

Genesis Chapter 48 Commentary

1 ¶ And it came to pass after these things, that one told Joseph, Behold, thy father is sick: and he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. 2 And one told Jacob, and said, Behold, thy son Joseph cometh unto thee: and Israel strengthened himself, and sat upon the bed. 3 And Jacob said unto Joseph, God Almighty appeared unto me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and blessed me, 4 And said unto me, Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and I will make of thee a multitude of people; and will give this land to thy seed after thee for an everlasting possession. 5 And now thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt before I came unto thee into Egypt, are mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine. 6 And thy issue, which thou begetttest after them, shall be thine, and shall be called after the name of their brethren in their inheritance.

Luz was the city's name originally, but Jacob changed it to Bethel, seen in: ***Ge 28:19 "And he called the name of that place Bethel: but the name of that city was called Luz at the first."***

Don't miss; Jacob tells Joseph, of the promise of God given to him at Bethel, and he tells him of the possession that is to be given to Israel later. Remember, the possession promised is not in Egypt. Remember, Israel is to become a very large nation in population. This will happen while Israel is in Egypt. It will be about four hundred years before this promise comes to fruition.

"And now thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh-are mine" Jacob tells Joseph, thy two sons are hereby adopted into my family, as though they were my very own. These children of yours, by adoption, shall be mine, and shall share in all that my own sons share in, both natural and spiritual blessings.

Vernon McGee points out something I had never thought of. You never hear of the tribe of Joseph being named when the tribes of Israel are named. You do hear the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh mentioned.

If Israel adopts Ephraim and Manasseh as his own sons, this will make 14 sons and there are only 12 tribes of Israel. When we get to the division of the Promised Land, we shall see how this plays out. The tribe of Levi, the priest, never got a portion of land given that was designated the land of Levi, as seen in:

- ***Jos 13:14 "Only unto the tribe of Levi he gave none inheritance; the sacrifices of the LORD God of Israel made by fire are their inheritance, as he said unto them."***
- ***Jos 13:33 But unto the tribe of Levi Moses gave not any inheritance: the LORD God of Israel was their inheritance, as he said unto them."***

There is no property mapped out with border lines for Levi. They were given possession of property in and around cities all over Israel. Neither do you find a land given to Joseph. These two sons of Joseph replaced the tribe of Levi and the name of Joseph in the division of the property. In Numbers chapter 34 the Lord tells Moses who to appoint as head of each tribe to receive property, and thus we find in: ***Nu 34:23-24; 23 "The prince of the children of Joseph, for the tribe of the children of Manasseh, Hanniel the son of Ephod. 24 And the prince of the tribe of the children of Ephraim, Kemuel the son of Shipthan."*** Thus, when you look at maps, that show the different tribal possessions of property for Israel, you will see land with borders mapped out for both Ephraim and Manasseh.

This provides us a picture of the grace church being adopted/grafted into the family of God. Our portion is the same. We are all seed of Christ; as Jacob is telling Joseph; his seed is still seed of Abraham, even though they are born in a strange land.

One other thought I have this morning concerning the tribe of Levi. The Levites were servant to Israel. They had no possession, except the cities where they were to teach, and carry out the ceremonial and sacrificial law ordinances. Compare this set up with the church today and the ministerial portions. The ministers, of the gospel of Jesus Christ, are given no earthly possession. They are given to teach and preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, wherever God appoints them in this world. Do you see each individual church and its pastor? The pastor is not given the church, but rather, the church is given a servant of God, the pastor or minister, to lead them in the way that God has provided.

7 And as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan in the way, when yet there was but a little way to come unto Ephrath: and I buried her there in the way of Ephrath; the same is Bethlehem.

My mind is drawn to this verse, and I want you to see a picture, which God has opened in my mind. Think about Rachel, who was the love of Jacob's life. She was his first love, but through deceit he was married to Leah first. Now consider; through deceit of Eve and Adam in the garden man fell in sin. Therefore, it was necessary that the law service come forth to manifest to mankind that they were sinners by nature, if not also by practice, and that there must be the shedding of blood for the remission of sins. This all was prophetic of what Christ Jesus would do when he came into the world incarnate.

How, you ask? Rachel died first, and then Leah died. In this we see: Rachel, the grace church, which was prophesied to come, in the future, had to be buried and await resurrection with Christ, that the life of Leah, the law church, might be lived out and then die. Did you notice; Rachel was buried at Bethlehem, which is the place of the birth of Christ? The birth of Jesus is the fulfilling, of the prophesy of the coming of the Messiah, and the birth of the Church of Salvation by Grace in the world. We, the grace church, we raised with Christ in his resurrection, seen in:

- ***Ro 8:11 "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you."***
- ***1Co 15:20-26; 20 ¶ "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. 21 For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. 23 But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. 24 Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. 25 For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. 26 The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."***
- ***2Co 4:14 "Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you."***
- ***Eph 2:5-7; 5 "Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly***

places in Christ Jesus: 7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus."

I trust you can understand; when Christ arose from the dead; he raised up the church of Salvation by Grace, the prophetic picture of Rachel, with himself.

8 ¶ And Israel beheld Joseph's sons, and said, Who are these? 9 And Joseph said unto his father, They are my sons, whom God hath given me in this place. And he said, Bring them, I pray thee, unto me, and I will bless them. 10 Now the eyes of Israel were dim for age, so that he could not see. And he brought them near unto him; and he kissed them, and embraced them. 11 And Israel said unto Joseph, I had not thought to see thy face: and, lo, God hath shewed me also thy seed. 12 And Joseph brought them out from between his knees, and he bowed himself with his face to the earth.

Notice, both Jacob, and Joseph, acknowledge that God is the giver of their children.

"and he bowed himself with his face to the earth." We see that Joseph, though lord of the land of Egypt, still gives due reverence to his father. This will lead us to the commandment to be given in Exodus and Deuteronomy about honoring the father and mother:

- ***Ex 20:12 ¶ "Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee."***
- ***De 5:16 "Honour thy father and thy mother, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee; that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee."***

13 And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near unto him. 14 And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands wittingly; for Manasseh was the firstborn.

Again, we see; the younger brother is placed ahead of the older brother.

15 And he blessed Joseph, and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day,

"And he blessed Joseph, and said," Jacob blesses Joseph, but the blessing is not directly to Joseph. Joseph is receiving blessing through the blessing his father is bestowing upon Joseph's sons. Notice how the text reads: ***"God, bless the lads;"*** and etc.

"the God which fed me all my life long unto this day" We see that Jacob acknowledges that it is God who has fed, and kept, him all the days of his life. So, it should be with us in this life today. Every day; we should be thankful to God for the blessings of life bestowed upon us.

16 The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.

Jacob acknowledges; his protector, and redeemer, has been an Angel, capitalized. This leads us to believe that Christ, pre-incarnate, has been leading Jacob along. How can we determine this? Jacob acknowledges, this Angel has redeemed him, as a kinsman redeemer would, and has forgiven my sins. Now I ask you, where does remission of sins come from? God, only, is able to forgive sin. God manifested this on the earth in His own Son, our Saviour, our Lord, and our Redeemer.

"and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac" We see here confirmation, that Jacob is indeed adopting them into his family as his own sons.

17 And when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it displeased him: and he held up his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's head unto Manasseh's head. 18 And Joseph said unto his father, Not so, my father: for this is the firstborn; put thy right hand upon his head.

Joseph understood; the right hand had great significance, in the giving of the greatest blessing. This was usually reserved for the firstborn son to come under the right hand of blessing from his father. As the father, Joseph thinks the greater blessing should be upon his eldest son. We have scriptural evidence that the right hand is indeed the place of blessing and power of God in:

- ***Mr 16:19¶ "So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God."***
- ***Lu 22:69 "Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God."***
- ***Ac 2:33 "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear."***
- ***Ac 5:31 "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins."***

19 And his father refused, and said, I know it, my son, I know it: he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great: but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations. 20 And he blessed them that day, saying, In thee shall Israel bless, saying, God make thee as Ephraim and as Manasseh: and he set Ephraim before Manasseh.

We see that Jacob puts the younger before the oldest. As we follow these tribes in scripture, we will see that Ephraim is the largest and most blessed of the two. God does this often in scripture, and it shows us; God does not order His business as men do. Men, in their way of doing things, used the order of birthright to pass along their possessions. God uses whom He chooses to do His business and to inherit His blessings.

We also remember other times when the younger was preferred over the older: as in Jacob himself was chosen over Esau. Here are some more pairs from:

- ***Adam Clarke's Commentary: It is observable how God from the beginning has preferred the younger to the elder, as Abel before Cain; Shem before Japheth; Isaac before Ishmael; Jacob before Esau; Judah and Joseph before Reuben; Ephraim before Manasseh; Moses before Aaron; and David before his brethren.***

21 And Israel said unto Joseph, Behold, I die: but God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers. 22 Moreover I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow.

"God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers." Jacob is faithful to remind Joseph; God promised to bring the nation Israel out of Egypt in the future, seen in: **Ge 46:3-4; 3 "And he said, I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation: 4 I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again: and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes."** Jacob reminds Joseph; God has promised a particular land to the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and myself. When God brings Israel forth from Egypt; God will take them to the land of promise.

"I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren" Naturally, Jacob gave Joseph two portions by adopting his two sons in Joseph's place. Each son received a portion of land in the division of the property in the land of promise.

We come to a better understanding of this text by different references from scripture. **1Ch 5:1-2; 1 ¶ "Now the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel, (for he was the firstborn; but, forasmuch as he defiled his father's bed, his birthright was given unto the sons of Joseph the son of Israel: and the genealogy is not to be reckoned after the birthright. 2 For Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him came the chief ruler; but the birthright was Joseph's:)"** In this text the full implication of the birthright of first-born is shown. From scripture, we discern; the birthright of first-born received two portions of the inheritance while all others received only one portion.

This scripture is evidence that Joseph was the one who received the first-born inheritance after Reuben sinned, seen in: **Jos 17:14-18; 14 ¶ "And the children of Joseph spake unto Joshua, saying, Why hast thou given me but one lot and one portion to inherit, seeing I am a great people, forasmuch as the LORD hath blessed me hitherto? 15 And Joshua answered them, If thou be a great people, then get thee up to the wood country, and cut down for thyself there in the land of the Perizzites and of the giants, if mount Ephraim be too narrow for thee. 16 And the children of Joseph said, The hill is not enough for us: and all the Canaanites that dwell in the land of the valley have chariots of iron, both they who are of Bethshean and her towns, and they who are of the valley of Jezreel. 17 And Joshua spake unto the house of Joseph, even to Ephraim and to Manasseh, saying, Thou art a great people, and hast great power: thou shalt not have one lot only: 18 But the mountain shall be thine; for it is a wood, and thou shalt cut it down: and the outgoings of it shall be thine: for thou shalt drive out the Canaanites, though they have iron chariots, and though they be strong."** This scripture supports that there was a larger portion of land given to the sons of Joseph. They were a large people because God blessed them according to the blessing of Jacob, their adopted father. Instead of being one tribe of people the family of Joseph was two tribes.

It is believed by many commentators that the country of Shechem is intended here because the word **"portion."** This is supported by scripture in:

- **Jos 24:32 "And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, buried they in Shechem, in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for an hundred pieces of silver: and it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph."** Joseph was buried in this parcel of land given to him by his father.

- ***Joh 4:5 "Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph."*** Here is further proof that Jacob gave Shechem to Joseph.

"which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow." We remember; Jacob purchased property at Shechem, before his sons, by means of deceit, killed the male inhabitants of that city, and spoiled it. After this Jacob took his family and fled. From this word of Jacob here noted, we understand; after Jacob left that possession, the Amorites took possession of it, and Jacob had to do battle to reclaim his purchased possession.

Isn't it a wonderful thing to bless your children, in the name of the Lord, before you pass from this life? We thank God the Father; that we were blessed by God the Son, before he left this earth, and returned to his eternal heavenly abode upon the throne of God. God help us to be faithful! Amen!