

## Studies in Genesis – Chapter 48

### Introduction:

1. In our most recent study in Genesis we considered the contents of chapter 47. By way of background information to chapter 47, we state that:
  - a. The family of Joseph, due to Joseph's influence, journeyed to Egypt to live during a time of great famine which prevailed over both the land of Canaan and the land of Egypt; a famine for which the Egyptians had made preparation.
  - b. All the family arrived in Egypt; Jacob was able to see Joseph for the first time in 22 years; upon seeing him he *"fell on his neck and wept...a good while,"* Genesis 46:29.
  - c. The family of Joseph settled in the land of Goshen, the best part of the land.
  - d. From chapter 47 we noted three important items:
    - (1) Joseph presented five of his brothers and their father to Pharaoh, Genesis 47:1-12.
    - (2) Joseph dealt very wisely with the Egyptians as the famine continued, Genesis 47:13-16.
    - (3) Joseph vowed to Jacob, his father, that he would bury him in the land of Canaan, Genesis 47:27-31.
2. Genesis 47 concluded with information pertaining to the age of Jacob, of his living in the land of Egypt another 17 years, and of Jacob insisting that Joseph swear to him that he would bury him in the *"burial place"* of his *"fathers."* Evidently some time passed between the end of chapter 47 and the beginning of chapter 48, for Joseph was away when news came that his father was *"sick,"* Genesis 48:1.

### Discussion:

#### I. Brief Outline of Genesis, Chapter 48.

- A. Joseph and his two sons visited his dying father, Genesis 48:1-7.
- B. Jacob blessed the two sons of Joseph, Genesis 48:8-22.

#### II. A Closer Look at Genesis, chapter 48.

- A. Joseph and his two sons visited his dying father, Genesis 48:1-7.
  1. *"After these things,"* Joseph was told *"indeed your father is sick,"* v. 1.
    - a. After the *"things"* mentioned in Genesis 47:27-31.
    - b. Joseph *"took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim,"* v. 1. Their births are recorded in Genesis 41:50-52; being born *"before the years of the famine came,"* v. 50.
  2. Jacob was told that Joseph was coming, so he *"strengthened himself and sat up on the bed,"* v. 2.
    - a. He collected his strength; he had an important job to do before dying!
  3. Jacob told Joseph about what God had done for him, Genesis 48:3,4.
    - a. *"God Almighty appeared to me at Luz...and blessed me,"* v. 3; Genesis 28:10-19. Luz was the same as Bethel, Genesis 28:19; 35:1-3,9-15.
    - b. *"God said...I will make you fruitful and multiply you..."* Genesis 48:4; 28:14.
    - c. God said I will *"give this land to your descendants..."*, Genesis 48:4; 28:13; 35:12.
  4. *"And now your two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh,...are mine,"* Genesis 48:5.
    - a. Jacob, in essence, was adopting Joseph's sons!
    - b. He said they *"are mine; as Reuben and Simeon,"* the first born sons of Jacob, Genesis 29:32,33.
      - (1) Ultimately they would supersede Reuben and Simeon, because of the grievous sins of Reuben and Simeon, I Chronicles 5:1; Genesis 35:22; 34:25.
    - c. Ephraim and Manasseh would become two of the tribes of Israel. Study a map of Canaan, after Joshua, and you will note twelve sections of land allotted to the various tribes, including Ephraim and Manasseh. The tribe of Levi, the priestly tribe, was not given a specific land allotment, but received cities, and their common land, throughout the land of Canaan, Joshua 14:4; Numbers 35:2-8.
  5. *"Your offspring...after them shall be yours; they will be called by the name of their brothers in their inheritance,"* Genesis 48:6.
    - a. If Joseph had other sons (none are listed), they would be called by the *"name of their brothers"* – either of the tribe of Ephraim or Manasseh.
  6. Jacob then mentioned the death of Rachel, Genesis 48:7.
    - a. Joseph (and Benjamin) were the sons of Rachel, Genesis 30:24; 35:16-19, who was Jacob's first real love, Genesis 29:18-20. So the sons of Joseph would receive favored status.
- B. Jacob blessed the two sons of Joseph, Genesis 48:8-22.
  1. Jacob (Israel) saw Joseph's sons; asked *"whose are these?"* Genesis 48:8

2. Jacob said *"bring them to me, and I will bless them,"* Genesis 48:9,10.
3. Jacob's gratitude surfaced: *"I had not thought to see your face; but in fact, God has also shown me your offspring,"* Genesis 48:11. For 22 years he thought Joseph was dead!
4. *"Joseph brought them from beside his knees, and he bowed down with his face to the earth,"* v. 12.
  - a. These were not little boys sitting on his knees! Note Genesis 41:50.
5. Jacob was seated; Joseph, with Ephraim on his right hand and Manasseh on his left hand, brought them to Jacob, believing that the blessing of the first born would be conferred upon Manasseh, Genesis 48:13,14. But Jacob first began to bless Ephraim!
6. In blessing Ephraim, Jacob praised God, saying,
  - a. He has *"fed me all my life long to this day,"* v. 15.
  - b. *"The Angel...has redeemed me from all evil,"* v. 16. Perhaps the same "Angel" as in Genesis 22:11.
  - c. *"Let my name be upon them,"* v. 16. They would be reckoned among the Israelites.
  - d. *"Let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth,"* v. 16.
7. Joseph thought his father was confused, so he tried to correct him, only to learn that his dad knew what he was doing, Genesis 48:17-19.
8. Jacob blessed both Ephraim and Manasseh, but said the *"younger brother shall be greater than he and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations,"* Genesis 48:19, 20.
  - a. Ephraim became great; ultimately "Ephraim" became a metaphor to refer to all the ten northern tribes, Isaiah 7:8, 17; 11:13. In the first census the family of Ephraim numbered 40,500, whereas the family of Manasseh numbered 32,200, Numbers 1:32-35.
9. Israel's promise to Joseph –*"God will be with you and bring you back to the land of your fathers,"* Genesis 48:21. This took place many years later, when under the leadership of Moses, the Israelites left the land of Egypt enroute to the land of Canaan.
10. *"I have given you one portion above your brothers,"* Genesis 48:22.
  - a. Joseph, through his sons, would receive two portions of the land of Canaan, whereas each of the other tribes (excepting Levi) would receive one portion.
  - b. Thus Joseph, the first born son of Rachel, received a double portion of the land. Cf. Deut. 21:17.

### III. Some Practical Applications to be obtained from this Chapter:

- A. Children are gifts from God.
  1. Joseph said *"these are my sons whom God has given me in this place,"* Genesis 48:9; cf. Psalm 127:3.
- B. God-Fearing Parents share their faith with their offspring.
  1. Jacob asked Joseph to *"bring"* his sons to him, so that he might *"bless them,"* Genesis 48:9. Cf. Ephesians 6:4.
- C. God-Fearing Children show Respect for their God-fearing parents.
  1. Joseph, second in command over all Egypt, came before his shepherd father and *"bowed down with his face to the earth,"* Genesis 48:12. Cf. Exodus 20:12.
- D. Things are often better than they seem.
  1. Jacob thought Joseph was dead and would never see him again, but he was permitted to see him and his two sons, Genesis 48:11.
  2. His sufferings were great, but his blessings were many; so it is with us if we are faithful Christians, Romans 8:18.
- E. We reap as we sow, Galatians 6:7.
  1. Reuben was the natural firstborn, but Reuben's misconduct caused him to pay a great price, Genesis 48:5; Genesis 49:3,4.
- F. God is our Shepherd!
  1. Jacob referred to *"the God who has fed me,"* Genesis 48:15. Literally, it means "the God Who has shepherded me." David used the *"shepherd"* metaphor to refer to God, Psalm 23:8; 80:1.
  2. Sheep require endless attention; they are easily panicked, and prone to stray. God wants His people properly shepherded! John 10:11; Hebrews 13:20,21; Acts 20:28.

### Conclusion:

1. God kept His promises to His people in Old Testament times, ultimately even sending His own Son to save us from our sins, Luke 24:44; John 3:16; Hebrews 5:9.

--Bobby Witherington, January 8, 2012

