

Genesis 47-50

I. Chapter 47 – Meet and Greet

This chapter describes the encounter between Pharaoh and Joseph's family as well as explains the devastating affect the drought was having upon the land. The people of Egypt and the surrounding nations were saved by divine intervention and the obedience of Joseph.

1-12 - Jacob and his sons meet pharaoh

Moses draws our attention to 2 primary events in this scene

1. **Goshen**, the best of the pastureland, is given to Jacob because of their relationship with Joseph

Jacob and his eleven sons were given the best that Egypt had to offer.

While the Egyptians suffered under the famine and were forced to forfeit their lands to the state in exchange for food, Jacob's sons were given the best land.

While jobs were scarce Jacob's sons were hired to be the chief herdsmen for Pharaoh's flocks.

In a time of great difficulty they were experiencing such blessings that Jacob predicted that the family would multiply greatly and become a strong nation.

This could easily illustrate the benefits we receive because of the work of Christ

We have forgiveness of sin, eternal life and favor with God not based on our own work but due to our association with Christ.

All who are in relationship with Him are **adopted** sons and daughters and **joint heirs** with Jesus. We are no longer looked upon as **strangers** who live distant from God or as **enemies** who are fighting against God but we are viewed as children who are loved by God.

All the favor of God is given to those who are his by relationship. It matters not the sins we have committed in the

past. Throwing a brother in a pit or lying to dad about his death were not the issue, all that mattered was that Jacob and his sons were related to Joseph.

2. Jacob blesses pharaoh

Genesis 47:7

Then Joseph brought in his father Jacob and set him before Pharaoh; and Jacob blessed Pharaoh.

In ancient times the blessing was always past from the **greater** to the **lesser**. Melchizedek blessed Abram, Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau yet we find an old shepherd blessing the king of the world.

- A. Certainly from heavens perspective Jacob always greater
- B. Jacob uses his age as a ministry opportunity

Aging has its pitfalls that are obvious to everyone, but it also has its benefits and provides new opportunities for ministry

Paul describes the life of a godly older woman who has lost her husband

1 Timothy 5:5

Now she who is really a widow, and left alone, trusts in God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day.

1 Timothy 5:10

Well reported for good works: if she has brought up children, if she has lodged strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has relieved the afflicted, if she has diligently followed every good work.

IT IS ALSO WORTH NOTING that Jacob refers to his life as a pilgrimage!

Pilgrimage –

- a temporary abode rather than a permanent residence
- To life as a stranger or sojourner

Although he worked hard, raised a family, acquired flocks and herds as an inheritance to pass on he still lived with eternity in view

The writer of Hebrews comments on this

Hebrews 11:13

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

It is vital that we live with eternity in view

- Hebrews 11:9-13
- 1Pet 2:11
- Phil 3:20
- 1Pet 1:17

Gen 47:13- 26 gives an overview of the grave conditions of the whole region and the wisdom of Joseph in providing for the people while acquiring greater wealth for Egypt and pharaoh

In summary grain was ultimately traded for land that was leased back to the people for 20% of the proceeds from their crops.

The priests were exempt

No commentary is given on these practices. We do know that it was not long after this that more freedoms were taken from the people and the Israelites were gathered into a slave population to serve the needs of the empire.

It is at least worth questioning the wisdom in making an exception for the priests. We have a similar practice today. However giving should never be driven by tax benefits

Gen 47:27-31

As the chapter closes so do the days of Jacob. He realizes he will pass soon and while Egypt was beautiful he longed to be buried in the land of promise.

II. Chapter 48 – Grandpa Jacob

This chapter focusses upon the blessing that Jacob extends to the tribe of Joseph. His faithfulness would result in getting a double portion. This will explain how

*there are 12 allotments of land although Levi and he priesthood were exempt.
Ephraim and Mannasseh are not sons of Jacob but are treated as such*

They may be a picture of election. They are chosen and given a portion by the sovereign hand of God

Some highlights from this chapter include:

Jacob's reflection

Genesis 48:3-4

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.'

As death approaches Jacob reflects on his encounter with God and the promises which include a nation and a land

His reflection on God's faithfulness continues as he blesses Joseph

Genesis 48:15-16

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,
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."

The God who fed me and redeemed me

Joseph's objection

Genesis 48:17

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.

Joseph objects to the blessing seeming to be out of order. Jacob put the primary blessing on the younger.

God has a way of interrupting culture and doing things in what

seems to be an illogical fashion

- Chooses barren women
- Blesses Jacob over Esau
- Selects Gideon while hiding in a cave
- Chooses the youngest, even forgotten son of Jesse
- Builds the church with the 12
- Sends Peter to Jews and Paul to Gentiles

This encourages me as I evaluate my own limited gifts and yet see The Lord choosing me anyway

The actual blessing on the boys is recorded

Genesis 48:20

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.

As history unfolds Ephraim will in fact play a more dominant role. The north will come to be referred to as Ephraim

Hosea 5:13

“When Ephraim saw his sickness,
And Judah saw his wound,
Then Ephraim went to Assyria
And sent to King Jareb;
Yet he cannot cure you,
Nor heal you of your wound.

III. Chapter 49 – Passing the Baton

Chapter 49 records the final blessings Jacob passes on to his children.

The blessings are like prophetic utterances that look forward to what God will do and back upon what the sons have done

These blessings serve two purposes

1. They highlight the pitfalls of the boys

Reuben and **Simeon** in particular

2. They look prophetically forward in three ways
 - A. What will happen to the tribes and the nation of Israel
 - Dan's** is particularly intriguing
 - B. They look to the coming messiah - **Judah** in particular
 - C. They look to the kingdom age

The blessings do not follow the birth order

1. REUBEN - Leah
2. SIMEON - Leah
3. LEVI - Leah
4. JUDAH - Leah
5. DAN - Rachel/Bilhah
6. NAPHTALI - Rachel/Bilhah
7. GAD - Leah/Zilpah
8. ASHER - Leah/Zilpah
9. ISSACHAR - Leah
10. ZEBULUN - Leah
11. JOSEPH - Rachel
12. BENJAMIN - Rachel

But instead they are written in the following order;

Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Zebulun, Issachar, Dan, Gad,
Asher, Naphtali, Joseph and Benjamin

Moses gives No explanation for the order

The New Testament comments on this text

Hebrews 11:21

By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff.

The emphasis is not on the blessing but how it was given - leaning on a staff

This draws attention to the work God accomplished in Jacob once he finally surrendered

We will highlight key elements from some of the blessings

Reuben – Gen 49:2-4

He is described as: “*My might, my strength and the excellency of dignity and power*”

Sadly, his giftings were overshadowed by his unbridled lust

Genesis 49:4
Unstable as water, you shall not excel,
Because you went up to your father’s bed;
Then you defiled *it*—
He went up to my couch.

This event is recorded in Genesis 35:22 without commentary

And it happened, when Israel dwelt in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father’s concubine; and Israel heard about it. Now the sons of Jacob were twelve:

Lust was his downfall

Natural desires must be curbed or they will become insatiable lust that cannot be satisfied

1cor 7:5

Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you **because of your lack of self-control.**

Satan tempts us according to desire.

It is possible for us to feed temptation so that it becomes greater than the ability to resist.

This does not contradict 1Cor 10:13

1 Corinthians 10:13

No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but

with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.

Instead it suggests that we need to keep proper guards so as not to feed passions that should be restrained

Simeon and Levi – Gen 49:5-8

Their blessing is combined because their actions were linked

Anger and **self-will** was their downfall. They allowed the mistreatment of their sister to cloud how they viewed right and wrong and committed mass murder

This event is recorded in Genesis 34

Genesis 34:25-26

Now it came to pass on the third day, when they were in pain, that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brothers, each took his sword and came boldly upon the city and killed all the males. And they killed Hamor and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah from Shechem's house, and went out.

Scripture warns of the danger of anger

Proverbs 16:32

*He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty,
And he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city.*

Proverbs 22:24

Make no friendship with an angry man,
And with a furious man do not go,

Psalm 37:8

Cease from anger, and forsake wrath;
Do not fret—*it only causes harm.*

James 1:20

For the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

Scripture also provides the solution for those who struggle with anger.

- Paul explained that gentleness and patience, which counteract anger, are a fruit of the Spirit.
- Jesus explained that fruit is born when we abide in Him

Judah - Gen 49:8-11

For reasons that only grace understands the failures of Judah are overlooked and promise is made regarding the role of his tribe. He is told in poetic fashion that the kings and the Messiah will come through his lineage.

Genesis 49:10

The scepter shall not depart from Judah,
Nor a lawgiver from between his feet,
Until Shiloh comes;
And to Him *shall be* the obedience of the people.

Scepter - an ornamented staff carried by rulers on ceremonial occasions as a symbol of sovereignty.

It is used here to speak of the rule given to the tribe of Judah. David came from the tribe of Judah and all other kings came from his lineage.

Shiloh - mention 33 times in scripture

All but one Gen 49:10, refer to a location in central Israel

This reference is considered to be messianic. The idea being that rule will be given to Judah until the Messiah comes to reign.

The promises given to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob regarding a nation and a land were distributed among the 12 tribes

The promise regarding the coming Messiah was given exclusively to Judah

Elmer Towns gives the following exposition from this text

Prior to Shiloh's coming, the tribe of Judah would continue to maintain power and strength, signified by

the scepter—the symbol of authority and rule of law. This first began in David, who was of the tribe of Judah, and continued to the Babylonian captivity, when another sort of government took place, described in the next part of the verse. A 'lawgiver' can be any ruler who has jurisdiction over others, and from the Babylonian captivity through the time of Christ, Israel was under the rule of other lawgivers.

When Shiloh—the Messiah—came, the scepter of rule over Israel departed from Judah and rested in the hand of the King of Kings, where it remains today, although many still reject Him. He is the Lawgiver at whose feet we now sit for teaching in truth and righteousness through His Word, the Bible.

Verse 11 is also worth our attention:

Generally, this language describes blessings so great that people will be able to tie a donkey to a choice vine and let it eat its fill because of abundance.

This is likely a prophecy concerning the kingdom age.

Other verses that shed light on this time period include:

- It will be a time of **peace** (Micah 4:2-4; Isaiah 32:17-18)
- A time of **joy** (Isaiah 61:7, 10)
- A time of **comfort** (Isaiah 40:1-2)
- And a time **devoid** of poverty or sickness (Amos 9:13-15; Joel 2:28-29).

Zebulun's Gen 49:13

Since his tribe received a land locked portion in the north it is clear that this passage will have a millennial fulfillment

Issachar Gen 49:14-15

His lot was in the Jezreel valley. Because of the trade route this was a highly contended area.

Jacob warned that when they stopped fighting they would become slaves

This illustrates the struggle of the flesh.

If we stop resisting and battling we will fall

David fell when he should have been in the battle.

Dan Gen 49:16-18

Dan took a leading role among the Northern tribes but not in a good way.

Soon after entering the Promised Land they fled the inheritance they were allotted and move to the far north of Israel. This location over time would become the northern border of the nation.

Joshua 19:47 New King James Version (NKJV)
And the border of the children of Dan went beyond these, because the children of Dan went up to fight against Leshem and took it; and they struck it with the edge of the sword, took possession of it, and dwelt in it. They called Leshem, Dan, after the name of Dan their father.

After the civil divide under the reign of Rehoboam, an altar and golden calf were erected in Dan and became a source of idolatry for the nation.

Situated among the hill this elaborate altar would be the first site seen by travelers as they entered Israel en route to Egypt.

How tragic that the nation called to be the light of the world became a beacon for idolatry?



This may explain the serpent reference

Gad Gen 49:19

Genesis 49:19

“Gad, a troop shall tramp upon him, but he shall triumph at last.

The tribe of Gad chose not to enter the Promised Land and as a result ended up being trampled by the enemies

Asher Gen 49:20

Genesis 49:20

“Bread from Asher *shall be* rich, And he shall yield royal dainties.

Naphtali Gen 49:21

Genesis 49:21

“Naphtali *is* a deer let loose; He uses beautiful words.

Joseph Gen 49:22-26

Joseph is called a bough that bears fruit in the midst of great adversity.

We should be asking how we to become a fruitful bough?

The bible gives the answer

Psalm 1, John 15

The chapter closes with Jacob asking to be buried alongside the

patriarchs in the cave of Machpelah

Machpelah - double, may speak of this being a cave within a cave. It was in a field purchased by Abraham as a burial site. It was the only land he owned in Canaan, although it was all promised to him

The cave was purchased by Abraham

Genesis 23:8-9

And he spoke with them, saying, "If it is your wish that I bury my dead out of my sight, hear me, and meet with Ephron the son of Zohar for me, that he may give me the cave of Machpelah which he has, which is at the end of his field. Let him give it to me at the full price, as property for a burial place among you."

It was the burial site of

Sarah

Genesis 23:19

And after this, Abraham buried **Sarah** his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah, before Mamre (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan.

Abraham

Genesis 25:8-9

Then **Abraham** breathed his last and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years, and was gathered to his people. And his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite,

Rebekah, Isaac, Leah

Genesis 49:31

There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife, there they buried **Isaac** and **Rebekah** his wife, and there I buried **Leah**.

Jacob

Genesis 50:13

For his sons carried him to the land of Canaan, and buried **him (Jacob)** in the cave of the field of Machpelah, before Mamre, which Abraham bought with the field from Ephron the Hittite as property for a burial place.

The only one who is missing is **Rachel**, who was buried near Bethlehem where she died in childbirth.

Today considered to be the second most holy site in Israel next to the Temple Mount

The Cave of Machpelah is the world's most ancient Jewish site and the second holiest place for the Jewish people, after Temple Mount in Jerusalem.

The cave and the adjoining field were purchased—at full market price—by Abraham 3700 years ago.

Under the reign of Herod a large structure was built over the site of the caves. That structure remains standing today.

The structure was built during the Second Temple Period by Herod, King of Judea, providing a place for gatherings and Jewish prayers at the graves of the Patriarchs.

The building stands intact and still fulfills its original function after thousands of years.

Foreign conquerors and invaders used the site for their own purposes, depending on their religious orientation:

- Byzantines and Crusaders transformed it into a church
- About 700 years ago, Muslim conquered Hebron, declared the structure a mosque and forbade entry to Jews, who were not allowed past the seventh step on a staircase outside the building.

After the 1967 war and the liberation of Hebron Rabbi Shlomo Goren, was the first Jew to enter the Cave of Machpelah.

The site is still run by the Muslim Waqf and many restrictions are imposed on Jewish prayers and customs at the Tomb of the Patriarchs

IV. Chapter 50 – Closing Scene

After the death of Jacob 3 things transpire

1. Mourning
2. Burial in Canaan

3. Fear fills the hearts of his boys

MOURNING

Gen 50:1-4

“...Now when the days of his mourning were past...”

Mourning is a proper and healthy response to losing a loved one.

However two things must be kept in mind

1. We don't mourn like those who have no hope
2. We don't mourn forever.

The days of mourning passed. The length of days was somewhat arbitrary but gave closer to his family

WebMD gives the following outline regarding grief over loss

Grief is expressed physically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually.

Physical expressions of grief often include crying and sighing, headaches, loss of appetite, difficulty sleeping, weakness, fatigue, feelings of heaviness, aches, pains, and other stress-related ailments.

Emotional expressions of grief include feelings of sadness and yearning. But feelings of worry, anxiety, frustration, anger, or guilt are also normal.

Social expressions of grief may include feeling detached from others, isolating yourself from social contact, and behaving in ways that are not normal for you.

Spiritual expressions of grief may include questioning the reason for your loss, the purpose of pain and suffering, the purpose of life, and the meaning of death. After a death, your grieving process is influenced by how you view death.

Psychology today adds

While it is true that the passage of time helps to heal the

emotional wound of mourning, it is important to be active as soon and as much as possible instead of just passively waiting for time to pass.

BUT

Many people never simply “get over it” but rather come to terms and make peace with their lives despite the permanent void of the loved one.

Anyone who has experienced a profound loss should be allowed to express his or her grief, and in some cases this could take years to diminish because the emotional upheavals feel like a roller-coaster with ups and downs

It can be very helpful if we understand what those who are mourning are going through if we want to effectively minister to them.

The Bible explains how we should treat those who are enduring great sorrow or mourning

2 **Corinthians 1:3-4**

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

BURIAL – Gen 50:4-14

Joseph and His brothers carry out the wishes of Jacob taking his body to Canaan and burying him beside his relatives.

FEAR IN THE BROTHERS – Gen 50:15-21

When Jacob died the brother feared that Joseph would turn on them for the wicked things they had done to him. Their fears led them to create a fanciful story

Genesis 50:16-17

So they sent *messengers* to Joseph, saying, “Before your father died he commanded, saying, **17** “Thus you shall say to Joseph: “I beg you, please forgive the trespass of your brothers and their sin; for they did evil to you.” Now, please, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of your father.” And Joseph wept when they spoke to him.

It seems highly unlikely that Jacob ever said that. Instead it seems that filled with fear they made it up as a way to save them from the danger they created

Joseph explains that he was able to forgive because he saw what the hand of God was doing through his difficulties

CHAPTER ENDS RECORDING THE DEATH OF joseph

His wishes were later fulfilled

Joseph was also buried in the promised land

Exodus 13:19

And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for he had placed the children of Israel under solemn oath, saying, "God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here with you."

Joshua 24:32

The bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel had brought up out of Egypt, they buried at Shechem, in the plot of ground which Jacob had bought from the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for one hundred pieces of silver, and which had become an inheritance of the children of Joseph.

The New Testament comments on this event

Hebrews 11:22

By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave instructions concerning his bones.

It is striking that of all the press given to Joseph His trust in the promises of God had the greatest impact upon the writer of Hebrews