

Jacob into Egypt

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[0 : 0 0] as we come into this 46th chapter we find that the happy news that Jacob has received that his former favourite son Joseph is alive he is master of Egypt and now as he said at the end of chapter 45 it is enough Joseph my son is yet alive I will go and see him before I die Israel took his journey with all that he had and came to Beersheba and offered sacrifices unto the God of his father Isaac despite it being his heart's desire to see Joseph again Jacob was above all else a man of faith a patriarch of the covenant line whose love for the Lord the God of his fathers superseded all else he knew he was a man in God's hands he'd known that from way back in the days of his youth there was nothing in Jacob's character especially to commend him over against his brother

Esau but he was the chosen one of the Lord and the Lord directed him and taught him and caused him by experience to learn that he who had been a deceiver would himself often be deceived but he who would turn to the Lord would find that the Lord was always his helper and his strength so he was a man who for decades now had been above all else a servant of the God of his fathers and although he was now come these 30 miles south from Hebron where his encampment had been to Beersheba in the far south of what we would now call the Holy Land and though it had been on his route to Egypt before he leaves the land of promise he must in a sense pause here he would not leave it all together without the blessing of the Lord now Beersheba of course had been blessed to both his grandfather Abraham and to his father Isaac in Genesis chapter 21 we read for example verse 33

Abraham planted a grove a grove of trees in Beersheba and it became almost as it were an open air temple where he called on the name of the Lord the everlasting God and he sojourned the Philistines land many days and we see also how Isaac himself in chapter 26 of Genesis from verse 23 when he went up from thence to Beersheba and the Lord appeared unto him that is to Isaac the same night and said I am the God of Abraham thy father fear not for I am with thee and will bless thee and multiply thy seed for my servant Abraham's sake and he built an altar there and called upon the name of the Lord and pitched his tent there and there Isaac's servants digged a well and later on of course in that chapter we find they find a water in the well and he calls it Beersheba which is the well of the covenant so here the well of the author of the covenant there so it has been blessed to Abraham it has been blessed to Isaac it's a place where

Isaac made an altar and worshipped the Lord and now Jacob before he leaves the Holy Land he would seek God's face again and there might perhaps be some grounds for anxiety on Jacob's part in a previous time of famine if you remember the Lord had explicitly said to his own father Isaac we go back to the beginning of chapter 26 verse 2 the Lord appeared on him and said go not down into Egypt dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of soldier in this land that is the land of Canaan and I will be with thee and will bless thee for unto thee and unto thy seed I will give all these countries and I will perform the oath which I swear unto Abraham my father I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven and will give unto thy seed all these countries and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed because that Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge and my commandments my statutes and my laws so we have this time of blessing on the one hand in Beersheba but also where God has warned

Isaac not to go down into Egypt so Jacob might have a wee bit of hindsight and say okay I want to go down I want to see Joseph but dare I go down without the Lord's blessing in the previous time of famine and remember this is a time of famine Isaac had said the Lord had said Isaac not to go down to Egypt so now Jacob seeks the Lord's guidance and this is a prime example as we see these verses 1 to 4 of God's perfect timing God's timing I won't say it's everything but it's a significant part of the outworking of his plan of salvation and grace Abraham could not inherit Canaan in his lifetime because as we would read in chapter 15 of Genesis the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full in other words God knew what these pagan nations would do he knew how wicked they would become but they were not yet at that stage of wickedness if God was to dispossess them and give everything in the land to Abram's descendants apart from the fact that they were so few in fact

[5 : 28] Abram hadn't got any at that point then it would be unjust on God's part because they had not yet fulfilled all the evil that they were going to by the time Israel came in to possess the land the land was if you like stinking to high heaven with iniquity when God specifies in so many of his laws in Leviticus in Numbers in Deuteronomy the evils which Israel is not to commit he says because these things these abominations these wickedness have all the nations of the land committed which is why the land spewed them out and why the Lord had no hesitation in cleansing the land of all that idolatry and wickedness and depravity and to settle his own people in the land that it should be a holy land and a holy people dedicated to the Lord so timing was important God could not give Abram the land just there and there the iniquity of the Ammonites was not yet through

Isaac could not go down into Egypt because at that time it might perhaps have lessened the whole of himself or his family upon the God of his fathers we don't know for whatever reason God said not to go down so Isaac did not go down he could not go but Jacob is now told that he should go God speaks to him and says here am I I am God the God of thy father verse 3 fear not to go down into Egypt for I will there make of thee a great nation I will go down with thee into Egypt and I will also surely bring thee up again and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes now this is a reference to not only will you see Joseph but he will outlive you you know you don't have to worry about him being taken away from you in death this is a reference to a most beloved relative closing the eyes in death so that when somebody physically died their eyes might be fixed open and the nearest loved one there at the time of their departing would close their eyes put their hand on their eyes and close them this is what it means that Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes

God's timing is everything it is always perfect and always to a purpose you know we might say to ourselves well at this stage why didn't God send Jesus then why didn't he just come in the midst of all his people of Israel and yet we are taught in Galatians chapter 4 when the fullness of time was come God sent forth his son made of a woman made under the law of course the law hadn't been given yet in the patriarchal time to redeem them that were under the law that we might receive the adoption of sons when the fullness of time was come we may be inclined to charge God foolishly and to say well Lord you promised this or you promised that and we don't see it yet and I prayed about this and you haven't given me it or you haven't answered my prayer you haven't done this you haven't done that and in our worst moments and our least-believing moments we may be inclined to shake our fist in heaven not perhaps out of defiance but perhaps out of a broken heart because we have waited and we think we are patiently born and yet nothing seems to have come and we don't understand why and we don't understand why the Lord seems to have left us he has not left us but if the answer to what we plead for on a way is not yet clear it will be because God's time is not yet his timing is highly significant it will always be as we say not absolutely everything of his salvation work but it is key it is central the time was not yet for Abraham the time was not yet for Isaac but the time is now for Jacob go down now into Egypt

I will go down with thee into Egypt verse 4 so Jacob comes to sacrifice at Beersheba and to pray bearing in mind that as we see here true prayer is neither the work of a mere moment we can't just close our eyes drop to our knees and rattle off a few words and say let's read all my prayers that's not really prayer is it that's just reciting things or just rattling through a few words it's just taking a box it's not nourishing a relationship with the Lord Jacob presumably continues in a spirit of prayer throughout that night nor is prayer ideally a mere one way speaking of us to God Jacob here is prepared and ready to receive guidance and a word from the Lord and this too is part of prayer remember waiting upon the Lord it's not just

I speak I say what I want I give up my petitions and that's me done free stop if I'm really engaging with the Lord and I'll not only give him outpourings of my heart but I'll wait in quietness upon him and I will continue in that spirit of prayer even when outward prayer or the mechanical necessity may have ceased and I have to carry on with duties or tasks or work as we all must if we continue in a spirit of prayer then we are ready to receive whatever the Lord may tell us or however he may speak to us through another person through what seems a throw away phrase through a Latin in the Bible or a Psalm or whatever it may be if we are ready to receive from the Lord then he will speak back to us this too is part of prayer waiting upon the Lord so we may safely suggest that Jacob's worship of Beersheba would have included firstly thanksgiving sacrifices of praise thanksgiving for the incredible transformation in his family circumstances you know until his sons came back as far as he knew

[11 : 46] Joseph had already been dead for 22 years Simeon was a prisoner in Egypt the governor of Egypt thought they were all spies Benjamin had gone down and for all he knew he would never see Benjamin or perhaps any of his sons again things were just about as black as they could be and then his sons come back hallelujah his sons come back with Simeon with Benjamin but not only that Joseph is alive and he is governor of Egypt and he wants him to come down and he'll look after him and manage him it's just too good almost to be true and yet he goes down and he gives God the thanks and the praise here at Beersheba thanksgiving for this almost unbelievable transformation in his family circumstances and it would have been a transformation in a day if you think about it there would have been a day when Jacob woke up in the morning in his tent still thinking the world was as black as black would be that would be the day when in the fullness of time or whether the afternoon or the evening the camels would appear or the asses or whatever on the horizon oh good they're coming back how many of them oh they're all there praise the

Lord and there's Simeon too and there's little Benjamin oh joy and then the news and then the riches and all the gifts and in that day his life would have been transformed God my friends can transform your life in a day in a moment in an hour that which seems to be a lifetime to us is a work of but a moment to the Lord of whom a thousand years and as a watch in the night a day as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day God can change your life God can transform your life however dark or hopeless or empty or fearful it may seem the Lord can change it in the blink of an eye there is nothing God cannot do thanksgiving would have been a significant part of Jacob's worship he would have Beersheba secondly petition petition for the presence of

God to go with him this momentous journey because remember this journey he's 130 at this stage this journey would very likely be his last he is always certainly not unmindful that his favourite wife Rachel died when they were on a journey when all the upheaval and all the constant moving and juggling and all the hassle of journey and all the upheaval would have taken its toll and he is an old man and he is frail and he has lived so much in his life with grief and although that grief has now turned into joy it has taken its toll upon him this will almost certainly be the very last journey he ever takes certainly it will be the greatest journey of any size or moment that he will take and the sacrifices which remember sacrifices in the old testament symbolic of taking away sin that is why the sacrificial beast dies its blood is shed it is the sacrificial victim in place of those who deserve to die for their sin because it is the token of the ultimate sacrifice for sin the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world so in petition and offering up these sacrifices he is seeking forgiveness of all his sins in the past perhaps we might have to acknowledge that the indulging the spoiling of Joseph when he was a young boy has not in a small way contributed to the enmity of his brothers and created humanly speaking the situation whereby he was sold into Egypt in the first case

Jacob is not guiltless in the situation that arose he spoiled him he indulged his youngest he showed favouritism he was extremely foolish in the upbringing of his children and the difference that he made between them and no doubt he has had plenty of time to be conscious of that and to consider that he seeks to put all these sins behind him and he desires to take no old sins with him on this journey but also it would be by way of worship consultation there was still a legitimate question as to whether or not he should go down into Egypt at this time yes he wants to he wants to see Joseph he's desperate to see Joseph but he will do nothing without the Lord he has begun his journey but he has not yet left the promised land he has come to the shrine of his father of Sinear Sheba and here now he offers up sacrifices to the

God of his father Isaac he seeks consultation with the Lord God's guidance God's will there is still a question whether or not he should go down to Egypt in this time would it be a forsaking of his covenant responsibilities would it be going against what God had said to his father Isaac he sought God's permission and of course God's blessing too God's blessing was needed God's presence was needed not only for going down into Egypt but also for coming back out of it again remember what Moses cried to the Lord on Mount Sinai in Exodus 33 verse 15 and what he says when God says there my presence shall go with thee and I will give thee rest and he said if thy presence go not with me carry us not up hence don't take us up out of Sinai don't take us up out of the desert if you don't go with us Lord it's better not to enter into the promised land itself if we don't have the Lord with us it's better not to go down into Egypt if we don't have the Lord with us it's better not to set foot into next week if we don't have the Lord with us it is definitely better not to enter eternity if we don't have the Lord with us whatever step of any journey we take we dare not take it without the Lord with us if thy presence go not with me carry us not up hence

[18:14] Moses cried and here is Joseph whom we might legitimately say is seeking God's permission and blessing for the very fact of going down into Egypt and God knows that this is part of his burden because he says fear not to go down into Egypt clearly there is some element of fear and anxiety there for I will there make of thee a great nation I will go down with thee into Egypt and I will also surely bring thee up again and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes now God answers Jacob comfortably and compassionately those who desire to maintain their relationship with God and take the pains to do so you know you would think Joseph Jacob would just be jumping in the wagons and can't wait to get down to Egypt but he pauses here he pauses here not just for rest he pauses here to worship he is seeking to maintain this relationship with the

Lord and those who will take the pains to do so will find that the relationship never fails on God's side we may often fall away or grow cold in our love for the Lord but the relationship never fails on his side if we speak to him as we ought he will not fail to speak to us and if we seek the Lord's guidance we ought to expect an answer we ought to expect God to lead and guide us and speak to us by whatever means he may choose to use there is no point asking the Lord's help if we do not expect him to answer there is no point just speaking into thin air unless we believe trust and expect that the Lord will answer our profitions Psalm 5 verse 3 Lord thou shalt early hear my voice I early will direct my prayer to thee and looking up an answer will expect Jacob expects an answer from the

Lord and here he receives it Matthew Henry puts it this way a commentator he says those that go whether God sends them shall certainly have God with them and that is enough to secure them wherever they are and to silence their fears we may safely venture even into Egypt if God go down with us but when the Lord says I will surely bring thee up again come on just a minute Jacob died down in Egypt so surely he didn't bring him up again well it's fulfilled in two senses one is that we know from the end of Genesis that Jacob's mortal remains are brought up and buried in the land of Canaan in the field of Machpelah where his father his grandfather are buried and their wives too and Leah his own wife likewise buried so his bones are brought up and they are buried within the land of the covenant so he could say in a sense

I'll bring thee up again but also that the larger meaning here is he will bring up your posterity your descendants the nation that comes from you when I multiply your seed as the stars of heaven the nation will be brought back into Canaan for their inheritance this is what God means when he says I will go down with you and I will also surely bring thee up again Jacob is brought up in the person and the nation of Israel back into the land of his promise again when we can if you like spiritualize this only says when we think about there are many many places or many experiences which to us might seem dark like Egypt Egypt the land remember of idolatry and paganism remember that when in Revelation the Lord talks about his two witnesses where they testify that a city which spiritually is called Sodom in Egypt when also our Lord was crucified and we know our Lord was crucified in Jerusalem but spiritually it's as evil as Sodom and as dark as Egypt is what it's referred to there in

Revelation so Egypt can be a frightening place to go down into again Matthew Henry saying whatever low or dark some valley we are called into at any time we may be confident if God go down with us into it that he will surely bring us up again if he go down with us to death itself he will surely bring us up again to glory others surely this is the heart of what the gospel is about isn't it it's about the defeat of death the defeat of the prince of the power of the air and the prince of this world whose business is death whose business is separating man from God because that's what death is separation from God and that's what he has sought to do since the beginning to drive a wedge between God and man to make man believe that he can be God instead of the true God and all he does is he brings in death now Satan is the master of death he is the prince of death and this is what he desires but what

[23 : 32] Jesus has come to do is to overcome death to soak up all the power of darkness that evil could throw at him to fulfill the law in its perfection and righteousness and purity to wholly fulfill it in every detail and then to lay down that perfect sinless sacrifice upon the cross as a once and for all offering for the sin of all who will believe and trust in him this is to defeat the power of death it is to defeat the power of Satan it is to overcome death if we go down into physical death we need not fear it because the spiritual death which Satan longs to ensnare the human race will have no power over us because Christ has already defeated that last enemy which shall be destroyed as 1 Corinthians tells us chapter 15 the last enemy which shall be destroyed is death and Jesus has already destroyed it on the cross with his death and resurrection if he that is the

Lord will die with us into Egypt he will bring us up again if he go down with us to death itself he will bring us up again to glory we need not fear if he go with us this is the promise this is not just about dry and dusty patriarchs in the desert this is the heart of the gospel the Lord going down with us into whatever dark valley may lie before us and the promise that he will bring us up and again now in these verses verses 5 to 27 the bulk of the volume of the chapter is given over to the narrative of Jacob's sons and grandsons and so on now you'll notice that there is no mention of servants or handmaids or the other people that must undoubtedly have gone down with them or indeed of wives presumably because the focus in this narrative is to identify the seed of

Abraham and Isaac and Jacob everyone who is mentioned is descended by ordinary generation from we could say Jacob's wife from Isaac and Abraham and through his own seed is his children his grandchildren and so on they are part of the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham and so we have all these sons and grandsons in some cases mentioned and they are divided up they are divided up into the different mothers that they had there is Leah of course Jacob's first wife Rachel and Zilpah Leah's handmaid and Bilhah Rachel's handmaid and they are thus divided in this way almost certainly by this time Leah is already dead if we turn again to chapter 49 where Jacob is making mention of the desire that he be buried with my fathers in the cave there is in the field of Ephraim the Hittite in the cave there is in the field of Machpola which is before

Manda in the land of Canaan which Abraham brought in the field of Ephraim and Hittite to a possession of a burying place there they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife there they buried Isaac and Rebecca his wife and there I buried Leah now Jacob does not go back up into Canaan during the course of the 17 years that he is there in Egypt so this is him saying before we even left Canaan Leah was already dead I buried her there in the cave of our father's there so we have these individuals who are listed and named and if you want to do all the maths and the arithmetic you can of course do so and you'll find of course that Reuben and the souls pertaining to him it totals five Simeon seven Levi four Judah six Isaac five Zebulun four and of course Dinah Jacob's daughter as well that makes 33 souls just as it says in verse 15 but that 33 is only if you deduct Judah's sons heir and

Onan who already died in the land of Canaan and if you add in Jacob himself that gives you the 33 likewise the 16 souls including Asher's two grandsons that are mentioned for Zilpah's descendants likewise Rachel's sons and grandsons you've got Benjamin's ten sons that are mentioned almost certainly those were only born after he came down into Egypt you've got Joseph the three souls including himself there's Manasseh and Ephraim and himself but Asenath is not included in that you've got Bilhah Rachel's handmaid and the seven souls partaking to her so the seventy souls which are mentioned includes Jacob himself that's something to bear in mind but it's not you know it's not seventy plus Jacob the seventy souls is all the descendants of Jacob plus Jacob himself all the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt verse 26 which came out of his loins again there's the distinction he sends them which of course the wives would not be directly his descendants besides Jacob's sons wives all the souls were three score and six and the sons of Joseph which were born in Egypt were two souls that makes three score eight Joseph himself three score and nine

[29 : 04] Jacob himself seventy three score and ten now if you have a mind to be picky and then with a photographic memory then you might remember that in the Acts of the Apostles in chapter seven where Stephen is giving his defense before the Sanhedrin that he mentions in chapter seven of Acts verse 14 then sent Joseph and called his father Jacob to him and all his kindred three score and fifteen souls seventy five well just seventy five where are the extra five coming in well Stephen is quoting of course from the Greek Old Testament that doesn't give it a license to change the arithmetic but almost certainly the total that Stephen is including includes and you'll notice that in this total we've got in that spot in Genesis 46 for our grandchildren in some cases added in it includes the sons of Manasseh and Ephraim if you wanted to you don't have to do this just now but I mean we're to turn to first Chronicles chapter seven you see it verses 14 and 15 where you've got Manasseh's sons

Asheriel whom she bore Machir the father of Gilead and then you've got Zilpah at verse 53 sons of Manasseh and then a little further down in the same chapter this is chapter seven of first Chronicles at verse 20 you've got mention of Shuthelah son of Ephraim and then about further down at verse 23 Bishlam who is likewise the son of Ephraim so you've got three sons of Manasseh two sons of Ephraim in other words grandsons of Jacob five additional souls so he does perfectly compute it does perfectly harmonize it's just whether or not you know you can be bothered to do the digging but the Bible and God's word and God's truth is always way ahead of us and if ever we think oh no it doesn't actually you know I don't think that's true that's not right that doesn't work it's only because we know so little and we haven't dug far enough God always knows more than we do God is always way ahead of us his word will always be true it is the addition of these grandchildren that simply changes the arithmetical total that is all but they are just as much part of Jacob's descendants as those who are listed in Genesis 46 so moving on then from verse 28 we find that as they send

Judah ahead of them Joseph comes to meet his father and his brothers and we read that he fell on his neck and wept a good while now you see in this world how closely and near to one another sorrow and joy are in this world when tears are the expression for both if you have extreme joy you weep with joy if you have extreme sorrow you weep for sorrow but in both of these there is in a sense there is an admixture of joy and sorrow if somebody is believed and they are weeping and they are grieving why are they grieving they are grieving for the loss of something that was sweet something that was good something that was beloved something which brought them great joy in their life and that joy is now gone had somebody who knew nothing of the person who has died and they walked past and they were crying all these people died and they are crying there oh it's because so and so has died oh have they oh right and they shrug and they walk on because that person meant nothing to them and they may be related to them but they didn't know them so their heart is not green it's not moved because there was no joy there is now no grief because there was no sweetness there is no pain because the two are intermixed and when you have great joy as you do here with Joseph and

Jacob being reunited part of the tears no doubt the tears of joy and the weeping upon his neck are likewise also for the grief that although it be now past is all the years of sorrow that have gone by when Jacob was grieving for what he believed was his dead son and Joseph was grieving in the prison cell in Egypt for separation from his father and from his loved ones and his family the grief the pain the tears on both sides now which are healed and brought together this is part of the memory this is part of the sealing of their joy is the calling back of the pain which now is as it were being washed away with these tears now some have said of course with some justification ah yes well that's only because in this world it's a fallen world and pain and sorrow are mixed in with joy and delight in God is true and when it comes to heaven there won't be any tears

I don't even have joy there won't be any tears because we read God will wipe away all tears from their eyes and that also is true but if we do read that which we do not only in chapter 7 at verse 17 of Revelation also most particularly chapter 21 at verse 4 God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes there shall be no more death neither sorrow nor crying neither shall be any more pain for the former things have passed away why do we have mention of that God wiping away the tears from their eyes if there are no tears to be wiped away there must be tears of some kind in heaven for God to wipe them away this intimate act of gentleness of the ultimate healing God himself wiping away all tears from their eyes don't mention this in God's infallible word unless there are tears to be wiped away now the only tears we could possibly have in heaven in the presence of the Lord would be tears of joy but once they are wiped away there will be no more tears after that there may initially be tears of joy as there are here when Jacob meets up with Joseph but we have this again mentioned in

[35 : 28] Revelation 7 where it seems to be sorrow intermingled with it in Isaiah 25 of course from which this is originally taken in verse 8 God shall wipe away all tears from their faces if God is doing that there must be tears to wipe away so I would suggest you that in heaven with all reverence to begin with there will be tears albeit tears of joy but thereafter all the sorrow intermingled with that joy will melt away there will only be pure joy and glory with the Lord thereafter now we find that Jacob then says when he has met with his son Joseph verse 13 now let me die since I have seen thy face because thou art yet alive life has no more joys for him to behold yet seen Joseph alive and now let me die because that is life completed it is crowned with all the joy I could possibly want and yet we know from the record that

Jacob in fact lose a further 17 years in Egypt he may be ready to die but God is not yet ready to take him and I've spoken often to people in the past particularly you know elderly souls whether in care homes or whatever sometimes you know retired missionaries and things who feel themselves useless who feel themselves trapped within this aged and decaying and frail body and have said literally sometimes I don't know why I'm still here I don't know why the Lord has left me here I just want to be a wing I want to be with him I don't know why I'm still on this earth why I'm still they wouldn't say your mercy's going when they're feeling miserable but that's what they mean why I'm still here I want to be a wing I may desire to depart and be with Christ which is far better they may be ready but God is not yet ready for their time to be pronounced fulfilled we die at God's appointed hour and not our own there is always that which God has yet to perfect in us until the very last hour we think of Simeon of course in the temple when the baby Jesus was brought in and he said Lord now let us thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word for my eyes have seen thy salvation which thou hast prepared before the face of all people a light to enlighten the Gentiles and the glory of thy people Israel there is nothing now left to live for when I have seen the Messiah face to face what more can this earth hold for me Simeon is saying but we do not know how soon thereafter Simeon did die because it is the Lord who appoints the hour of our departure just as he appoints the hour of our entry into this world it is not necessary for him to die there and then it is not necessary for

Jacob to die there and then but what it does indicate is that now he is ready to go now he is willing to go and when we have beheld by faith the face of the Messiah it may not be in the baby arms that Simeon laid his eyes upon in the temple it may simply be with the eye of faith that which may appear to Paul on a road to Damascus or it may be more private and more quiet but when we have encountered Christ personally and known him for our individual Savior this is the most crucial thing that earth affords there is nothing greater in life than knowing Christ as our personal Savior nothing is more important nothing is more cardinal more central to the entire reason why you and I have been put here this is the fulfillment of all our existence now it does not mean of course at the moment you encounter Christ that you week up into glory right away God still has work for you to do he still has purpose for you we see this at the end of this chapter that Jacob may be ready to go but we see in these closing verses verse 31 on to verse 34

Joseph is now talking about right I've got to go and tell Pharaoh I've got to bring my brothers and my father into the land of Goshen we've got to get settled life must go on settlement to be made business to attend to there is work to do Jacob may be ready to go but nobody else is at this stage and he is still needful as the head of their family to hold them all together to be the patriarch of that family they are entering now into that period of their history which would define them forever what is it which defines Israel as a people it is that the Lord brought them up out of Egypt with a mighty hand and a stretched out arm but before he could bring them up out of Egypt he must first bring them down into it and now they are entering into that valley of the shadow and to begin with they're joyful they think this is great we're going to stay alive we're going to be fair we're going to be looked after there is great joy for now there is great suffering ahead but the greatest deliverance of all will be the sweetness and the awakening and the reward and that which is awaiting at the end of it if they are going to have that defining deliverance they must first enter into that dark valley now I don't know whether or not you're in a dark valley just now whether you've been through one or whether you feel like you're suffering when God may have withdrawn himself for a time or so it may seem but what I can say is that you will have no dark valley to be brought out of and God to work this great work of deliverance until such time as you're first brought into it God first brings the family of Jacob down into Egypt that they may be defined in the foes of time by their deliverance out of it and ahead of them yes there is great suffering of which they are as yet oblivious mercifully oblivious and none of us knows what is ahead of us in this life but what we do know is that the Lord who has brought us down into it will bring us back up out of it if we hold fast for them now

Jacob may be ready to go he may be wanting away he may think there's nothing else left for him to do but for now there is work to do there is business to be settled and we need not fear the work ahead if the Lord be with us if God be for us who can be against us he that spared not his own son but deliver him up for us all how shall he not with him also freely give us all things but I am persuaded that neither death nor life nor angels nor principalities nor powers nor things present nor things to come nor height nor depth nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord whether it be in Egypt whether it be in Canaan whether it be in Scotland whether it be in Scalpy whether it be in the dark night of your soul if the Lord has brought you down in to that God will bring you back out again with great glory and with a mighty deliverance if you will but hold fast and you look to them the author and missin up your feet the ■■■ithee that is full for you

[43 : 16] Have you has ■■■ enough time to read ye mit