



Genesis – 48:1-22
Jacob Blesses Ephraim and Manasseh
(Lesson #59)

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Joseph’s Timeline

Event	Joseph’s Age	Genesis
Joseph’s father moves family from Haran	6	31:17-21
Joseph is sold into slavery	<u>17</u> / Jac 108	37:12-36
Joseph interprets the dreams of cupbearer and baker while in prison	28	41:1
Joseph’s grandfather Isaac dies	29 / Jac 120	35:28-29
Joseph interprets Pharaoh’s dreams and is released from prison	<u>30</u>	41:46
Seven years of plenty, Manasseh and Ephraim born during this time	30-37	41:47-52
Seven years of famine	37-44	41:47-52
Joseph and Jacob reunite (2 years into famine), and family moves family to Egypt	39 / <u>Jac 130</u>	45:6, 47:9, 28
Jacob dies	56 / <u>Jac 147</u>	47:28
Joseph dies	<u>110</u>	50:22-26

Outline of chapter 48:

1. Word comes to Joseph that his father is dying (48:1a).
2. Joseph takes his two sons and goes to see his father (48:1b).
3. Joseph arrives at Jacob’s home (48:2).
4. Jacob recounts to Joseph the blessings and the promises God made to him (48:3-4).
5. Jacob declares Manasseh and Ephraim are his (48:5-6).
6. Jacob recounts the loss of his beloved Rachel (48:7-8).
7. Jacob sees young men with Joseph and inquires as to who they are (48:8).
8. Joseph explains the two men with him are his sons (48:9a)
9. Jacob desires to bless Joseph’s two sons (48:9b-11).
10. Joseph bows before his father (48:12).
11. Joseph positions the young men in preparation for the blessing (48:13).
12. Jacob crosses his hands, seemingly mixing up the birthright order (48:14).
13. Jacob begins to bless Joseph and his sons (48:15-16).
14. Joseph attempts to correct his father on who should receive the blessing of the right hand (48:17-18).
15. Jacob tells Joseph that he is doing what he is doing on purpose (48:19).
16. Jacob finishes the blessing on Ephraim and Manasseh (48:20).
17. Jacob gives Joseph a parcel of land in Canaan (48:21-22).

"1 ¶ After this, Joseph was told, "Behold, your father is ill." So he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. 2 And it was told to Jacob, "Your son Joseph has come to you." Then Israel summoned his strength and sat up in bed. 3 And Jacob said to Joseph, "God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me, 4 and said to me, 'Behold, I will make you fruitful and multiply you, and I will make of you a company of peoples and will give this land to your offspring after you for an everlasting possession.'

Vs 1 - At some point after Joseph had sworn to his father that when he died, he would take him back to Canaan, back to the Promised Land and bury him in the cave at Machpelah, sometime after that, likely not a very long time. Sometime after that, Joseph got word that Jacob was ill and rapidly approaching death.

The Hebrew word can mean sick or weak. Likely what is in view is that Jacob is getting near the point of death. His eyesight has almost completely failed, it also appears that he is now fully bedridden.

Joseph grabs his two sons, Manasses (the firstborn) and Ephraim (the second-born) and goes to see his father.

If you remember **Manasseh**, the firstborn's name means "causing to forget." **Ephraim**, is the second-born and his name means "doubly fruitful."

Some scholars believe they were twins, we simply do not know. We do know that both were born to him while he was the second in power in Egypt during the seven years of plenty (Gen 41:50-52).

If these boys were born the year before the famine came, which seems to be what Genesis 41 is implying, at that point Joseph was 36, the year that Jacob dies Joseph is 56, thus these boys are likely around 20 years old or slightly younger.

*** Although not stated, but you will see this develop, it is likely that Joseph also at this point sent word, likely via messengers to his other brothers about his father's illness. Although it is important to note that the text does not emphatically say that.

Vs 2 - Jacob is likely living in a house in Averis. Jacob likely has many servants who attend to him and one of the servants informs Jacob that Joseph is here to see you.

NOT TO BEAT THE POINT: But notice what Moses does: It was told "Jacob", so then "Israel" summoned his strength. Again, it seems these two names are used interchangeably by Moses.

Then Israel, clearly very weak and bedridden, summons his strength to simply set up in bed. Again, we should see that Israel is near the point of death. He is near the point of going home.

Vs 3-4 - Jacob then begins to recount to Joseph what Yahweh had done in his life. How Yahweh had met him at Luz. Jacob starts retelling those amazing encounters when God appeared to him in Luz (a place he renamed Bethel), in the land of Canaan.

It was there that God blessed Jacob, and here Jacob starts by reviewing the promises that that God made to him in Bethel recorded in (Gen 28).

But God visited Jacob a second time in Bethel as recorded in (Gen 35).

So Jacob is recounting **these amazing interactions** with Yahweh at Bethel!

Notice:

- 1) God appeared to me in Luz Vs 3
- 2) God blessed me Vs 3
- 3) Then we see the **four individual statements of the Abrahamic covenant** conferred to Jacob:
 - a. I will make you **fruitful** (personal blessing).

- b. I will **multiply** you (national blessing of multiplication).
- c. I will make you a **company of peoples** (the plural peoples is likely pointing to the multiple tribes).
- d. I will give the Promised Land to your offspring.

Thus, the key features of the Abrahamic covenant were confirmed by God to Jacob, and here Jacob is ensuring that Joseph understands this.

Now I want you to notice how closely what Jacob shares with Joseph follows what God had said to Israel in the first place:

Here: Behold, I will make you fruitful

Gen 35:11a: And God said to him, "I am God Almighty: be fruitful..."

Here: 'Behold, I will make you fruitful and multiply you,

Gen 35:11 a-b: And God said to him, "I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply.

Here: I will make of you a company of peoples

Gen 35:11: And God said to him, "I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply. A nation and a company of nations shall come from you,

Here: and will give this land to your offspring after you for an everlasting possession.

Gen 35:12: The land that I gave to Abraham and Isaac I will give to you, and I will give the land to your offspring after you.

Jacob is endeavoring, even in this encounter, to remind Joseph of exactly what God said. Not roughly, not approximately, but exactly! Jacob did not bring God's ideas, but he brought the Words of God.

5 And now your two sons, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, are mine; Ephraim and Manasseh shall be mine, as Reuben and Simeon are. 6 And the children that you fathered after them shall be yours. They shall be called by the name of their brothers in their inheritance. 7 As for me, when I came from Paddan, to my sorrow Rachel died in the land of Canaan on the way, when there was still some distance to go to Ephrath, and I buried her there on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem)."

Vs 5 - Then, Jacob makes **two surprising declarations:**

Now, your two sons, the two sons that were born to you while you were in Egypt, when I assumed you were dead, your two sons (notice the order that he calls them by (Ephraim and Manasseh). This will come back up in a moment.

THE FIRST: Your two sons are mine:

As Reuben and Simeon are mine, and will **receive a portion of my inheritance**, as Reuben and Simeon are mine and are **accounted to me**, so too will Ephraim and Manasseh be mine.

So, Jacob is announcing to Joseph, that he is adopting Joseph's two sons. Jacob is declaring to Joseph your two sons are now **my two sons**, and as such will receive **everything that being a son of Jacob entails**.

Jacob's dozen has become Jacob's baker's dozen with Ephraim and Manasseh taking Joseph's place as Jacob's sons. Here Jacob adds two new tribes, the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh.

THE SECOND: They are displacing Reuben and Simeon as the first and second born. At this point, it is only alluded to, but it will get much clearer.

Jacob is saying I am not only adopting them, but I am adopting them in as number 1 and 2, displacing **Reuben and Simeon**.

The birthright has been conveyed to Joseph, and Jacob has elevated Joseph's two sons to take **his place**. But now we have two sons in line for the birthright. Jacob will work through this!

The author of I Chronicles explains this (IChr 5:1-2).

Joseph chooses to **bless Jacob in the most special way**, by elevating **Joseph's two sons**, from grandson status **to son status** and giving one of them the **birthright blessing**.

APPLICATION: Now maybe you are thinking; what is up with Jacob adopting these two boys? I would say for sure; it is meant to serve as a beautiful picture of our adoption into God's family.

You and I were sons and daughters of Adam, but we have now been adopted into God's family (through faith in Jesus Christ) and we are sons and daughters of the living God, here in Genesis 48, we have a faint picture of that amazing reality!

Vs 6 - Jacob goes on, and the children that you father, after Ephraim and Manasseh, shall be yours and shall be accounted to you. At this point **Joseph is 56**.

As far as we know, Joseph will not father any additional sons.

But Jacob is clear, Ephraim and Manasseh shall be called by the names of their brothers. **They shall be named among the descendants of Israel**; they shall be named among the tribes of Israel.

Here we must believe that God is directing Jacob to add to the tribes of Israel.

Will Israel's desire hold? Will Ephraim and Manasseh really become tribes because they were adopted by Israel on his deathbed?

In Numbers chapter 1, Yahweh directs Moses to number the fighting men of Israel, by their tribes identifying the leader of each tribe, in fact we read (Num 1:3-3).

Then we read in (Num 1:32-33) and finally in (Num 1:34-35).

It stuck, and **both would grow into mighty tribes in Israel**.

Vs 7 - These are words clearly contain lingering sadness and grief as Jacob retells the story of the loss of his beloved Rachel.

As they were traveling from Bethel as they were still some distance from Ephrath (Bethlehem) (Gen 35), Rachel went into labor and she died giving birth the Benjamin, Jacob's 12th and final son.

Jacob goes on, I buried here on the way to Ephrath, that is Bethlehem.

8 When Israel saw Joseph's sons, he said, "Who are these?" 9 Joseph said to his father, "They are my sons, whom God has given me here." And he said, "Bring them to me, please, that I may bless them." 10 Now the eyes of Israel were dim with age, so that he could not see. So Joseph brought them near him, and he kissed them and embraced them. 11 And Israel said to Joseph, "I never expected to see your face; and behold, God has let me see your offspring also."

Vs 8 - Then likely with **very blurry vision**, Jacob sees Joseph's two sons and ask: **Who do these boys belong to?** Now we have every reason to believe he has met them before, but here unless they are close, he cannot even see them.

A few important things to note:

- 1) They have been **standing there the whole time**.
- 2) Clearly Jacob's vision is very poor at this stage in his life.
- 3) They **two** are likely around **20 years old**, they are young men now.
- 4) These two young men heard everything that Jacob said about them and their adoption.

Vs 9 - Joseph tells his father Jacob that these are the two sons that Elohim (God) gave him while he was living in Egypt. Then Jacob replies to bring them to him that he may bless them!

Get them close to me so that I may pronounce a **blessing upon them**. If they have any questions as to what grand-pappy Jacob meant, those questions are about to be answered.

Vs 10 - Again, Jacob's vision was failing, he could not really see well. So, Joseph brings Manasseh and Ephraim close to Jacob and Jacob embraces them and Jacob kisses them.

This was no doubt an amazingly tender moment. Do not lose the beauty of this moment with Jacob, Joseph, and Joseph's two sons.

Vs 11 - Then Jacob says to Joseph, I never imagined in my wildest dreams that I would see you alive! I never expected to ever see your face again. Behold, God has allowed me to see your offspring!

We can only imagine the joy that is flooding Jacob's heart. He has been able to spend the final 17 years of his life with Joseph and he has watched his two sons grow up into men.

12 Then Joseph removed them from 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 near him. 14 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).

Vs 12 - Then Joseph, removed them from Jacob's knees, where it appears they were standing, and Joseph bowed himself with his face to the ground. Likely, in worship to God and in deference to his father.

It is noteworthy that the second most powerful man in Egypt bows before and honors his dad.

APPLICATION: We never outgrow honoring our parents. Joseph is 56 years old and a powerful ruler, yet here he is bowing before his earthly father.

Vs 13 - Then Joseph took his sons and arranged them to be blessed by Jacob. He took Ephraim, and put him on his right, which would be Jacob's left and he put Manasseh on his left hand, which was Israel's right hand, which put them in the correct birth order for Jacob, whose vision was nearly completely failed.

Having positioned his sons, he brings them in close to Jacob.

In the Bible the right hand is the favored position. It is the position of strength, power, exaltation, and favor.

It is said of Jesus that he is seated at the "right hand" of God (Acts 7:56 and other places).

Vs 14 - Then Jacob stretches out his right hand and lays it on Ephraim, the younger, and his left hand on Manasseh, who is the older. Jacob does this by **crossing his hands**.

He places his right hand on Ephraim, the younger, and his left hand on Manasseh, who is the first born. He appears to be setting up to give the greater blessing to the younger son. But Jacob is nearly blind, surely this is some type of accident.

NOTE: As far as I can tell, this is the first blessing in the Scriptures that is accomplished by the laying on of hands.

15 And he blessed Joseph and said, "The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been my shepherd all my life long to this day, 16 the angel who has redeemed me from all evil, bless the boys; and in them let my name be carried on, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth."

Vs 15-16 - Then Moses says that **Jacob blessed Joseph**. As you will see this blessing is really God blessing Joseph's sons!

Then Jacob says (God under three heads) and by the way many believe this is a beautiful picture of the Trinity here in the Old Testament:

- 1) **The God** before who my **grandfather and my father** walked.
- 2) **The God** who has been **my shepherd all my life**.
- 3) **The angel** who **redeemed me from evil**.

FIRST, God is the one who Jacob's dad and granddad served.

SECOND, this is the **first reference** in the Bible to **God being our shepherd**, this will become a theme of the Bible, but it is first introduced here. Examples included (Ps 23:1 and Joh 10:11).

THIRD, the Hebrew word translated redeem is the Hebrew word: גָּאַל (*ga'al*), which means to redeem, it is where we get the word redeemer, and it is the **first use** of this **word in the Old Testament**.

THEOLOGY BREAK: The word redemption or redeem means to "**buy out**." In the New Testament the term was used in reference to the purchase of a slave's freedom.

If part of salvation is our redemption, then it means our prior condition was slavery. But the word is an extremely rich word with amazing depth of meaning in the New Testament (Rev 5:9-10, Eph 1:7, Gal 4:4-6).

Then blessings under **three heads**:

- 1) God (under three heads) **Bless these boys**.
- 2) Let them **carry on my name and the name of my father and grandfather**.
- 3) Let them grow into a **multitude in the midst of the earth**.

Now these two boys get essentially the same blessing, but the younger gets a **double portion**.

You must admit, it is at least interesting the Joseph named his younger son Ephraim which I told you means "**doubly fruitful**." Can I have a little license, doubly blessed!

APPLICATION: There is no greater blessing from the Father than to see our children blessed. We should continue to pray for one another's children, for that is how God can really bless us!

17 When Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand on the head of Ephraim, it displeased him, and he took his father's hand to move it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. 18 And Joseph said to his father, "Not this way, my father; since this one is the firstborn, put your right hand on his head." 19 But his father refused and said, "I know, my son, I know. He also shall become a people, and he also shall be great. Nevertheless, his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his offspring shall become a multitude of nations."

Vs 17 - So Joseph had the boys set up so that the elder would be on Jacob's right hand. When Joseph saw that his dad had placed his right hand, not on the elder Manasseh, but instead on the head of Ephraim, it displeased Jacob.

After all, why is the old man crossing his hands, he is messing up the order here. So, Joseph takes his father's right hand, which is currently on Ephraim's head and lifts it and attempts to move it to the correct head (as far as Joseph is concerned).

Vs 18 - Further, Joseph looks at dad and says: Do not do that you are messing things up, I have you set up so if you put your hands out, your right hand is on the head of the elder. Just follow my lead.

Vs 19 - So Joseph corrects his dad and directs him to place his right hand on Manasseh, who is the older son. But Jacob refuses and instead responds I know, I know.

Manasseh shall become a people and he (they shall be great). But Ephraim (the younger) will be greater than Manasseh and Ephraim's offspring shall become a multitude of nations.

REMINDER: If God says it, you can be certain it will come to pass.

Ephraim becomes the key tribe of Israel and eventually the name Ephraim also becomes a synonym for all Israel (especially the Northern Kingdom). Examples of this use include (Isa 7:1-2, Isa 7:17, Hos 9:1-3).

"I ¶ In the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, son of Uzziah, king of Judah, Rezin the king of Syria and Pekah the son of Remaliah the king of Israel came up to Jerusalem to wage war against it, but could not yet mount an attack against it. 2 When the house of David was told, "Syria is in league with Ephraim," the heart of Ahaz and the heart of his people shook as the trees of the forest shake before the wind." (Isa 7:1-2 ESV)

"The LORD will bring upon you and upon your people and upon your father's house such days as have not come since the day that Ephraim departed from Judah — the king of Assyria." (Isa 7:17 ESV)

"I ¶ Rejoice not, O Israel! Exult not like the peoples; for you have played the whore, forsaking your God. You have loved a prostitute's wages on all threshing floors. 2 Threshing floor and wine vat shall not feed them, and the new wine shall fail them. 3 They shall not remain in the land of the LORD, but Ephraim shall return to Egypt, and they shall eat unclean food in Assyria." (Ho 9:1-3 ESV)

This whole issue with calling Israel by the name of Ephraim makes no sense if we do not understand what Jacob did here.

WORTH NOTING: It is worth noting that once again God bypasses the literal birth order to pass the blessing to the younger. Isaac instead of Ishamel. Jacob instead of Esau. Joseph (11th) instead of Reuben. Ephraim instead of Manasseh.

APPLICATION: *"But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart." (1Sa 16:7 ESV)*

Your birth order matters not to God, your abilities do not matter to God, God looks at your heart. There is where God finds men and women He can bless and use.

20 *So he blessed them that day, saying, "By you Israel will pronounce blessings, saying, 'God make you as Ephraim and as Manasseh.'" Thus he put Ephraim before Manasseh. 21 Then Israel said to Joseph, "Behold, I am about to die, but God will be with you and will bring you again to the land of your fathers. 22 Moreover, I have given to you rather than to your brothers one mountain slope that I took from the hand of the Amorites with my sword and with my bow."*

Vs 20 - So Jacob blessed both of them that day.

The day Manasseh and Ephraim were placed as the first and second tribes in Israel. Is also the day **Ephraim was put before Manasseh.**

That day the term “**God make you as Ephraim and Manasseh**” (notice the order) began to be used as a saying promising great blessings! This also highlights their place of preeminence, in the tribes given to them by Jacob.

Vs 21 - This Jacob said to Joseph, I am about to die, now he is a little closer this week, than he was last week, but he is not quite there yet.

But (**two promises**):

- 1) God will be with you
- 2) God will bring you again up out of this land in into the land of your fathers (into the Promised Land)!

Now Joseph would leave Egypt and go back to the Promised Land to bury Jacob, we will read about this in (Gen 50:7).

Although Joseph was initially buried in Egypt, he made the sons of Israel swear to carry his bones to the Promised Land (Gen 50:25).

The you could be Joseph, but more than likely I suspect “you”, is actually the nation of Israel who would leave Egypt in approximately 413 years from Jacob’s death.

APPLICATION: God will be with us as we move through this life God will one day **bring us across the Jordan** (metamorphically) to the ultimate **Promised Land (heaven).**

But until that day, **God will be with us.**

Vs 22 - Moreover (**A third promise**):

I have held a special gift for you that I do not intend to give or any of your brothers.

There is a **mountain slope** (ESV), **portion** (KJV), the word means shoulder that Jacob took from the Amorites. Unknown until this moment, we knew nothing of this event.

He took it with his sword and his bow. We do not know when this happened, only that it did. In that confrontation he captured a piece of land and here he gives it to Joseph.

Now this would simply slide off into history without another thought, and then we read this in the New Testament:

“5 So he (Jesus) came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. 6 Jacob’s well was there; so Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour.” (Joh 4:5-6 ESV)

It seems that the piece of property that Jacob gave Joseph was near a town in Jesus’ day known as Sychar, a town of Samaria.

There is some irony here. Jacob’s gift of the coat to Joseph brought a great deal of hostility and chaos into Joseph’s life. Here at the end of his life, Jacob gives Joseph a plot of land to Joseph.
