

On the Beginning

40. Jacob's Revival

NOTE ESPECIALLY Genesis 45-47

The first time the word “*revived*” is used in the Bible is in Genesis 45:27.

“And they told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said unto them: and when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived . . .”

The Hebrew word used here comes from the word for “life” and has the idea of coming back to life. When Jacob was convinced that his son Joseph was alive, his spirit came back to life. In other words, he was restored to emotional health. In everyday speech we use the word “revive” to mean the same thing: to restore to health and normality. After years of self-imposed depression (See Lesson 35), Jacob returned to the normal state of mental well-being, peace, and joy. The chapters that describe Jacob’s revival tell us some things about the spiritual revival we all need from time to time.

1. A Wonderful **Revelation**.

The first sixteen verses of Genesis 45 tell us how Joseph revealed to his brothers who he was, and what the effect of that news was. Of course all of the brothers except Benjamin “*were troubled at his presence*” because of what they had done to him years before. However, the overall effect of this revelation was very good because of Joseph’s comforting words, and because of the plan to bring his father down to Egypt. Later we see that it was this revelation (that Joseph was alive) and good news that brought about Jacob’s revival (vs. 25-28). In the spiritual realm, it is good news revealed in the Bible that revives the spirit. You cannot have a spiritual revival without the Word of God. The same Hebrew word translated “revive” in this chapter is translated “quicken” in Psalm 119, the longest chapter in the Bible. Psalm 119 is about the Word of God and says important things about its quickening (reviving) power.

“Behold, I have longed after thy precepts: quicken me in thy righteousness.” (verse 40)

“Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope. This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me.” (verse 49-50)

“Great are thy tender mercies, O LORD: quicken me according to thy judgments.” (verse 156)

2. Reviving **Faith!**

The rest of Chapter 45 tells how Jacob was revived. What made it happen was a choice he made to believe the truth about Joseph. Can you see this in verses 25 through 28? When his sons told Jacob about Joseph, he did not believe it at first. Then they told him

“all the words” that Joseph had said (probably including the story of how God had made him a ruler in Egypt) and belief was certainly encouraged by those words. Finally, *“he saw”* the evidence that the words were true and decided to believe the truth that his son was alive. Immediately he was *“revived”* and determined to go down to see Joseph. Faith is a decision. If you decide to believe the truth, it will effect you tremendously. For Christians living at a low spiritual level, a decision of faith can bring revival! Believe the truth of God’s Word. Act on that belief. Have a revival!

3. Jacob’s **Journey.**

Genesis 46 is the account of the coming of Jacob’s whole family to Egypt. We might think of it as the aftermath of his emotional revival. Remember Jacob’s frame of mind during his self-imposed period of depression. Recall how he talked.

“. . . For I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning.”
(Genesis 37:35)

“And Jacob their father said unto them, Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me.” (Genesis 42:36)

He had such a dark attitude because he *“refused to be comforted”* (Genesis 37:35). All that time he doubted God’s love and believed a lie, that Joseph was dead. But when he believed the truth, he began a new era of his life. Of course, Jacob could have had God’s comfort even when he could not have known about Joseph. He could have believed in God’s love and wisdom and enjoyed peace and joy and had a positive outlook. But when he decided to exercise his faith, his emotional health was restored and he began to travel a new road.

- a. He rededicated his life to God and worshipped Him (v. 1).
- b. He listened to what God said to him (vs. 2-4).
- c. He began obeying God again (vs. 5-7).
- d. He found that God was taking good care of him (vs. 28-34).

This is exactly the road some who study this lesson with us ought to take today: the revival road.

4. Jacob’s **Life.**

Genesis 47 continues the story, and it also draws some conclusions about Jacob’s life. Even though for years the Patriarch had concluded that his life had been hard, that God had let him down, and that he was on the verge of dying, it ended up that God had given him a good life. He lived seventeen years after he had said, *“I will go and see him [Joseph] before I die.”* He came to see his life as a *“pilgrimage,”* only part of a bigger plan. In Egypt, at Goshen where they came to live, Jacob’s family *“grew and multiplied exceedingly.”* God blessed them abundantly. When a man chooses to adopt the attitude of faith he will see how good God has been to him, and how good his life has been!

