

## GENESIS: Where Grace Begins

### The Blessing of Joseph – Genesis 48

<sup>20</sup> So he blessed them that day, saying, "By you Israel will pronounce blessings, saying, 'God make you as Ephraim and as Manasseh.' "

**Genesis 48:20**

#### Analyzing the Text:

**48** After this, Joseph was told, "Behold, your father is ill." So he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. <sup>2</sup> It was told to Jacob, "Your son Joseph has come to you." Then Israel summoned his strength and sat up in bed. <sup>3</sup> And Jacob said to Joseph, "God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me, <sup>4</sup> 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.' <sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>6</sup> And the children that you fathered after them shall be yours. They shall be called by the name of their brothers in their inheritance. <sup>7</sup> 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)."

**Genesis 48:1-7**

Jacob reminds Joseph of the \_\_\_\_\_ of God ...

Jacob recounts to Joseph the \_\_\_\_\_ of God ...

Jacob renews the covenant with Joseph by elevating Ephraim and Manasseh to \_\_\_\_\_ of God ...

*In a real sense, they have \_\_\_\_\_ Reuben and Simeon. They were 'adopted' by Jacob.*

***5** The sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel (for he was the firstborn, but because he defiled his father's couch, his birthright was given to the sons of Joseph the son of Israel, so that he could not be enrolled as the oldest son; <sup>2</sup> though Judah became strong among his brothers and a chief came from him, yet **the birthright belonged to Joseph**) ...*

*1 Chronicles 5:1-2*

The firstborn of the favored wife is now elevated to the preeminent position in the family, and his two sons are elevated to the level of the Sons of Jacob.

<sup>8</sup> When Israel saw Joseph's sons, he said, "Who are these?"

<sup>9</sup> 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.**"

<sup>10</sup> 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.

<sup>11</sup> And Israel said to Joseph, "I never expected to see your face; and behold, God has let me see your offspring also."

<sup>12</sup>Then Joseph removed them from his knees, and he bowed himself with his face to the earth. <sup>13</sup>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.

<sup>14</sup>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). <sup>15</sup>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, <sup>16</sup>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."

<sup>17</sup>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. <sup>18</sup>And Joseph said to his father, "Not this way, my father; since this one is the firstborn, put your right hand on his head."

<sup>19</sup>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." <sup>20</sup>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. <sup>21</sup>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. <sup>22</sup>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."

### **Genesis 48:8-22**

It took him a lifetime to change, but Jacob is no longer the headstrong, rebellious, dishonest, contentious man he once was. His is now a \_\_\_\_\_ faith.

His testimony:

My fathers \_\_\_\_\_ with God ...

God has \_\_\_\_\_ me ...

In all of the difficulties, God's \_\_\_\_\_ has prevailed ...

And though he could not see well, he knew full well that he was choosing to bless the younger son above the older. In the words of Allen Ross, "In his early years he had deceived his blind father for the blessing, but in his duty now of passing on the blessing, he performed in the way that God wanted, blessing the younger over the elder. He would not attempt to bless the wrong one, as his father had attempted to do; nor would he handle the blessing dishonestly."

Manasseh would become "a people," but Ephraim would become "a multitude of nations."

Why Ephraim over Manasseh?

God's \_\_\_\_\_ ... So that future Israel (and us) would never presume upon our privilege, birth, abilities, personality, potential for God's use and blessing but only instead, His grace). And in so doing, he confirmed the \_\_\_\_\_ of both men and their offspring. As ½ Egyptian, they would nonetheless be forever God's chosen ones and part of a group that would one day be anathema to Egyptians but blessed by God as his own special possession.

## The Lost Gift of **Blessing**\*:

What is a biblical "blessing"?

*"the intentional act of speaking God's favor and power into someone's life, often accompanied by a symbolic gesture such as laying hands on the person."* (Rolf Garborg, **The Family Blessing**)

When we pray ...

When we bless ...

When we bless, we are invoking, summoning, or calling upon God's blessing for the benefit of another. When we bless, we seek God's blessing to flow through us to another.

We see this clearly in **Numbers 6:22-27** when the LORD, through Moses, gives this instruction to Aaron and his sons: " 'Thus you shall bless the people of Israel: you shall say to them, The LORD bless you, and keep you; the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace. *So shall they put my name upon the people of Israel, and I will bless them.*' "

Blessings were a regular part of \_\_\_\_\_ experience in their homes and in their gatherings:

- As Laban was parting company with Jacob and his family, he "arose and kissed his grandchildren and his daughters and blessed them" (Genesis 31:55).
- Jacob, at the end of his life, gathered his children together and "blessed them, blessing each with the blessing suitable to him" (Genesis 49:28).
- Aaron "lifted up his hands toward the people and blessed [Israel], and he came down from offering the sin offering and the burnt offering and the peace offerings" (Leviticus 9:22).
- After Joshua had given the half-tribe of Manasseh its possession, he "blessed them and sent them away" (Joshua 22:6).
- King David brought the ark of God back to Jerusalem and "blessed the people in the name of the LORD of hosts" and then "returned to bless his household" (2 Samuel 6:18-20).

Twice in the Gospels, \_\_\_\_\_ blesses his people:

- In Mark 10, we are told that He took the children into His arms "and blessed them, laying his hands on them" (Mark 10:15).
- And just before ascending to heaven, Luke tells us that Jesus led His disciples "out as far as Bethany and lifting up his hands he blessed them. While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven. And they worshiped Him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy" (Luke 24:50-52).

In today's passage, we see a \_\_\_\_\_ blessing at the end of Jacob's life when Joseph's sons are blessed. Joseph's unsuccessful attempt to move Jacob's right hand of blessing from Ephraim to Manasseh points to the \_\_\_\_\_ significance.

Who has the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ to bless?

Some guidelines on "blessing":

- 1) Blessings should correspond with \_\_\_\_\_ and what we know of the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of God.

Note: God is not obligated to act according to the blessings we invoke any more than He is obligated to give us what we ask for in prayer. Nevertheless, we bless in the same confidence that we pray, knowing that God is faithful to His Word and delights to act in response to the faith of His people.

- 2) Blessings have a \_\_\_\_\_ result in mind. As with prayer, we bless others with \_\_\_\_\_.

Examples: "May He watch over your coming and going, both now and forever" (Psalm 121:8); "May your name be remembered forever" (Psalm 112:6); "May you dwell in the house of the LORD forever" (Psalm 23:6); "Even to the next generation may you and your children be blessed" (adapted from Psalm 112:2); and "May the LORD give you pleasure at His right hand, forever" (adapted from Psalm 16:11).

- 3) Blessings convey what we most \_\_\_\_\_ God to do in the lives of those we bless.

When we bless others (especially our children) they are getting a clear picture of what we value \_\_\_\_\_ for them.

- 4) Blessings are a source of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

The blessing is a reminder of the presence of God and His care for us: "Even while you sleep, may the LORD instruct your heart" (adapted from Psalm 16:7), "May the LORD watch over you and be a shade at your right hand so the sun will not harm you by day nor the moon by night" (adapted from Psalm 121:5-6), and "May the LORD answer you when you pray and relieve you in distress" (adapted from Psalm 4:1).

- 5) Blessings strengthen the bonds of \_\_\_\_\_ between children and parents.

"By itself, the blessing cannot take the place of faithful parenting. We ought not be deceived into thinking that we can bless our children once a day while ignoring them and their needs the rest of the time. However, combined with faithful parenting, the blessing can be a powerful tool in strengthening the bonds of affection and establishing our children firmly in faith."

- 6) Blessings are a means of godly, spiritual \_\_\_\_\_.

"I have witnessed the benefit to families and marriages when husbands and fathers make the effort to bless their wives and children ... when a man is regularly blessing his wife and children, he is more likely to give spiritual leadership in other areas of personal and family life."

\*Taken from David Michael's *A Father's Guide to Blessing His Children*

Next week: *Genesis 49:1-27 – The Fates of the 12 Tribes*