



The following is the summary of the Sunday sermon that is sent to the body at Steadfast in an email called "The Weekly"

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## **Genesis 45-49**

Jacob in Egypt: God's Promise and Jacob's Blessings

With Joseph now the vice-regent of Egypt and he and his brothers reconciled, God now moved Jacob and his entire clan to the protective cocoon of the Nile Delta; to Goshen. Over the next 400 years, that clan of 70 will develop into the nation of Israel. Jacob and his family will now live together in Egypt under the rule of Joseph. As Jacob moved from Hebron to Beersheba and there offered sacrifices to God, God appeared to Jacob in a night vision: "I am God, the God of your father. Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for there I will make you into a great nation. I myself will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also bring you up again, and Joseph's hand shall close your eyes." [ESV] God had confirmed His covenant promises and further encouraged the faith of Jacob and his family. Furthermore, God had brought about the unity of the family and replaced deep hurt and bitterness with comfort and trust. After 23 years, Jacob was finally reunited with Joseph!

### ***Jacob blesses Pharaoh, 47:1-12***

It is 1876 BC; Israel was secure in Egypt. [All the events associated with Joseph occur during the twelfth dynasty of Egypt's Middle Kingdom. During the reign of Pharaoh Sestoris II (1897-1878 BC), land reclamation projects and flood control projects abounded, some of which correspond with the biblical record of projects supervised by Joseph, the prime minister of Egypt. Indeed, one was a canal connecting the Fayyum Basin with the Nile River, which is called "The River of Joseph."] As Israel was presented to Pharaoh Sestoris, he blessed pharaoh. When we remember the Abrahamic covenantal promise, "in you all the nations will be blessed" (12:3), this was profound. Israel mediated God's blessings to Egypt's Pharaoh.

Joseph settled Jacob and his clan in Goshen, in the eastern Nile delta region where the clan herded their animals and where some of them cared for pharaoh's flocks as well (47:6). Because the Egyptian capital was in Memphis, in Goshen they would also be close to Joseph. The children of Israel would be in Egypt for 400 years.

### ***Jacob blesses Joseph's sons, 47:28-48:22***

In this passage, Israel manifested a faith that had learned the ways of God. Indeed, Hebrews 11:21 gives focus to this blessing of Joseph's two sons as the greatest act of Jacob's

faith. Facing death, Israel blessed the younger over the older. The irony here of course reminds the reader of Jacob, as the younger, receiving the blessing from Isaac. But this time there was no deception, no bitterness. This time the blessing was given openly, in accord with God's plan.

First, Israel asked Joseph to swear that he would bury him in the cave purchased by Abraham. He knew that the fulfillment of the covenant promise was in Canaan, not in Egypt (47:27-30). A reverent act of thanksgiving by Jacob followed (47:31). Jacob then reviewed the remarkable covenant faithfulness of God to him (48:1-7).

Then, Joseph brought his two sons to Jacob for a blessing. Confident of the Lord's covenant promises, Israel elevated Ephraim and Manasseh to the rank of heirs (48:5-7), meaning that they would share in the Promised Land, an incredible expression of faith—that his children would one day return to the Land of Promise! But, as 48:13-14 reveals, "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 him. And Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on the head of Ephraim, who was the younger, and his left hand on the head of Manasseh, crossing his hands (for Manasseh was the firstborn)." [ESV] Jacob had learned the lesson of faith: He would not attempt to bless the wrong one, as his father had attempted to do; nor could he handle the blessing dishonestly. Although Joseph protested what his father had done, Israel was emphatic—the younger would be greater than the older (v. 19).

### ***Jacob blesses his sons, 49:1-28***

In this remarkable chapter, Jacob, by faith and under divine inspiration, looked forward to the Conquest and the settlement of the Promised Land and beyond, as he distributed blessings to his sons. He announced the participation of each of his sons in the blessing of God. This deathbed set of blessings by Jacob, stipulated a major proposition of Scripture: The actions of individual people affect the lives of their descendants. Nonetheless, these blessings also stipulated that each of Jacob's sons would participate in the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant. He also foretold what would befall each of them and their descendants. He disqualified Reuben for the birthright because of sin and Simeon and Levi because of violence. Kingship was given to Judah and extensive blessing to Joseph. Jacob's sons would all be in the Promised Land but in different capacities.

After living in Egypt for 17 years, Jacob died at 147 years of age (49:29-33). Joseph had Jacob's body embalmed for burial. The period of embalming normally took less than a month, but the Egyptians mourned Jacob for seventy days, just two days short of the time of the mourning for Pharaoh!! The procession to Canaan was led by Joseph (50:7-14) and they buried Jacob in the cave where Abraham, Sarah and Isaac were buried. Jacob was in the Promised Land.

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