

Intro: We are in the latter part of Gen. 47, as we approach the last few stages of Joseph's story.

* At this point, Joseph has revealed himself to his brothers, they have gone back home to tell Jacob that Joseph is alive, and Jacob and all his family have made the trip to Egypt.

* When they arrived, Joseph took his brothers to see Pharaoh to secure the land of Goshen for the place where the family would settle.

* Then Joseph brought his aged father before Pharaoh, and old Jacob showed his great confidence in God by blessing Pharaoh when he came in and when he left.

* After that, we learned how Joseph decisively saved the masses in the region from starvation and death, in the way he handled the famine.

* Now in 47:27, the famine has been over for some 12 years,
and because of Joseph's honest leadership, and his godly life---,
-- Joseph has remained as Prime Minister in Egypt, and the Empire has once again
become thriving and plentiful.

* Now in the last part of Ch. 47 and then in Ch. 48, the text focuses on 2 promises.

I. JOSEPH'S PROMISE TO JACOB - ABOUT HIS BURIAL IN CANAAN. (Gen 47:27-31)

II. JACOB'S PROMISE TO JOSEPH, IN BESTOWING HIS BIRTHRIGHT. (48: whole)

I. JOSEPH'S PROMISE TO JACOB - ABOUT HIS BURIAL. (Gen 47:27-31)

* As we've already seen, looking at Joseph's life also turns out to be a look at Jacob's life, as well. *
These last 5 verses of Ch 47, speak of 2 things about Jacob.

A. JACOB'S BLESSINGS. (vs 27-28- read) The text shows 4 ways Jacob was blessed.

1. Jacob was blessed physically. (27)

- In Jacob's 17 years in Egypt, at the normal rate of growth, his family would now number about 300 or so, which means they have become a large community of people.
- Some 400 years in the future, they will number some 2 million as they leave Egypt with Moses.

2. Jacob was blessed materially. (27)

- While living in Goshen, the most lush land in the Empire, they gained property, which means they continued to grow financially, which would benefit their long-term growth, as they developed into a small nation.

3. Jacob was blessed relationally. (28)

- Jacob and Joseph got to spend the first 17 years of Joseph's life, together. Vs 28 shows that now, Jacob has been blessed to spend the last 17 years of his life with Joseph.

4. Jacob was blessed spiritually. (We learn this from WHAT IS NOT SAID)

- Much of Jacob's story in Genesis relates to someone's sin, (Jacob's, Laban's, the son's), which shows the consequences that Jacob and his family suffered from it.
- But for the last 17 years, absolutely nothing negative or sinful is mentioned. Why?
- Because God worked in Jacob and his son's lives, and brought them to be changed men.
- Jacob- the self-serving deceiver, had become a humble, fulfilled servant of God.
- And Joseph's lying, conniving, vicious brothers, were following God as well.
- And with Joseph's help, It seems Jacob and his sons had protected the family from Egypt's sin and paganism, and had grown them to love and obey God, so in these late years, Jacob's story is devoid of any mention of sin.

Lsn- From early in Jacob's life, they had much physical prosperity, but troubled relationships. But now, the sinful relationships in Jacob's home, have been swallowed up in godliness. 2/3

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B. JACOB'S REQUEST FOR BURIAL. (29-31- read)

* This again indicates Jacob's changed heart. God had promised great things for the family's future- to Jacob's grandfather Abraham, to His father Isaac, and to Jacob as well.

* God said he would make of them a great nation, numbered like the stars and the sand, and that he would give them **a land** that would be their possession forever.

* Abraham had been led to that land, and at this point, the family had lived there 2 centuries.

* Here, Jacob showed how centered his heart was on God's promises, and how serious he took his responsibility to remind the family that Egypt was not their permanent home.

* So as Jacob neared death, he made Joseph swear a serious oath that when he died, Joseph and the family would not bury him in Egypt, but in God's promised land.

* Notice 2 lessons here.

1. This request displayed Jacob's "world view". (we hear that a lot in our time)

- Your world view is how you perceive and interpret history and present times, and how your life should fit into those things. ("the lens you perceive life through")

- With this request, Jacob showed that his view of life was not about prospering in Egypt, or about the greatness of that place, even though Joseph was elevated there.

- Jacob viewed the world as God's place, where God's plan and promises to the family were to be followed; And because of his godly view of life, he demanded to be buried in the land God had promised to give the family.

Lsn- This is God's world, and His purposes will be fulfilled, and like Jacob, believers are to make God's truth and His purposes the lens we view every detail of our world and our life through. **(David said- Ps. 73:23-28)**

2. When Joseph made his promise, Jacob worshipped (31)

- Again, the desire of Jacob's heart was to fulfill the purpose God had for him.

- The Lord had brought him through all his struggles, to fulfill that purpose.

- And even though Jacob knew his spirit would "rest with his fathers", he wanted his body to rest in God's land, so His death would focus the family on believing and honoring God's plan and promise for His people.

- So when Joseph made his promise, Jacob worshipped- he bowed to God in thanks.

II. JACOB'S PROMISE TO JOSEPH, IN BESTOWING HIS BIRTHRIGHT. (48:1-22)

6 details describe this part of the story.

A. JOSEPH AND HIS SONS VISITED JACOB. (1-2- read)

* When Joseph and his 2 sons came to visit, Jacob used this opportunity to formalize the giving of the birthright to Joseph.

* When Joseph was 17, Jacob granted him the birthright, by giving him his coat of many colors, which made him co-ruler with Jacob over the family and its business.

(Rueben the firstborn forfeited this right by sinning against his father with Bilhah)

* The birthright meant that when Jacob died, Joseph would inherit a double portion of the family estate, and would be the leader and caretaker of the family.

* But now time has passed, and because years earlier, Jacob assumed Joseph was dead, Joseph may have thought his father awarded the birthright to another brother (Judah?)

* But even though the choice was made years ago, the birthright wasn't formally bestowed until the father was near the end of his life. Here, Jacob confirmed the BR belongs to Joseph.

B. JACOB REAFFIRMED THE BIRTHRIGHT BY ADOPTING JOSEPH'S SONS. (3-6- read)

* Remember that the birthright would give Joseph the leadership of the family, and a double portion of the family's wealth.

* But in v3-4, Jacob began by rehearsing the promise God gave him years ago, that God would increase his numbers, "make him a community of peoples" to dwell in the land of Canaan as Abraham was promised (a community of tribes),

* The point is- Joseph was already leading the family by his promotion in Egypt, and by bringing the family to Goshen, and Joseph was wealthy, so he didn't need the family's money.

* So the way Jacob gave Joseph a double portion of the inheritance, was to adopt his 2 sons as equals to Joseph's other brothers, so they would each get a tribe in the future nation.

* In ancient times, land was the greatest asset you could have, so Jacob adopting Ephraim and Manasseh was a huge honor for Joseph. 2 probable reasons Jacob did this.

1. Jacob recognized that Joseph had paid a great price to deliver the family, and had been faithful in all he did, so Joseph was worthy of the birthright.

2. Jacob was reminded that Joseph's sons were Rachel's grandsons. (7-read)

Looking at Joseph and his 2 sons, reminded Jacob of his deep love for Rachel. 4a

C. THE SONS WERE PRESENTED TO RECEIVE JACOB'S BLESSING. (8-14) 2 steps

1st- Jacob acknowledged Joseph's 2 sons and greeted them. (8-11-read)

- With bad eyesight and probably a bad memory as well, after talking to Joseph, Jacob saw his sons. (They had surely come there before, but Jacob just didn't remember.)
- Then Jacob formally kissed and embraced both sons, and confessed his joy and surprise that not only was he able to see Joseph again, but he was able to see his sons as well.

2nd- Joseph arranged his sons to receive the blessing . (12-14- read)

- Understand- this passing of the birthright, was considered a serious, life altering event. This meant God was passing down His will to the family through Jacob.
- And it was a mandate for Joseph's sons to set aside whatever loyalty they may have had to Egypt, to make God's will and living in God's land, their life's priority in the future.
- So to begin, notice that even though Joseph had great earthly authority in Egypt, he bowed in submission and honor to the spiritual authority his father had with God.
- Then Joseph led his sons to kneel in front of Jacob as he sat on the edge of his bed (v2), Ephraim by Jacob's left hand, and Manasseh by Jacob's right hand (firstborn).
- This was important because the **firstborn** son (Manasseh) was to receive the greater part of the blessing, which was bestowed by the father's right hand. (the hand of strength)
- **But notice- Jacob did just the opposite-** he crossed his arms and placed his right hand on Ephraim- the younger, and his left hand on Manasseh the firstborn. **Then --**

D.

JACOB IMMEDIATELY PRONOUNCED THE BLESSING. (15-16- read)

* In a moment we'll see Joseph's reaction, **but 1st- notice 4 key truths** that Jacob passed down to these sons, that show us what we are to pass down to our children.

1. Jacob called on God whom they had followed, from Abraham to the present time.

- He emphasized Abraham and Isaac's walk with the Lord to remind these sons who the true God is, and that this family has followed the true God all their history.
- By doing so, Jacob reinforced what they no doubt had heard from Joseph all their life, and saying this, Jacob was separating them from any allegiance to Egypt's paganism.

App- Of all we pass down to our children to make them responsible adults, the most important thing is - we serve the One and Only True God. (stats show failure) (pluralism) 5/6

2. Jacob spoke of how God had led him, all his days. (15b)

- He called God his **SHEPHERD**.
- This is the first time in the bible, God is referred to as the Shepherd of His people.
- This became a major theme later in the bible as David said- "The Lord is my Shepherd".
- And Jesus referred to Himself as the good Shepherd of the sheep. (Jn 10) Significance---
- For many reasons, sheep are very difficult to lead and care for. They are unaware, stupid, timid, easily panicked, cruel and competitive, and prone to infection by parasites, bugs.
- In the spiritual realm, this sounds much like God's people, and Jacob knew all too well that he had been a difficult person as God led him; But looking back on his life, he saw how patient God had been to lead and care for him, in spite of his foolishness and sin.

3. Jacob also called God his protecting angel. (16a).

- , There were several times Jacob was in trouble, often due to his own sin, and God protected and delivered him from harm. (Esau, Laban, Shechem)
- , This would remind these 2 sons that their own father was protected by God, as God used Joseph to be sold into Egypt, so he could provide for Jacob's family in the future.

4. He stressed their identity with God's people, and God's blessings. (16b)

SUM-

What should we communicate to our children?

- We follow the true God, who will lead and protect his children all our days, forgive our sin when we fail, and give us the joy of being in God's family, which brings us God's continued blessings.
- Jacob was doing with Joseph's 2 sons, what David did century's later in **Psalms 78:1-8.**
- There is no greater responsibility in life than passing to the next generation, the truth about God, and the importance of a relationship with God.

E. NEXT, JOSEPH PROTESTED HOW JACOB BLESSED HIS SONS. (17-18- read)

- This seems familiar. Years ago, Jacob stole Esau's birthright because Isaac couldn't see. Now it seems Joseph thought because Jacob couldn't see, he made the same mistake.
- Joseph wasn't being disrespectful, he just wanted the firstborn to receive the greater blessing. But once the blessing was officially bestowed, it could not be reversed. (Isaac- Esau, livid)
- And in this situation, Jacob so quickly pronounced the blessing, that Ephraim the younger was favored rather than Manasseh, and now it was too late, and Joseph was upset.

F. TO ANSWER JOSEPH, JACOB DEFENDED HIS BLESSING. (19-20- read)

- When Joseph tried to rearrange Jacob's hands, Jacob informed Joseph that his placement was not due to his bad eyesight or bad memory, He said twice, "I know".
- Then Joseph knew that God was leading his father Jacob, to deliberately go against tradition and give the greater blessing to Ephraim rather than Manasseh, the firstborn.
- , God did this with Abraham when the promise went to Isaac rather than Ismael.
- God did this with Isaac when He allowed him to bless Jacob rather than Esau.
- , And here God led Jacob to bless the younger Ephraim, over the first born- Manasseh, as he listed him first in v20 saying- "God make you **AS** Ephraim and Manasseh". (ESV)

Question- Why did God go against tradition, and not honor the first born.

* Apparently, God was showing God's family that in the lives of God's people, human will or tradition is not our guide. God's will is, even if it seems strange.

* We shouldn't let the world set the tone for how we live, what we think, or what we decide.
WE BELONG TO GOD, THAT'S GOD'S PLACE IN OUR LIFE. (Roman 12:1-2- read)

Note- Just so we know that it was God who led the 3 patriarchs in this change of blessing--
This prophecy came true.

- Ephraim the younger became so dominant in Israel that when the nation split, it was Jeroboam an Ephraimite, who ruled the 10 northern tribes, and later, the northern kingdom actually came to be called - Ephraim.

CONCLUSION- (21-22-read)

- * Here, Jacob again confirmed his blessing to Joseph by promising him that God would one day return them to the land, and Jacob even identified the land Joseph would receive.
- * And more than 400 years later, when Moses and Israel finally possessed the land, this is exactly the part of the land that went to Joseph's 2 sons. (God's in control)

Lesson- In our modern time, these birthright blessings seem foreign to us, but there is a great lesson here for everyone who follows God.

- * The OT birthright blessing, had mostly to do with earthly things--
Leadership of the family, and a double portion of the estate.

@ But it was a picture of spiritual blessing as well.

- * The firstborn son was given the privilege to be inseparably connected to the father, and was given the responsibility to serve the family for the father.
- * **As believers**, we've all been given the privilege to be equally connected to God through Christ, and all of us have been given a birthright that includes both privilege and responsibility.
- * We are one with Christ and the Father through the Spirit, and we are responsible to righteously, faithfully, and honestly, live a life that honor's the Father, and is used by the Lord to serve the Father's family, and grow it as well.
- * In this ancient setting, Joseph fulfilled the firstborn responsibilities well, and Jacob's faithful promise to Joseph in vs 21 was - 'God will be with you, and lead you'.
- * This is God's world. That being true, every human has to decide if they want to be led by and blessed by the Owner and controller of the world, and fulfill his will in this life and the next, or live their life on their own, for themselves, without God, in this life or the next.
- * Have you made the right choice?