

The Administering of the Birthright by Jacob

Genesis 48:1-22

- I. THE REMEMBERING OF GOD'S PROMISES (Genesis 48:1-4)
 - A. Joseph Went to His Father (Genesis 48:1)
 - 1. News got to Joseph that his father was sick.
 - 2. Joseph went unto his father with Ephraim and Manasseh (Genesis 48:1, 8).
 - B. Jacob Rose to Meet His Son (Genesis 48:2)
 - 1. Jacob was told by someone of Joseph's desire to meet with him.
 - 2. Jacob strengthened himself to sit upon his bed.
 - 3. Apparently, he leaned upon his staff in the process (Hebrews 11:21).
 - C. Jacob Spoke of God's Appearance to Him (Genesis 48:3-4)
 - 1. Jacob spoke of God's blessing while at Luz (Genesis 48:3)
 - 2. Jacob spoke of God's promise of a seed (Genesis 48:4)
 - 3. Jacob spoke of God's promise of the land (Genesis 48:4)
- II. THE ADOPTION OF JOSEPH'S SONS (Genesis 48:5-7)
 - A. The Status of the Sons (Genesis 48:5)
 - 1. The announcement by Jacob to Joseph of the adoption of Joseph's sons for the birthright blessing.
 - 2. The two sons... would be Jacob's, thus elevating them to the same level of his own sons.
 - 3. The two sons mentioned by name (Reuben and Simeon) were the eldest.
 - 4. Ephraim and Manasseh would receive the birthright blessing.
 - 5. Thus, Joseph will be blessed as two sons which is another way of saying Joseph gets the double-portion part of the birthright.
 - B. The Treatment of Future Offspring (Genesis 48:6)
 - 1. That Manasseh and Ephraim, the two sons of Joseph, did indeed receive the status of Jacob's sons is evidenced throughout the Old Testament.

2. We note three ways this is evidenced throughout the Bible.
 - a. One, **statistics**. Twice a census of the Israelites was taken in the wilderness. In each census, two sons of Joseph were distinguished as separate tribes of Israel (Numbers 1:32, 35; Numbers 26:34, 37).
 - b. Two, **spies**. When Moses chose spies from each tribe to go and spy out the land. He chose one from "*the tribe of Ephraim*" (Numbers 13:8) and one from "*the tribe of Manasseh*" (Numbers 13:11).
 - c. Three, **sites**. In the prophecy concerning the various sites of the tribes during the millennial kingdom, it is distinctly said that "*Joseph shall have two portions*" (Ezekiel 47:13) and those two portions were specified for Manasseh and Ephraim (Ezekiel 48:4-6).

C. The Special Remembrance of Rachel (Genesis 48:7)

1. Rachel's death
 - a. Dying by Jacob in the land of Canaan.
 - b. Rachel's premature death made it impossible for Jacob to have more children by her. Thus, being unable to have more children by her, he adopts Joseph's children (Rachel was the mother of Joseph). So Jacob's reference to Rachel is more reason and support for adopting Joseph's sons, which added to Joseph's blessing.
2. Rachel's burial
 - a. Rachel was buried in the land of Canaan.
 - b. Rachel was buried in the way of Ephrath (Bethlehem) (Genesis 35:19).

III. THE ADMINISTERING OF THE BLESSING (Genesis 48:8-20)

A. The Double Blessing

1. The second way in which the double-portion part of the birthright was bestowed upon Joseph was in the fact that Jacob gave Joseph two blessings instead of just one. All the sons, including Joseph, received one blessing in chapter 49 from Jacob.
2. Here, however, Joseph receives an additional blessing besides the one he will receive in Genesis 49 with his other brothers. Therefore, he received two, which corresponds to and manifests the double-portion blessing of the birthright.
3. This first of the two was given to Joseph through his two sons, but it still stated, "*he blessed Joseph*" (Genesis 48:15) as well as "*he blessed them*" (Genesis 48:20).

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- B. The Dimness of Jacob (Genesis 48:8-10, 21)
1. Jacob asked Joseph who was with him (Genesis 48:8).
 - a. Jacob had already met Ephraim and Manasseh
 - b. Jacob couldn't recognize them (Genesis 48:10)
 2. Joseph had to identify his sons (Genesis 48:9).
 3. Jacob called them to come closer (Genesis 48:9).
 4. Jacob desired to bless the sons (Genesis 48:9).
 5. Jacob's eyes were dim (Genesis 48:8, 10, 21)
 - a. Before each of these three bestowals of the double-portion of Jacob's birthright is a reminder of Jacob's failing health.
 - b. Here before the second of three, it says his eyes were dim because of age. Before the first of the three bestowals, it said Jacob was sick.
 - c. In the last of the three bestowals recorded in this chapter, it says, "*Behold, I die*" (Genesis 48:21).
- C. The Delight of Jacob (Genesis 48:8-11)
1. Words fail to convey adequately the emotion in Jacob's heart regarding his knowing Joseph's sons. Jacob had not thought he would ever see Joseph; but he not only saw Joseph again, but he also saw his sons.
 2. Jacob kissed and embraced the sons of Joseph (Genesis 48:10)
 3. Jacob expressed gratitude for not only seeing Joseph but also seeing the seed of Joseph (Genesis 48:11; Ephesians 3:20-21).
- D. The Deference for Jacob (Genesis 48:12)
1. "*Joseph... bowed himself with his face to the earth.*"
 - a. Though a man of very high position in a powerful country, Joseph shows respect to his father Jacob.
 - b. The respect is also an expression of gratitude for the blessing that Jacob had given them (Joseph's sons) through adoption into the inheritance.
Note: Jacob as a type of Christ: Just as Jacob adopted Joseph's sons, we have been adopted into the family of God by Jesus Christ (Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:5).
 2. Joseph brought his sons from between his knees of Jacob.
 3. Jacob worshipped God, leaning upon his staff (Hebrews 11:21).
- E. The Directing by Joseph (Genesis 48:13-14)
1. Correctly guided by Joseph (Genesis 48:13)
 - a. Ephraim was placed close to the left hand of Jacob.
 - b. Manasseh was placed close to the right hand of Jacob.

- c. This was done so the right hand would bless the firstborn Manasseh.
2. Wittingly voided by Jacob (Genesis 48:14)
 - a. He touched Ephraim with his right hand.
 - b. He touched Manasseh with his left hand.

F. The Rights of the Firstborn

1. The right of a double portion
 - a. The firstborn was offered a double portion of the inheritance. He received twice as much as each of his brothers (Deuteronomy 21:15-17).
 - b. Because of his sins and instability (Genesis 49:3-4), Reuben (the legal firstborn to Jacob) lost all the privileges of his birthright.
 - c. Reuben lost this right to Joseph (1 Chronicles 5:1; Genesis 48:5, 22).
2. The right of earthly power
 - a. The firstborn was given authority over the family when the father died.
 - b. Reuben lost this right to Judah (Genesis 49:10; 1 Chronicles 5:2).
3. The right of spiritual priesthood
 - a. In early days, the firstborn acted as the family's priest. He was in charge of the spiritual leadership and made way for their approach to God.
 - b. Reuben lost this right to Levi (Numbers 3:11-13; Numbers 8:18). Notice that the Levites replaced the duties of the firstborn who were delivered on the night of the Passover and properly belonged to God.

G. The Deity in the Blessing (Genesis 48:15, 16)

1. The God of his fathers who fed him (Genesis 48:15)
2. The Angel who redeemed him (Genesis 48:16)
3. At death, Jacob testified that God fed him all his days. Contrast this with the following.
 - a. Jacob's attitude when he first appeared before Pharaoh (Genesis 47:9).
 - b. At the end of his life, Jacob learned the Lord's will (Ephesians 5:18) and how to give God thanks in everything (1 Thessalonians 5:18).
 - c. Note: Unfortunately, the majority never seems to learn the lesson until late in life or not at all (Luke 17:15—one healed leper thanked the Lord).

H. The Dispute About the Blessing (Genesis 48:17-19)

1. The desire in the dispute (Genesis 48:17-18)
 - a. Joseph placed the firstborn of his sons before Jacob's right hand to have him blessed as the firstborn.
 - b. Joseph protested his father's hand placement and tried to correct it.
2. The determination in the dispute (Genesis 48:19)
 - a. Jacob refused to yield to Joseph's desire.

- b. Jacob was acting under God’s direction.
- c. Jacob confirmed that it was to be so, knowing that whom he had placed his hands on.
- d. Jacob’s determination to do the will of God in the face of opposition from one closest to him in affection and loyalty is a good example of giving the will of God top priority in our lives despite opposition from the ones we love.

I. The Division in the Blessing (Genesis 48:20)

1. Blessing the sons on that day.
2. Placing Ephraim before Manasseh.

IV. THE ALLOTMENT OF THE LAND (Genesis 48:21, 22)

A. The Faith About the Allotment (Genesis 48:21)

1. Faith despite death.
 - a. Jacob would die in Egypt.
 - b. However, it seems that the closer he got to death the stronger his faith in God got.
2. Faith despite the dwelling.
 - a. Jacob’s faith in his possessing the promised land was strong even though his dwelling was currently in Egypt.
 - b. Many folks do not live like this. They live in the earth and become so earthly minded that they have no faith in or interest in heaven.
3. Faith despite the duration.
 - a. The promise of Canaan had been made years before to Abraham. However, the land still was not in the hands of the descendants. But Jacob still had faith that it would come to pass (Hebrews 10:36).
 - b. Promising a return to Canaan (Genesis 48:21); Notice the plural “you” in speaking to Joseph. Joseph only returned as bones but the children of Israel returned in mass to inherit the land.

B. The Favour for the Allotment (Genesis 48:22)

1. The double portion—Providing a double portion to Joseph (Genesis 48:22)
2. The battle not recorded in Genesis—“*I have given thee one portion above thy brethren... I took... of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow.*”