payment of all God intends to do.

He is the personal presence of the living God, testifying to our adoption, empowering us for faithfulness, comforting us in our struggles, and guiding us in truth.

But there’s more.

Genesis 46–47 gives us a glimpse of a figure who *points forward* to Jesus in a powerful way: **Joseph the advocate**.

An advocate is a person who speaks, pleads, or acts on behalf of another, especially to defend, support, or secure their good.

Joseph goes before Pharaoh to represent his family.

He speaks up for them, ensures their safety, and provides for their needs.

He uses his position, power, and relationship with Pharaoh not for himself, but to stand in the gap for others. Joseph says in essence:

“These are my people.
They are humble shepherds.
They will not trouble you.
They are trustworthy.
Let them settle in the land.”

Joseph is Israel’s *advocate* before Pharaoh. And as long as Joseph lives, Israel is safe. As long as their advocate remains, they flourish. But what happens when the advocate is gone?

We are told in **Exodus 1:8–11**:

“Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph.
And he said to his people, ‘Behold, the people of Israel are too many and too mighty for us. Come, let us deal shrewdly with them...’ Therefore, they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with heavy burdens.”

Joseph dies. The memory of the advocate fades. And in that vacuum, fear takes root. Oppression grows. Slavery begins. This is not just history; it is *a mirror* of something deeper. Joseph’s advocacy, though brave and wise, was not eternal. It had an expiration date. And when it expired, his people suffered.

Which is why we need a *greater* advocate.

One who lives forever.

One who will never be forgotten.

One who will never cease to stand in our place.

And this is what we have in Jesus.

“We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. (*1 John 2:1*)

Jesus is the eternal Advocate. He stands before the Father on our behalf, not just once, but eternally. He defends us, intercedes for us, and secures our place in God's family by His own righteousness and sacrifice. And through the Holy Spirit, that advocacy is not distant or abstract. It is alive within you:

- When you are weary and uncertain, Jesus stands on your behalf.
- When the future feels unclear, Jesus strengthens you in the present.
- When the pressures of life feel too heavy, Jesus sustains and protects you.
- When you feel like the world forgets you or misunderstands you, your eternal advocate does not.

Unlike Joseph, he will never be forgotten.

Unlike Joseph, he will never die again.

His intercession continues forever.

And in him, we are secure.

Part 4: Peace for the Pilgrim Heart (John 14:23–27)

Jesus, on the night before his death, spoke words of comfort to his disciples, words that sound strikingly familiar to God's promise to Jacob.

From (*John 14:23, 27*)

“Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching.

My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them...

Peace, I leave with you; my peace I give you.

I do not give to you as the world gives.

Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”

Do not be afraid, says God to Jacob.

Do not be afraid, says God to Joseph.

Do not be afraid, says Jesus to his disciples.

Why?

Because God is with us.

Because Jesus is present by his Spirit.

Because we are never alone, not in Egypt, not in exile, not even in death.

Jacob dies in Egypt, but not abandoned. He dies in peace, surrounded by family, with Joseph at his side. And even in death, God is faithful. Joseph will eventually carry Jacob's bones back to the land of promise.

Conclusion:

The story of Jacob in Egypt is not just about survival in a foreign land. It's about trust in the God who leads us where we do not expect to go.

We do not always get to choose our Egypt's, those unfamiliar, uncertain places in life. But we are never sent there alone.

God is not only with us; He is for us.

And in Jesus, we have an advocate who never sleeps, never fades, never forgets. One who stands before the throne and calls us by name.

So here is the challenge for this week:

- Walk as people who are not abandoned.
- Pray as those who are heard.
- Speak as those who are spoken for.
- And trust, not in the path you see, but in the Advocate who goes ahead of you.

You may not know what lies ahead.

But you know who stands there waiting.

Go with courage.

Live with hope.

The Advocate lives.

And He is yours.

Amen.