

# Israel *in* Egypt




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## SABBATH AFTERNOON

**Read for This Week’s Study:** *Genesis 46; Rom. 10:12, 13; Genesis 47; Genesis 48; Acts 3:25, 26; Genesis 49; Phil. 2:10; Gen. 49:29–50:21.*

**Memory Text:** “So Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen; and they had possessions there and grew and multiplied exceedingly” (*Genesis 47:27, NKJV*).

**G**enesis covers the last years of Jacob and Joseph together. We see Jacob (Israel) leave Canaan (*Genesis 46*) in order to settle in Egypt (*Genesis 47*), and there he will die (*Gen. 49:29–50:21*). And yet, even in this Egyptian setting, the prospect of the Promised Land still looms large in the background (*Gen. 50:22–26*).

As soon as Jacob arrives in Egypt, Jacob blesses Pharaoh (*Gen. 47:7–10*), thus fulfilling (partially, of course) the Abrahamic promise to be a blessing to the nations (*Gen. 12:3*). Later, about to die, Jacob blesses Joseph’s sons (*Genesis 48*). Jacob also blesses his own sons (*Gen. 49:1–28*) and makes impressive predictions concerning each of them in the context of the future 12 tribes of Israel (*Gen. 49:1–27*).

The fact, however, that Israel “dwells” in exile, in Egypt as strangers, is in tension with the hope of the Promised Land. And though the book of Genesis itself ends with the children of Israel in Egypt, some of the last words of Joseph point to another place: “ ‘I am dying; but God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land to the land of which He swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob’ ” (*Gen. 50:24, NKJV*).

\* Study this week’s lesson to prepare for Sabbath, June 25.

## Jacob Goes to Joseph

**Read** Genesis 46. What is the significance of Jacob's departure from Canaan?

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When Jacob leaves his place in Canaan, he is full of hope. The assurance that he will no longer be hungry and the good news that Joseph is alive must have given him the momentum that he needed to leave the Promised Land.

Jacob's departure echoes the experience of Abraham, though in Abraham's case he was heading to the Promised Land. Jacob hears the same promise Abraham heard from God, namely that He will make him "a great nation" (*Gen. 46:3; compare with Gen. 12:2*). God's call here also is reminiscent of God's covenant with Abraham; in both occasions God uses the same reassuring words "do not fear" (*Gen. 46:3, NKJV; compare with Gen. 15:1*), which carry the promise of a glorious future.

The comprehensive listing of the names of the children of Israel who went to Egypt, including his daughters (*Gen. 46:7*), recalls God's promise of fruitfulness to Abraham even when he was still childless. The number "seventy" (including Jacob, Joseph, and his two sons) expresses the idea of totality. It is "all Israel" that goes to Egypt. It also is significant that the number 70 corresponds to the number of nations (*Genesis 10*), suggesting that the destiny of all the nations also is at stake in Jacob's journey.

This truth will become more evident only many years later, after the Cross and the fuller revelation of the plan of salvation, which, of course, was for all humanity, everywhere, and not just for the children of Abraham.

In other words, however interesting the stories are regarding this family, the seed of Abraham, and whatever spiritual lessons we can take from them—these accounts are in the Word of God because they are part of salvation history; they are part of God's plan to bring redemption to as many as possible on this fallen planet.

**"For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. For 'whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved' " (*Rom. 10:12, 13, NKJV*). What does Paul say here that shows the universality of the gospel? More important, what do these words say to us regarding what we as a church should be doing to help spread the gospel?**

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## Jacob Settles in Egypt

It's very interesting how, despite all that Jacob had been told about Joseph's being alive in Egypt, the Lord still gave him "visions of the night" (*Gen. 46:2*) and in them commanded him to leave. Jacob leaves the Land of Promise for, of all places, Egypt—which later becomes associated with the one place that God's people do not want to go (*Deut. 17:16*).

**Read** Genesis 47. What spiritual truths and principles can we find in this account?

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"Joseph took five of his brothers to present to Pharaoh and receive from him the grant of land for their future home. Gratitude to his prime minister would have led the monarch to honor them with appointments to offices of state; but Joseph, true to the worship of Jehovah, sought to save his brothers from the temptations to which they would be exposed at a heathen court; therefore he counseled them, when questioned by the king, to tell him frankly their occupation. The sons of Jacob followed this counsel, being careful also to state that they had come to sojourn in the land, not to become permanent dwellers there, thus reserving the right to depart if they chose. The king assigned them a home, as offered, in 'the best of the land,' the country of Goshen."—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 233.

Wisely, too, Pharaoh does not encourage these sojourners to become beggars, living off the largess of their host. He enquires about their "occupation" (*Gen. 47:3, NKJV*) in order that they may adjust better in their new environment. He also is eager to use their expertise, and even suggests that they serve him as "chief herdsmen over [his] livestock" (*Gen. 47:6, NKJV*).

Then, although Jacob, the foreigner, is the inferior, the stranger, he stands before the leader of the land, and, as the text says, "Jacob blessed Pharaoh" (*Gen. 47:7*). He, the lowly stranger, is the one who blesses Pharaoh, the ruler of mighty Egypt? Why should that be?

The verb *'amad lifney*, "set . . . before" (*Gen. 47:7*), is normally used in priestly contexts (*Lev. 14:11*). Considering that in ancient Egypt the pharaoh had the status of the highest priest, this means that, in a spiritual sense, Jacob stands higher than the highest priest of Egypt, higher even than Pharaoh himself.

**Whatever our station in life, what should it mean to us, in how we treat others, that we are "a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people" (1 Pet. 2:9)? What obligations does our faith put on us?**

## Jacob Blesses Joseph's Sons

As Jacob approaches death, he remembers his earlier return to Bethel (*Gen. 35:1–15*), when he received from God the renewed promise of the “everlasting possession” (*Gen. 48:4*) that was given to Abraham (*Gen. 17:8*). The hope of the Promised Land is, therefore, a comforting thought that nurtures his hope as he feels death coming. Jacob turns, then, to Joseph's two sons, who were born in Egypt, and blesses them, but does so in the context of the future promise regarding his own seed.

**Read Genesis 48. Why did Jacob bless Joseph's two sons here, and not his other grandsons?**

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Joseph's two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, are the only grandsons that Jacob blessed. They are thus elevated from the status of grandsons to the status of sons (*Gen. 48:5*). Although Jacob's blessing implies a preeminence of the second (Ephraim) over the first (Manasseh), Jacob's blessing essentially concerns Joseph (*Gen. 48:15*).

What we see here is a personal testimony about God's faithfulness to them in the past and His promise for them in the future. Jacob refers to the God of Abraham and Isaac (*Gen. 48:15*), who had provided food and protection for them. He is the same God who “has redeemed me from all evil” (*Gen. 48:16, NKJV*). Jacob also has in mind “the God of Bethel” (*Gen. 31:13*), with whom he wrestled (*Gen. 32:29*) and who changed his name from Jacob to “Israel” (*Gen. 32:26–29*).

By referring to all these experiences where God turns the evil into good, Jacob expresses his hope that not only will God take care of the present lives of his grandsons, just as He cared for his own life and Joseph's, but Jacob also thinks of the future, when his descendants will return to Canaan. This hope is clear from his reference to Shechem (*Gen. 48:22*), which not only is a piece of land that he had acquired (*Gen. 33:19*) but also is a place where Joseph's bones will be buried (*Josh. 24:32*) and where the land will be distributed to the tribes of Israel (*Josh. 24:1*). Even amid all that has happened, Jacob keeps in mind the promises of God, who said that through this family “ ‘all the families of the earth shall be blessed’ ” (*Gen 12:3, NKJV*).

**Read Acts 3:25, 26. According to Peter, how was this promise of Genesis 12:3 being fulfilled? How have we, ourselves, received this blessing?**

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## Jacob Blesses His Sons

**Read** Genesis 49:1–28. What is the spiritual significance of Jacob’s blessing on his sons?

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Beyond the prophecies concerning the immediate history of the tribes of Israel, Jacob sees the Messiah and the ultimate hope of salvation. This hope already is indicated in Jacob’s opening words that use the expression “in the last days” (*Gen. 49:1*), a technical expression that refers to the coming of the Messianic King (*Isa. 2:2, Dan. 10:14*).

The text then goes through the future line of each of these men. These are not predestinated fates, as if God willed that each of these would face what they faced; rather, they are expressions of what their characters and the characters of their children would bring about. God’s knowing, for instance, that someone will kill an innocent man is a radically different thing from God’s having willed that the killer do it.

**Read** Genesis 49:8–12. What prophecy is given here, and why is it important?

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Over and above human free will, God does know the future, and He had arranged that it would be through Judah that the Messiah would come. Judah (*Gen. 49:8–12*), who is represented by a lion (*Gen. 49:9*), refers to royalty and praise. Judah will not only produce King David, but also the Shiloh; that is, the One who will bring *shalom*, “peace” (*Isa. 9:6, 7*), to Him “shall be the obedience of the people” (*Gen. 49:10, NKJV*).

The Jews have long seen this as a Messianic prophecy pointing to the coming Messiah, and Christians, too, have seen this text as pointing to Jesus. “Unto him shall the gathering of the people be” (*Gen. 49:10*), which is, perhaps, a precursor to the New Testament promise “that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow” (*Phil. 2:10*).

As Ellen G. White wrote: “The lion, king of the forest, is a fitting symbol of this tribe, from which came David, and the Son of David, Shiloh, the true ‘Lion of the tribe of Judah,’ to whom all powers shall finally bow and all nations render homage.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 236.

**Why should we be rendering homage to Jesus now, even before all nations will do it?**

## The Hope of the Promised Land

**Read** Genesis 49:29–50:21. What great themes of hope are found in the conclusion of the book of Genesis?

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The conclusion of Genesis is made up of three events that are filled with hope.

First, there is the hope that Israel will return to the Promised Land. Moses, the author of Genesis, describes Jacob's and Joseph's deaths and burials as events pointing to the Promised Land. Immediately after his blessing and prophecy on the "twelve tribes of Israel" (*Gen. 49:28*), Jacob thinks of his death and charges his sons to bury him in Canaan, at the cave of Machpelah, where Sarah was buried (*Gen. 49:29–31*). The narrative describing the funeral procession toward Canaan becomes a precursor to the exodus from Egypt several centuries later.

Second, there is the hope that God will turn evil into good. After Jacob's death and burial, Joseph's brothers are worried about their future. They are afraid that Joseph will now take his revenge. They come to Joseph and prostrate themselves before him, ready to become his servants (*Gen. 50:18*), a scenario that is reminiscent of Joseph's prophetic dreams. Joseph reassures them and tells them to "not be afraid" (*Gen. 50:19, NKJV*), a phrase that refers to the future (*Gen. 15:1*); because what was "'meant evil'" against him, "God meant . . . for good" (*Gen. 50:20, NKJV*), and turned the course of events toward salvation (*Gen. 50:19–21; compare with Gen. 45:5, 7–9*). That is, even despite so many human failures, God's providence will overrule.

Third, there is the hope that God will save fallen humankind. The story of Joseph's death in this last verse of Genesis is broader than just about his death. Strangely, Joseph does not command to have his bones buried. Instead he points to the time when "'God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here'" (*Gen. 50:25, NKJV*), which they did, many years later, in direct obedience to those words (*see Exod. 13:19*). Ultimately, the hope of the Promised Land, Canaan, is a symbol, a precursor, to the ultimate hope of salvation, of restoration, of a New Jerusalem in a new heaven and a new earth—the ultimate hope for all of us, a hope made certain by the death of Shiloh.

**Read Revelation 21:1–4. How do these verses represent the grandest hope that we have? Without this promise, what hope do we have other than death alone as the end of all our problems?**

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**Further Thought:** Ellen G. White, “Joseph and His Brothers,” pp. 233–240, in *Patriarchs and Prophets*.

“The life of Joseph illustrates the life of Christ. It was envy that moved the brothers of Joseph to sell him as a slave; they hoped to prevent him from becoming greater than themselves. And when he was carried to Egypt, they flattered themselves that they were to be no more troubled with his dreams, that they had removed all possibility of their fulfillment. But their own course was overruled by God to bring about the very event that they designed to hinder. So the Jewish priests and elders were jealous of Christ, fearing that He would attract the attention of the people from them. They put Him to death, to prevent Him from becoming king, but they were thus bringing about this very result.

“Joseph, through his bondage in Egypt, became a savior to his father’s family; yet this fact did not lessen the guilt of his brothers. So the crucifixion of Christ by His enemies made Him the Redeemer of mankind, the Savior of the fallen race, and Ruler over the whole world; but the crime of His murderers was just as heinous as though God’s providential hand had not controlled events for His own glory and the good of man.

“As Joseph was sold to the heathen by his own brothers, so Christ was sold to His bitterest enemies by one of His disciples. Joseph was falsely accused and thrust into prison because of his virtue; so Christ was despised and rejected because His righteous, self-denying life was a rebuke to sin; and though guilty of no wrong, He was condemned upon the testimony of false witnesses. And Joseph’s patience and meekness under injustice and oppression, his ready forgiveness and noble benevolence toward his unnatural brothers, represent the Savior’s uncomplaining endurance of the malice and abuse of wicked men, and His forgiveness, not only of His murderers, but of all who have come to Him confessing their sins and seeking pardon.”—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 239, 240.

### Discussion Questions:

- 1 Once Jacob died, Joseph’s brothers feared that now Joseph would get revenge. What does this teach about the guilt that they still harbored? What does Joseph’s reaction teach us about forgiveness for the guilty?
- 2 What other parallels can you find between the lives of Joseph and Jesus?
- 3 Dwell on the fact that although God intimately knows the future, we are still free in the choices we make. How do we reconcile these two ideas?

## Praying for 10 Years

By ANDREW MCCHESENEY

Winston Crawford, a US volunteer teaching English in Moscow, invited one of his Russian students to the Seventh-day Adventist church on Sabbath.

The student, Sasha, did not seem moved by the worship experience. He had been raised in an atheistic family, and he looked downright bored.

Winston felt sad. “I’m not going to try to invite him back,” he told himself. “I can see clearly that he didn’t enjoy himself.” Instead, he started praying. He prayed that the Lord would touch Sasha’s heart.

As the months rolled by, Winston and Sasha struck up a friendship. During vacation, Sasha invited him to travel to the Karelia region near Finland to meet his parents and younger brother. Winston kept praying.

After completing his year of volunteer service, Winston returned to the United States but remained in contact with Sasha. When Sasha visited the United States after several years, the two spent time together in Chicago.

Winston kept praying. More than 10 years passed.

One day, Sasha sent a message via WhatsApp. “I want to read the Bible,” he wrote. “Could you help me to understand it?” Winston was delighted. “Sure!” he texted back. They agreed to meet once a week.

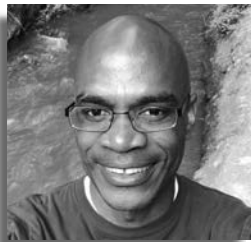
At their first meeting, Sasha was fascinated as they read Genesis 1. He was particularly impressed that God gave a vegetarian diet in Genesis 1:29, which says, “And God said, ‘See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food’ ” (NKJV). Sasha was a vegetarian, and he had thought that following a plant-based diet was simply good practice.

“I had no idea that this is from the Bible!” he said.

At the end of the meeting, he expressed awe. “I have read Pushkin and Dostoevsky, but it seems like something different is happening when I read the Bible,” he said. “It’s like the words are coming up off the page to me.”

Winston was elated. He felt certain that the Holy Spirit was elevating His Word to reach Sasha’s heart. After three weeks of Bible study, Sasha asked whether they could increase their meetings to twice a week. Winston kept

praying. “It’s inspiring for me that after more than 10 years he wants to read the Bible—and not only that, but I get to study the Bible with him,” Winston said in an interview. “I know this is God. I know it completely is God.”



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*This mission story illustrates Spiritual Growth Objective No. 5 of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s “I Will Go” strategic plan, “To disciple individuals and families into Spirit-filled lives.” Read more: [IWillGo2020.org](http://IWillGo2020.org).*



**Key Text:** *Genesis 47:27*

**Study Focus:** *Genesis 46–50; Acts 3:25, 26.*

## ***Part I: Overview***

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**Introduction:** This last section of the book of Genesis takes us to the end of the patriarchal period with the deaths of Jacob and Joseph. The whole clan of Jacob is now in exile in Egypt. The last words of the book are “a coffin in Egypt.” The history of salvation seems to have no happy ending. And yet, this is the part of the book that is the most redolent of hope. The profile of Israel as God’s people looms on the horizon. The portentous number of “seventy” that constitutes the house of Jacob (*Gen. 46:27*) alerts the reader to the spiritual destiny of this people. Jacob blesses his sons (*Gen. 49:1–28*) and predicts the future of what will become the 12 tribes of Israel and the future coming of the Messiah, who will save Israel and the nations (*Gen. 49:10–12*). The last words of the book that are resonant with death are, in fact, words pointing to the redemptive future: they anticipate the return to the Promised Land in terms that echo the first words of Genesis, introducing the event of Creation and the planting of the Garden of Eden. The underlying theological principle is that God turns evil into good (*Gen. 50:20*). This is the lesson that Joseph shares with his brothers to comfort them and reassure them (*Gen. 50:21*), but, more important, to open their eyes to God’s salvation of the world (*Gen. 50:20*).

## ***Part II: Commentary***

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### **The Blessing of Jacob**

After having gathered his sons (*Gen. 49:1, 2*), Jacob blesses them one after another, following their birth order, from Reuben the eldest to Benjamin the youngest (*Gen. 49:3–27*). These blessings are, in fact, prophecies that predict their future (*Gen. 49:1*). The Hebrew words *be’akharit hayyamim*, “in the last days” (*Gen. 49:1*), is a technical expression that often refers to the coming of the Messianic King and the eschatological salvation (*Isa. 2:2, Dan. 10:14*). The text of Jacob’s blessing, as it moves from his first son, Reuben, to his last one, Benjamin, is therefore imbued with the prophetic-eschatological tension.

This is the third time in the book of Genesis that a blessing is addressed

to a group of persons. The first collective blessing is God's blessing of Adam and Eve (*Gen. 1:28*). The second is Noah's blessing of his three sons (*Gen. 9:24–27*). Jacob's blessing is more related to Noah's blessing in that both are fatherly blessings and even curses; and both contain specific prophecies unveiling the future destiny of the sons. Both blessings appear at the beginning of a new era, and both mark the first steps of a new race. Therefore, the blessing of Israel has a universal scope. The blessings conclude with the reference to "the twelve tribes of Israel" (*Gen. 49:28*). This is the first biblical mention of the "twelve tribes." Clearly, the future destiny of all of Israel, with its failures and successes, is in view (*compare Gen. 49:1*).

### The Coming of the Messiah

The words that are used—"scepter," "lawgiver"—indicate that it is a king rather than a tribe that is the object of the prophecy. This verse, Genesis 49:10, also is echoed in Balaam's prophecy (*Num. 24:17*). The star from Jacob in Balaam's prophecy corresponds to the Lion of Judah in Jacob's prophecy. Furthermore, our passage introduces a temporal element in that rulership (*Gen. 49:10*). The coming of the Messiah is placed in the history of Israel. Yet, the adverbial conjunction 'ad ki, "until," in the phrase "until Shiloh" means more than just a point of arrival. The Hebrew 'ad ki does not necessarily refer to an end but rather to a fulfillment or to a climax, expressing a superlative (*Gen. 26:13, Gen. 41:19*). This means that the royalty of Judah will reach its climax with the coming of Shiloh. The universal dimension of this Person is clarified in the next few words: "To him shall be the obedience of the peoples" (*Gen. 49:10, ESV*). Note that the word *people* is plural in the Hebrew text ('*amim*).

The universal scope of this Ruler to whom "peoples" owe obedience suggests a figure of Messianic and supernatural dimension. The word *Shiloh* is the name of a Person as indicated by its parallel to the name Judah. The Hebrew word is related to the words *shalwah* or *shalom*, "peace," both being synonyms (*Ps. 122:7*). This interpretation is attested in the most ancient Christian and Jewish sources and has the merit of fitting the context of our passage (*Gen. 49:11*), which associates the coming of this Ruler with the reign of peace (*compare Isa. 9:5, 6; Mic. 5:5, [4]; Eph. 2:14*). The last two verses of Jacob's blessing to Judah (*Gen. 49:11, 12*) describe the character and the mission of the Messiah. The Hebrew word for "donkey" refers generally to the donkey used for riding (*Judg. 10:4*). The donkey evokes peace and humility (in contrast to the horse, which evokes war and arrogance [*Prov. 21:31*]). The same association of kingship and lowliness is used by Zechariah to describe the "lowly" Davidic king who will ride on

a donkey (*Zech. 9:9*) and will reign over the whole world, “from sea to sea . . . to the ends of the earth” (*Zech. 9:10, NKJV*). This image reminds us of Solomon, who rides his father’s mule to signify that he is the anointed one, the true heir to the Davidic throne (*1 Kings 1:38–48*). Likewise, Jesus’ action to “untie” the donkey and His riding on it point back to that tradition (*Mark 11:2–11*).

The other images of “wine” and “milk” and their respective colors of red/eyes and white/teeth evoke the abundance of life and the peace and security that will fill the Promised Land (*Num. 13:23, 27*). The reference to eye and tooth in our context, which refers to the fullness of enjoyment, intends, then, to suggest the intensity of life and of complete peace that will characterize the Messianic kingdom.

### **From Evil to Good**

When Joseph’s brothers come to Joseph to ask for forgiveness (*Gen. 50:17*), Joseph reassures his brothers that he intends no harm to them. His words, “ ‘Do not be afraid’ ” (*Gen. 50:19, NKJV*), are the same words that God used to reassure Abraham of his future (*Gen. 15:1*). To relieve the tension, Joseph places himself on the same human level: “Am I in the place of God?” (*Gen. 50:19*). Jacob had addressed Rachel with the same words in response to her complaint of not having children (*Gen. 30:2*). However, for Joseph this is different. While for Jacob these words were an expression of his anger, for Joseph the same words express his love toward his brothers and are meant to assuage their worries.

And when Joseph, unexpectedly, refers to God, he implies that divine forgiveness is involved in human forgiveness. Joseph even refers to his brothers’ treachery as the mechanism of that forgiveness: in that which they “ ‘meant evil,’ ” “ ‘God meant it for good’ ” (*Gen. 50:20, NKJV*). What his brothers did, which they rightly acknowledge as “evil,” was turned “ ‘to save many people alive’ ” (*Gen. 50:20, NKJV*). Joseph does not merely content himself with granting forgiveness to his brothers; he takes away their feeling of guilt, for their evil action turned out for good. They can now face Joseph and confront the future. Joseph reassures them with the same words that involve the future, “ ‘Do not be afraid’ ” (*Gen. 50:21, NKJV; compare Gen. 50:19*), and concludes with the promise that he will provide for them and their children.

### **The Salvation of the World**

Whereas the text mentions a grave for Jacob but no coffin (*Gen. 49:29*), for Joseph, the text mentions a coffin but no grave (*Gen. 50:26*). Joseph was embalmed, and yet he is not buried, because of his hope of the Promised Land. Thus, Joseph does not command to have

his bones buried at his death. He wants his bones to be carried to Canaan along with all the people of Israel. In the meantime, he is “put in a coffin in Egypt” (*Gen. 50:26*). The Hebrew uses the definite article *ba’aron*, literally meaning “in the coffin,” thus stressing the significance of the fact that this coffin was without a grave.

Thus, the book of Genesis ends the same way that the whole Pentateuch ends: with death, yet without a grave (*Deut. 34:6*), and in view of the Promised Land (*compare Deut. 34:1–4*). The book of Genesis, like the Pentateuch, begins with Creation and the Garden of Eden (*Genesis 1, Genesis 2*) and ends with the prospect of the Promised Land and the hope of the resurrection of the dead (*Deut. 34:6; compare Jude 9*). This literary coincidence is not accidental. We find the same association elsewhere and at the beginning and end of several books of the Bible (*for instance, see Isa. 1:2; Isa. 66:22, 23; Eccles. 1:1–11; Eccles. 12:14; Dan. 1:12; Dan. 12:13; John 1:1–10; John 21:22, 23*), and even throughout the entire Bible (*Genesis 1, Genesis 2, Rev. 22:20*).

### ***Part III: Life Application***

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**The Blessing of Jacob.** There is a story about a New Testament teacher who said to his students, “If you want to be a good Christian, you will have to kill the Jew in you.” Then one student answered: “Do you mean killing Jesus?” How does the blessing of Jacob to his sons relate to you personally? Is it possible to receive the blessings of Jacob while denying their Jewish component? What makes these blessings your blessings, as well?

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**The Coming of the Messiah.** How does Jacob’s prophecy apply to Jesus Christ? Discuss with your class the rich imagery that is used in this passage to characterize the Messiah. How does the image of Christ as “lawgiver” apply to your life? How does the imagery of tooth and eyes,

which signify joy of life and peace, affect your understanding of the Christian life?

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**From Evil to Good.** Do you remember one experience in life when a wicked action directed at you, with the intention to harm, turned out for your good? In the aftermath of that action, how did your experiences of suffering and injustice play a role in the formation of your character?

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**The Salvation of the World.** How does our name “Seventh-day Adventist” show our belief in the Creation? As our name suggests, what is the association between our belief in Creation and the hope that we have in the second coming of Jesus?

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This quarter's study, "In the Crucible With Christ," by Gavin Anthony, explores why we as Christians, committed to Christ, experience suffering. Christ was no stranger to suffering. Our pain, suffering, and loss do not mean God has abandoned us. Our study will show that God gives us meaning in these difficult times, and that, above all, we can trust Him. "Trials are essential in order that we may be brought close to our heavenly Father, in submission to His will, that we may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. . . . The Lord brings His children over the same ground again and again, increasing the pressure until perfect humility fills the mind, and the character is transformed; then they are victorious over self, and in harmony with Christ and the Spirit of heaven. The purification of God's people cannot be accomplished without suffering."—Ellen G. White, *My Life Today*, p. 92.

## Lesson 1—The Shepherd's Crucible

### The Week at a Glance:

SUNDAY: **A Guide for the Journey: The Shepherd** (*Ps. 23:1*)

MONDAY: **Locations on the Journey** (*Ps. 23:3, NRSV*)

TUESDAY: **Unexpected Detour 1: The Valley** (*Ps. 23:4, NKJV*)

WEDNESDAY: **Unexpected Detour 2: The Surrounded Table** (*Ps. 23:5*)

THURSDAY: **A Certain Promise for the Journey** (*Ps. 23:6, NKJV*)

**Memory Text**—*Psalm 23:3*

**Sabbath Gem:** There are times when we have been treated unfairly, betrayed, or led into the valley of death as described in Psalm 23. But God promises that He will restore us and use these painful experiences to train us in righteousness.

## Lesson 2—The Crucibles That Come

### The Week at a Glance:

SUNDAY: **Surprises** (*1 Pet. 4:12, NIV*)

MONDAY: **Crucibles of Satan** (*1 Pet. 5:8, NKJV*)

TUESDAY: **Crucibles of Sin** (*Rom. 1:8, NKJV*)

WEDNESDAY: **Crucibles of Purification** (*Jer. 9:7, NKJV*)

THURSDAY: **Crucibles of Maturity** (*2 Cor. 12:7, NKJV*)

**Memory Text**—*1 Peter 4:12, 13, NIV*

**Sabbath Gem:** God allows us to experience difficult circumstances to change, develop, and grow our characters. At times these tests make us feel like we are in a boiling crucible in a lab, but we are not the victims of a cruel divine experiment. If we recognize how God works in our lives, we can understand what our response should be.

**Lessons for People Who Are Legally Blind** The *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide* is available free in braille, on audio CD, and via online download to people who are legally blind or physically disabled. This includes individuals who, because of arthritis, multiple sclerosis, paralysis, accident, and so forth, cannot hold or focus on normal ink-print publications. Contact Christian Record Services for the Blind, Box 6097, Lincoln, NE 68506-0097. Phone: 402-488-0981; email: [services@christianrecord.org](mailto:services@christianrecord.org); website: [www.christianrecord.org](http://www.christianrecord.org).