

The Story of Joseph: Seeing the Bigger Picture

Week 17: The Blessing

Scripture:

Genesis 48

Motivation (Why You Need This):

Where are we in the story?

- The entire family is reunited in Egypt to survive the famine (Gen. 46:28-47:12)
- Joseph sustains the nation through the famine (Gen. 47:13-31)
- Jacob's family settles in Goshen, and Jacob makes preparation for his death

Genesis 47:29 (ESV) And when the time drew near that Israel must die, he called his son Joseph and said to him, "If now I have found favor in your sight, put your hand under my thigh and promise to deal kindly and truly with me. Do not bury me in Egypt, **30** but let me lie with my fathers. Carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burying place." He answered, "I will do as you have said."

Although we've been following the story of Joseph, this is the final testimony of Jacob as he approached his death. It's a wonderful testimony of God's faithfulness to Jacob, even though he was not always faithful to the Lord.

Information (What You Need to Know):

- **God promises are remembered by Jacob** (who gives testimony to Joseph)
 - ✓ Joseph goes to visit his dying father and takes his two sons with him
Genesis 48:1 (ESV) 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.
 - ✓ Jacob verbalizes the promises of God to him
Genesis 48:3 (ESV) 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.'

Jacob is dying, but the promise is not.

Jacob rehearsed how God appeared to him at Luz (Jacob renamed Bethel) and promised him the blessing of an innumerable people in the land as an everlasting possession. This promise provided him with hope through all his pilgrimage, just as they would quicken hope in the nation that sprang from him. They had the sure word of God. – Bible Knowledge Commentary

■ **Jacob blesses Joseph's sons and brings them into God's promises**

- ✓ Jacob “adopts” Joseph’s two sons as his own

Genesis 48:5 (ESV) “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.”

“Ephraim and Manasseh were like replacements for Reuben and Simeon, who were in a sense disqualified from positions of leadership in Israel’s family because of their sins.” – David Guzik

- ✓ Jacob pronounces a blessing on Joseph’s two sons

Genesis 48:15 (ESV) 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.”

- Jacob’s order of blessing was displeasing to Joseph

Genesis 48:17 (ESV) 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 [*the youngest*] to Manasseh’s head [*the eldest*]. **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.”

- Jacob confirmed that his blessing was correct

Genesis 48:19 (ESV) 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.” **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.

Jacob blesses both sons, but greater blessing goes to Ephraim to show that God’s grace isn’t controlled by family order. This would be fulfilled in Israel’s history as Ephraim would become the greater tribe.

- **Jacob blesses Joseph**

Genesis 48:21 (ESV) 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.”

This is such a great ending....

- Jacob is dying, but **God’s promise** is not dying with him
- Jacob is leaving, but **God’s presence** remains with them
- Jacob won’t take them back to Canaan, but **God’s provision/protection** will

Application (What You Need to Do):

At the end of his life, Jacob had very little strength left, but he still had the promises of God...and that was enough.

Jacob could not...

- Undo all his failures
- Erase the pain in his family
- Personally take his descendants back to Canaan

But Jacob could testify that God...

- Appeared to and blessed him
- Had been his shepherd
- Will also be with his descendants and take them to Canaan

That is the blessing.

And for us, that blessing comes through Jesus Christ. He is the true Son, the One who bore the curse of sin so that sinners could receive the blessing of God.