

Genesis 48

Israel's Last Days

Now it came about after these things that Joseph was told, "Behold, your father is sick." So he took his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim with him. ² When it was told to Jacob, "Behold, your son Joseph has come to you," Israel collected his strength and sat up in the bed. ³ Then Jacob said to Joseph, "God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me,

⁴ and He said to me, 'Behold, I will make you fruitful and numerous, and I will make you a multitude of peoples, and will give this land to your descendants after you as an everlasting possession.' ⁵ Now your two sons, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, are mine; Ephraim and Manasseh shall be mine, as Reuben and Simeon are.

⁶ But your children that you have fathered after them shall be yours; they shall be called by the names of their brothers in their inheritance. ⁷ Now as for me, when I came from Paddan, Rachel died, to my sorrow, in the land of Canaan on the journey, when there was still some distance to go to Ephrath. I buried her there on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem)." ⁸ When Israel saw Joseph's sons, he said, "Who are these?" ⁹ And Joseph said to his father, "They are my sons, whom God has given me here." So he said, "Bring them to me, please, so that I may bless them."

¹⁰ Now the eyes of Israel were so dim from age *that* he could not see. And Joseph brought them close to him, and he kissed them and embraced them. ¹¹ And Israel said to Joseph, "I never expected to see your face, and behold, God has let me see your children as well!" ¹² Then Joseph took them from his knees, and bowed with his face to the ground. ¹³ And Joseph took them both, Ephraim with his right hand toward Israel's left, and Manasseh with his left hand toward Israel's right, and brought them close to him.

¹⁴ But Israel reached out his right hand and placed it on the head of Ephraim, who was the younger, and his left hand on Manasseh's head, crossing his hands, although Manasseh was the firstborn. ¹⁵ And he blessed Joseph, and said, "The God before whom my father's Abraham and Isaac walked, The God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day, ¹⁶ The angel who has redeemed me from all evil, Bless the boys; And may my name live on in them, And the names of my father's Abraham and Isaac; And may they grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth."

¹⁷ When Joseph saw that his father placed his right hand on Ephraim's head, it displeased him; and he grasped his father's hand to move it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. ¹⁸ And Joseph said to his father, "Not so, my father, for this one is the firstborn. Place your right hand on his head."

¹⁹ But his father refused and said, "I know, my son, I know; he also will become a people and he also will be great. However, his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations." ²⁰ So he blessed them that day, saying, By you Israel will pronounce blessing, saying, 'May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh!'" And so he put Ephraim before Manasseh.

²¹ Then Israel said to Joseph, “Behold, I am about to die, but God will be with you, and bring you back to the land of your fathers. ²² And I give you one portion more than your brothers, which I took from the hand of the Amorite with my sword and my bow.”

We will use five tools on our expedition that are built around five questions

What questions were provoked within you?

Did anything confuse you?

Did anything move you emotionally?

Did God instruct you to do something?

Did you gain any insight into God’s character?

Paul’s helpful insights

1. Joseph is told ‘your dad is sick’. Not a nice experience for anyone to have.
2. He knows it is serious, so he takes his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, with him.
3. Israel/Jacob pulls himself together to greet his son Joseph and his two sons.
4. Do you know that sense of pulling yourself together to face a life situation?
5. What are we doing and to whom?
6. Jacob recalls his visitation vision to his son Joseph and his two sons.
7. God told Jacob/Israel ‘I will make you a numerous nation and give you, and your descendants, land to possess forever’.
8. Why did Jacob/Israel claim Joseph’s two sons for himself? Why did he not include Joseph’s other children? The rejection of these children would be a long term issue.
9. What is it to be called by the names of your brothers?
10. How did Jacob/Israel manage the death of his wife Rachel having buried her on the road to Bethlehem?
11. Why did Jacob/Israel ask Joseph ‘who are these sons?’ Did he not ever visit his father?
12. The blessing of Jacob/Israel would have meant a lot to Joseph. So why did he deliberately bless the younger one with the older ones blessing?
13. Old age is a difficult thing to manage in life. Why do we lose our sight?
14. Jacob/Israel is rejoicing at the recovery blessings he received from God to see not only Joseph, but also Joseph’s sons.
15. Gideon Manasseh’s perception of himself and his tribe was one of low self-image. He said to the angel ‘I am the least in the tribe and the tribe is the least in Israel.’
16. Why did Jacob/Israel feel the need to recall the names of his father and grandfather when he brought the blessing upon Joseph’s sons?
17. Jacob/Israel’s exultation of God is his way of reconnecting this blessing to the promise God had made to his family.
18. Jacob/Israel wants what every man wants, that his name lives on earth after his death.

19. Jacob/Israel reiterates in his blessing, the blessing given to Abraham, to be a great nation.
20. Why was Joseph upset about what his father had done in giving the blessing to the younger before the older?
21. Unfortunately for Joseph, Jacob/Israel was having none of it.
22. Why was this the practice within this family?
23. The conviction of confidence in Jacob/Israel, regarding the blessing that would come upon these two boys, is built on his understanding of the God who keeps His promises.
24. Jacob/Israel knows he is going to die, but he still prophesies over Joseph regarding returning to the land of his fathers.
25. Why did Jacob/Israel give one portion more to Joseph – as if he needed it?
26. But Joseph's descendants most certainly would have benefitted.