

Genesis

Chapter 48:1-22

✧ **Gen 48:1-7** ¹ Now it came to pass after these things that Joseph was told, "Indeed your father is sick"; and he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. ² And Jacob was told, "Look, your son Joseph is coming to you"; and Israel strengthened himself and sat up on 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 said to me, 'Behold, I will make you fruitful and multiply you, and I will make of you a multitude of people, and give this land to your descendants after you as an everlasting possession.' ⁵ "And now your two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, are mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine. ⁶ "Your offspring whom you beget after them shall be yours; they will be called by the name of their brothers in their inheritance. ⁷ "But as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died beside me in the land of Canaan on the way, when there was but a little distance to go to Ephrath; and I buried her there on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem)."

The end of last week's study we read of how Jacob called his son Joseph and made him swear that he would bury him in the same place of Abraham and Sara, his grandparents and Isaac and Rebekah, his mother and father.

Starting this week we read that Jacob is ready to die, and before he does, his son Joseph goes to him from Egypt and brings his two sons. When Jacob is told that his son was coming, he strengthened himself and sat up in his bed.

Why would this have to be told in the bible?

What was so important of Jacob sitting up in bed?

When we read on, we read of Jacob telling his son of God's promise to him. What was happening is the Lord had become Jacob's strength in his last days before he died. This was important to Joseph to know that the God of his father Jacob was with him his whole life, even unto the end of his life.

God had strengthened Jacob through all he had gone through and even in his last days, God had not failed him.

Shortly after this time, as we will read in the next chapter that Jacob will die of old age.

We will notice that Jacob does not say to his son, "I wish I had done this or that". No he tells his son of God's promise to him, which also affects his family.

That promise he tells in verses 3 & 4.

✧ **Then Jacob said to Joseph: "God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me, "and said to me, 'Behold, I will make you fruitful and multiply you, and I will make of you a multitude of people, and give this land to your descendants after you as an everlasting possession.**

This was the same promise to Abraham and Isaac. But I believe that Abraham told his son Isaac, who in turn told his son Jacob that they would be held captive for 400 years in Egypt. Also Jacob would tell this to his son Joseph, but also that after 400 years God would deliver his descendants out of Egypt and into the Promised Land.

These words that Jacob is speaking to his son on his deathbed are words of encouragement. Read them again and see.

✠ *'Behold, I will make you fruitful and multiply you, and I will make of you a multitude of people, and give this land to your descendants after you as an everlasting possession.'*

No matter how much Jacob may have been in pain, he took the time to tell his son about God and His promises. Something to think about maybe even now if you are going through a struggle and wonder what God is doing in your life. As Jacob gave his son Gods words of encouragement, so will I with you.

- ✠ *Isaiah 41:13 For I, the LORD your God, will hold your right hand, Saying to you, 'Fear not, I will help you.'*
- ✠ *Matt 14:27-29 But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid." And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water." So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus.*
- ✠ *Matt 17:7-8 But Jesus came and touched them and said, "Arise, and do not be afraid." When they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.*
- ✠ *Psalms 34:8 Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him!*
- ✠ *Nahum 1:7 (NLT) The LORD is good. When trouble comes, he is a strong refuge. And he knows everyone who trusts in him.*

Take your eyes off of your troubles and set them on Jesus. I know it's a hard thing to do; even Peter who saw the Lord physically, when the storm came in, he took his eyes off the Lord and looked at the storm.

- ✠ *Matt 14:30-31 (NLT) But when he looked around at the high waves, he was terrified and began to sink. "Save me, Lord!" he shouted. Instantly Jesus reached out his hand and grabbed him. "You don't have much faith," Jesus said. "Why did you doubt me?"*

Even as a teacher of Gods word, there are times when the storms seem to overtake me and I look at the problem wondering what am I going to do, rather than looking to the Lord and seeking His direction.

Then when I am over my head I cry out, “*Lord save me!*” And He always does, maybe not in the way I think He should, but in the way which is best for me.

So take courage in Jacob’s words to his son on his sick bed. God has been, and always will be with you.

Jacob had a comfort in this and knowing once again that he had accomplished all that the Lord had him to do. It reminds me of a story I heard about two men who were playing ping-pong at one of the men’s house. One man asked the other, “*If you knew the Lord were coming back in one hour from now, what would you do?*” The other mans reply was, “*I would finish our game.*”

Reading this you may think, “*is this man crazy, shouldn’t he go tell everyone about Jesus coming back?*”

But the man’s reply was that he had done all the Lord had him to do. He shared Jesus with his friends, family and co-workers. He knew that if the Lord came back at that moment that he did all that he could.

What about you? What if today were your last day here on earth, would you be comfortable in knowing that you had done all the Lord had you to do? Maybe you think, “*I have plenty of time. At least 20 or 30 years left.*” There is a man in the bible that felt that way.

† **Luke 12:19-21 (NLT)** *And I'll sit back and say to myself, My friend, you have enough stored away for years to come. Now take it easy! Eat, drink, and be merry!*
"But God said to him, 'You fool! You will die this very night. Then who will get it all?'
"Yes, a person is a fool to store up earthly wealth but not have a rich relationship with God."

We say, “*Tomorrow I will tell them about Jesus*”, or “*Next year I will start reading through the bible, or fasting or praying more.*” Maybe, “*I'll invite them to church next week*” Why not tell them about Jesus now? Today is the day of salvation, not tomorrow or Sunday. And the Lord wants to use you. That’s right, you!

“*But I don’t know much about the bible, what if they ask me a question I don’t know the answer to?*”

Good question but also a cop out. Jesus tells us to go into the world and witness about Him. He didn’t say be a bible scholar, go to seminary or bible collage or even mission trips, then come home and tell others about Jesus. No, Jesus wants us to tell them now. I’ve heard it said that when you witness, the first word is from you, and everything else is from the Holy Spirit.

So all you have to do is get that first word out and let the Lord do the rest. Is it hard? At the beginning yes. But so was learning to ride a bike or standing up on roller blades.

But now you don't even have to think about it. It's the same way with witnessing, it will start to come natural because you know the Holy Spirit is doing it, and not you; therefore your confidence is in the Lord.

✠ **5** *"And now your two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, are mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine.*

What is going on here? We read the answer further on in the bible.

✠ **1 Chron 5:1-2 (NLT)** *The oldest son of Israel was Reuben. But since he dishonored his father by sleeping with one of his father's concubines, his birthright was given to the sons of his brother Joseph. For this reason, Reuben is not listed in the genealogy as the firstborn son. It was the descendants of Judah that became the most powerful tribe and provided a ruler for the nation, but the birthright belonged to Joseph.*

Then Jacob tells of how his mother died on the way and where she was buried.

✠ **Gen 48:8-14** ⁸ *Then Israel saw Joseph's sons, and said, "Who are these?"* ⁹ *And Joseph said to his father, "They are my sons, whom God has given me in this place." And he said, "Please bring them to me, and I will bless them."* ¹⁰ *Now the eyes of Israel were dim with age, so that he could not see. Then Joseph brought them near him, and he kissed them and embraced them.* ¹¹ *And Israel said to Joseph, "I had not thought to see your face; but in fact, God has also shown me your offspring!"* ¹² *So Joseph brought them from beside his knees, and he bowed down with his face to the earth.* ¹³ *And Joseph took them both, Ephraim with his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh with his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near him.* ¹⁴ *Then Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand on Manasseh's head, guiding his hands knowingly, for Manasseh was the firstborn.*

You may be reading this and thinking, "Jacob has been in Egypt for 17 years and has never seen his grandsons?"

Let's read it from the NLT.

✠ **Gen 48:8 (NLT)** *Then Jacob looked over at the two boys. "Are these your sons?" he asked.*

Also notice it says that Jacobs eyes where going bad from old age.

Jacob had thought in the past that it was all over for him and that he had lost his son Joseph, but God blesses him with being able to see his son Joseph again and also his grandchildren.

If you look back on your life, where there times you can remember that you thought things would never get good again? It seemed you had hit rock bottom and would never get up. But look at your life now. Look how the Lord has blessed you all these years. The Lord never left you; once again you looked at the situation and not the Lord.

So as Joseph brings his sons before Jacob to bless them, he brings Manasseh, the oldest to Jacob's right hand and Ephraim to his left as the custom was to bless the oldest with the right hand and a better blessing.

But that wasn't what Jacob had in mind, or should I say what the Lord had in mind, because Jacob crossed his arms and put his right hand on the younger and his left hand on the oldest.

✧ **Gen 48:15-16** ¹⁵ *And he blessed Joseph, and said:
"God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked,
The God who has fed me all my life long to this day,
¹⁶ The Angel who has redeemed me from all evil,
Bless the lads;
Let my name be named upon them,
And the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac;
And let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth."*

A few things I notice about this blessing and prayer to the Lord. Remember that there was a famine on the whole earth for seven years. But notice that Jacob did not acknowledge his son Joseph or Pharaoh as the one who provided food for him, but rather the Lord was the one who provided.

Second, God has protected Jacob with an angel. We have talked about angels in the past and I won't get too deep into them again, but throughout the bible we do read of angels protecting others and sent by God to help people.

Finally I read that Jacob was praying the Lord's will for these two boys. Remember God's promise that we just read? *And let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.*" This was Jacob praying God's words back to God acknowledging he was doing God's will. That's what prayer is all about, not conforming God to our will, but God conforming us to His will.

✧ **Gen 48:17-22** ¹⁷ *Now when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand on the head of Ephraim, it displeased him; so he took hold of his father's hand to remove 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; put your right hand on his head." ¹⁹ But his father refused and said, "I know, my son, I know. He also shall become a people, and he also shall be great; but truly 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 bless, saying, 'May God make you as Ephraim and as Manasseh!' " And thus he set Ephraim before Manasseh. 21 Then Israel said to Joseph, "Behold, I am dying, but God will be with you and bring you back to the land of your fathers. 22 "Moreover I have given to you one portion above your brothers, which I took from the hand of the Amorite with my sword and my bow."

Joseph knew of the custom of blessing the firstborn with the initial blessing, but so did Jacob, and even though Jacob's eyesight was bad at this time, he knew what he was doing. This was no mistake by an old blind man.

✠ *But his father refused and said, "I know, my son, I know. He also shall become a people, and he also shall be great; but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he."*

These are not words of an old man trying to cover up his mistake. No, these are words of an obedient servant of God. This was God's choice, and even though it didn't seem right to Joseph, Jacob stood his ground because it was the Lord's will.

It's so easy to compromise and try to please those around us. But the question you need to ask yourself is, who would you rather please, the world or God? Think about Daniel, he had to make a choice whether to compromise his walk with the Lord and just not pray for thirty days, or be thrown to a den of hungry lions.

✠ *Dan 6:7 & 10 All the governors of the kingdom, the administrators and satraps, the counselors and advisors, have consulted together to establish a royal statute and to make a firm decree, that whoever petitions any god or man for thirty days, except you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions.*

Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days.

Notice that it was Daniel's custom to pray three times a day to the Lord. He didn't just start doing it because he was told he couldn't. Something to think about when you hear of someone not being able to have a bible at work or pray in school. Don't start reading your bible at work because someone else got in trouble for it and you want to make a statement.

✠ *Dan 6:16 So the king gave the command, and they brought Daniel and cast him into the den of lions. But the king spoke, saying to Daniel, "Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you."*

Reading on in the story of Daniel we read that the king knew of Daniel's God, he even says, *"Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you."*

How would you like your boss to say that about you and God! As you know the story God does deliver Daniel from the den of lions.

† **Dan 6:26a** *I make a decree that in every dominion of my kingdom men must tremble and fear before the God of Daniel.*

By Daniel not compromising the king and the whole land knew of God and how great He is. So even though you may be tempted to compromise, even for a short time, don't do it. Just trust in the Lord, the consequences may not come out like they did for Daniel, but as his companions said earlier in another part of the book of Daniel.

† **Dan 3:16-18 (NLT)** *Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego replied, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God whom we serve is able to save us. He will rescue us from your power, Your Majesty. But even if he doesn't, Your Majesty can be sure that we will never serve your gods or worship the gold statue you have set up."*

But even if he doesn't, we will never serve your gods or worship the gold statue you have set up. Faith in God is not just only believing that He will get you through a situation, but knowing even if God chooses not to, He is still God and you will serve no other.

If you read church history, you will read of many Christians who were thrown to the lions and killed, many were tortured and all sorts of unspeakable things happening to them, But even though they died they still knew that they served God and never stopped loving Him or doubting His love for them. Even Stephen, the first martyr for Christ said these words as he was being stoned.

† **Acts 7:59-60** *And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.*

Next week we will look at the blessing of Jacob upon his 12 sons before he dies.

May God richly bless you and watch over you and your family!