

JACOB BLESSES HIS SONS --- THE GREAT MESSIANIC PROPHECIES

BIBLE TEXT : Genesis 48:1-22; 49:1-33.

LESSON 40 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!" (Numbers 23:10).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Genesis 48:1-22

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 begetteth after them, shall be thine, *and* shall be called after the name of their brethren in their inheritance.

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.

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.

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*

Bible References:

Notes:

"Kept the Faith"

The long and turbulent life of Jacob was coming to a close. There had been times of deep despair for him through the years, some at least of which he could have avoided if he had not run ahead of the leading of God. But there had also been great spiritual victories, and he came to the end of his life with no fear of leaving this world and going to meet his Maker. His last years were his best, and he had a hope of eternal life.

Blessings of Jacob

Jacob had never forgotten that night at Bethel when in his dream he saw the angels of God ascending and descending upon a ladder that reached to Heaven. The Lord had stood above it, and had promised Jacob to be with him all the days of his life and to give him the land upon which he stood (Genesis 28:10-22). Jacob realised he had met the Lord, and he consecrated his life and all he had, or ever would have, to Him; and there he was saved, and his nature changed.

God expected Jacob to worship Him in return for all His blessings and He expects His children today to have grateful hearts and offer Him praise for His tender mercies and loving-kindness. When God promised the land of Canaan to Abraham for an everlasting possession, He added: "And I will be their God" (Genesis 17:8). He wanted His people to worship Him alone, which was the least they could do in appreciation for His favour. Later, when the Children of Israel were about to enter into the Promised Land where they could live in houses they had not built, could eat of the fruit of the vines they had not planted, God warned them that when they had eaten and were full they should not forget the Lord Who had brought them up from the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

Another high point in the life of Jacob was his victory over the "man" with whom he wrestled all night on the banks of the brook Jabbok. He made deeper consecrations during the struggle that night than he had ever made before, and when morning began to dawn he received his heart's desire, and was sanctified. The words the "man" spoke, "As a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed," must have burned into Jacob's heart so that he never forgot them. God also changed his name from Jacob to Israel; and thereafter the name "Children of Israel," or the "nation of Israel," referred to the descendants of Jacob.

Trials of Jacob

One of the greatest sorrows in the life of Jacob came upon him when his favourite son Joseph was taken from him and sold into Egypt. He thought Joseph was dead and that he would never see him again. How happy he was, about twenty years later, when his other sons went to Egypt to buy corn and learned that the brother whom they had despised had become the second ruler in the land! The whole family (Jacob, his sons, and grandchildren -- 66 people in all) moved to the land of Goshen in Egypt, where they lived comfortably for the rest of Jacob's life.

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.

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,

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.

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.

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.

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.

Genesis 49:1-33

1 And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you *that* which shall befall you in the last days.

2 Gather yourselves together, and hear, ye sons of Jacob; and hearken unto Israel your father.

3 Reuben, thou *art* my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power:

4 Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel; because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; then defiledst thou *it*: he went up to my couch.

5 Simeon and Levi *are* brethren; instruments of cruelty *are in* their habitations.

Future Blessings Pronounced

When Jacob was 147 years old he became very ill, and he called all his sons to him to bless them and tell them what would happen to them in the time to come. But first he blessed Joseph and Joseph's two sons. Joseph had always been his father's favourite because he lived to please his father and to please God; but through the great work he had done in preserving the lives of the whole population of Egypt, as well as his own family, he had won a greater right to his father's blessing. Instead of receiving an equal inheritance with his other brothers, he received a double share, one for each of his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. Jacob adopted these two grandsons, making it legal for them to receive the same share as the other sons of Jacob. Hundreds of years later, when the Children of Israel went into Canaan to claim their inheritance, we do not hear of the tribe of Joseph, but rather of the two tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh. In fact, Ephraim became so strong that sometimes the entire Israelitish nation was spoken of as "Ephraim." Much of its distinction came from the fact that Joshua, Israel's leader who succeeded Moses, belonged to that tribe.

Manasseh was older than Ephraim, but Ephraim received the greater blessing. Jacob said he knew what he was doing when he placed his right hand upon Ephraim's head to receive the first blessing. He said Manasseh would also become a great nation, but not as great as Ephraim. We know Jacob was inspired of God when he pronounced all the blessings upon his children, and we can see that the Lord does not judge us as man does. We are given blessings from God according to the desire we have in our hearts to please Him.

Consecrations Required

We see many instances in the Bible where the younger is preferred before the elder. Everyone has the same opportunity to find favour in the sight of God, but not everyone is willing to make the deep consecrations that will bring the blessings. When Cain resented God's preference for Abel, his younger brother, God said, "Why art thou wrath? . . . If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door" (Genesis 4:6, 7).

Reuben was the eldest son of Jacob, and should have received the birthright, which included being the civil ruler over his family, as a king; performing the religious rites, as a priest; and getting a double share of his father's property. But Reuben had sinned and displeased his father, so he lost all these special privileges. We have already seen that Joseph, through his two sons, obtained the double share of real estate.

A Redeemer Promised

To Judah went the kingship: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come." Jacob could not look into the future, but the Spirit of God spoke through him, and prophesied that through Judah Jesus would come, "and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." You remember God had promised Abraham, "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 12:3); then He repeated the promise to his son, Isaac, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 26:4); and then to Jacob, Abraham's grandson, He said, "In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 28:14). All the earth was going to be blessed through Jesus Who would be of the posterity of these patriarchs. God's Word is sure, and He kept repeating that wonderful promise of a Redeemer to each succeeding generation. Now Jacob passes it on to his son, Judah.

6 O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united: for in their anger they slew a man, and in their selfwill they digged down a wall.

7 Cursed *be* their anger, for *it was* fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.

8 Judah, thou *art he* whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand *shall be* in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee.

9 Judah *is* a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?

10 The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him *shall* the gathering of the people *be*.

11 Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes:

12 His eyes *shall be* red with wine, and his teeth white with milk.

13 Zebulun shall dwell at the haven of the sea; and he *shall be* for an haven of ships; and his border *shall be* unto Zidon.

14 Issachar *is* a strong ass couching down between two burdens:

15 And he saw that rest *was* good, and the land that *it was* pleasant; and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute.

16 Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel.

17 Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward.

18 I have waited for thy salvation, O LORD.

19 Gad, a troop shall overcome him: but he shall overcome at the last.

20 Out of Asher his bread *shall be* fat, and he shall yield royal dainties.

21 Naphtali *is* a hind let loose: he giveth goodly words.

22 Joseph *is* a fruitful bough, *even* a fruitful bough by a well; *whose* branches run over the wall:

23 The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot *at him*, and hated him:

24 But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty *God* of Jacob; (from thence *is* the shepherd, the stone of Israel:)

25 *Even* by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who

We know that King David came from the tribe of Judah, and Jesus is often referred to as the Son of David. In Revelation 5:5, Jesus is called the Lion of the tribe of Judah.

The role of priest went to Levi, and from that tribe came all the priests. When we read of the Levitical priesthood, that means priests of the tribe of Levi. Not everyone in the tribe could be a priest, but they performed other duties in the church, and were supported by the church and did not receive an inheritance when they came to Canaan. In Jacob's blessing, he said, "I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel." That literally happened, because as ministers and priests they served the people throughout the land, and did not live together as a tribe. Some of the people we shall study about who belonged to this tribe are Moses, Aaron, and Samuel. We have already studied about Zacharias and Elisabeth, the parents of John the Baptist, who both belonged to this tribe. Zacharias ministered in the Temple as a priest.

The Last Call

All the sons of Jacob, the heads of the twelve tribes of Israel, received blessings from their father. When he had finished, he died and went to be with the Lord, and with Abraham, Isaac, and others of his people who had gone on before.

There was great mourning in the land of Egypt for the father of Joseph. It was the custom of the Jews to mourn for 40 days, and the Egyptians mourned 70 days. Jacob had asked to be buried in Canaan, so at the end of the mourning period, a great procession wended its way back to his homeland. With Joseph went "all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt, and all the house of Joseph, and his brethren, and his father's house" (Genesis 50:7, 8).

Joseph the Deliverer

After they returned to Egypt, Joseph's brothers thought, now that their father was gone, Joseph might yet try to get revenge for their cruelty in selling him into slavery. We notice that once more they bowed themselves before him, according to the dream he had when a boy. But Joseph was a real man of God, and had long ago forgiven and forgotten all the wrongs they had done to him. He had waited patiently for the Lord to work out His plans, and because of his faithfulness to God, he had become the deliverer of Jacob's household and all the inhabitants of the land of Egypt. What great things God can do with the man who is wholly consecrated!

QUESTIONS

1. Can you recall upon what occasion Jacob was saved?
2. Where was he sanctified?
3. Did Joseph's eldest son receive the blessing, as was the usual custom?
4. Name several means through which we may receive the blessings of the Lord upon our heart.
5. Where had Jacob requested to be buried?

shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb:

26 The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren.

27 Benjamin shall ravin *as* a wolf: in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil.

28 All these *are* the twelve tribes of Israel: and this *is it* that their father spake unto them, and blessed them; every one according to his blessing he blessed them.

29 And he charged them, and said unto them, I am to be gathered unto my people: bury me with my fathers in the cave that *is* in the field of Ephron the Hittite,

30 In the cave that *is* in the field of Machpelah, which *is* before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite for a possession of a buryingplace.

31 There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah.

32 The purchase of the field and of the cave that *is* therein *was* from the children of Heth.

33 And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people.