



## Brown Community Group Discussion Guide

Genesis 47:27-48:22 – Jacobs Last Days

October 6, 2019

As we near the completion of our study of Genesis over the next few weeks, today we will take an interesting look at the end of Jacob's days and blessing he puts in place to secure his legacy and God's people for the future. We will also see incredible scriptures about God's providence and redemption unlike any other in the Old Testament. Jacob recognized his great and mighty God was his deliverer and redeemer! Through these scriptures we see a beaming example of a life well lived for God and Jacob's full and total commitment to his God.

### 1) Jacob's Request for Burial 47:27-31

***27 Now the Israelites settled in Egypt in the region of Goshen. They acquired property there and were fruitful and increased greatly in number. 28 Jacob lived in Egypt seventeen years, and the years of his life were a hundred and forty-seven. 29 When the time drew near for Israel to die, he called for his son Joseph and said to him, "If I have found favor in your eyes, put your hand under my thigh and promise that you will show me kindness and faithfulness. Do not bury me in Egypt, 30 but when I rest with my fathers, carry me out of Egypt and bury me where they are buried." "I will do as you say," he said. 31 "Swear to me," he said. Then Joseph swore to him, and Israel worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff.***

For a father to ask his son "If I have found favor in your eyes" is somewhat strange indeed. This would normally have been reserved for a subordinate speaking to his superior. This remark completes the Joseph dream points, with his father "bowing down to him" possibly regarding him being the ruler of Egypt as well as his beloved Joseph.

The reference to putting his hand under his thigh is also described and used in Chapter 24 where Abraham used this method as a way to make his servant swear by the Lord, the God of Heaven and earth, concerning a pledge to find a wife from the land of their elders for Isaac. This custom is only mentioned twice in Genesis, Chapter 24 and here in Chapter 47.

Jacob was making it very clear that he did not want to be buried in Egypt, but wanted to return to the land of his fathers in Canaan. Jacob also seemed to be not satisfied with Joseph's simple word and insisted that he make an oath to that effect.

### 2) Joseph's Sons Among the Twelve 48:1-7

***1 Sometime later Joseph was told, "Your father is ill." So he took his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim along with him. 2 When Jacob was told, "Your son Joseph has come to you," Israel rallied his strength and sat up on the bed. 3 Jacob said to Joseph, "God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and there he blessed me 4 and said to me, 'I am going to make you fruitful and increase your numbers. I will make you a community of peoples, and I will give this land as an everlasting possession to your descendants after you.' 5 "Now then, your two sons born to you in Egypt before I came to you here will be reckoned as mine; Ephraim and Manasseh will be mine, just as Reuben and Simeon are mine. 6 Any children born to you after them will be yours; in the territory they inherit they will be reckoned under the names of their brothers. 7 As I was returning from Paddan, to my sorrow Rachel died in the land of Canaan while we were still on the way, a little distance from Ephrath. So I buried her there beside the road to Ephrath" (that is, Bethlehem).***

The priestly account is placed in this context because it speaks of the same events which the Joseph story tells us but in a different way. The reference to Luz (Bethel) recalls the Priestly account. This apparently

represents a slightly different version than the one in Chapter 35, for “Peoples” appears in Verse 4 as compared to “Nations” and also very importantly “Everlasting” has been added to the gift of the land.

In this blessing, Jacob gave both Ephraim and Manasseh a full rank among the twelve tribes! It also included any future sons not born yet children.

The addition of the verses referencing Rachel are a topic of discussion at this point of the scripture. Commentaries have commented on the following:

- It was credited to the memories rushing in at the sight of the two grandsons
- Since death had robbed Jacob of his beloved Rachel, he felt justified in substituting two of Rachel’s grandsons for sons she otherwise might have born.
- The phrase “to my sorrow” may be a key to understand what might have been Jacob’s melancholy view of life through the years since her death

### 3) Joseph’s Sons Among the Twelve 48:8-22

***<sup>8</sup> When Israel saw the sons of Joseph, he asked, “Who are these?” <sup>9</sup> “They are the sons God has given me here,” Joseph said to his father. Then Israel said, “Bring them to me so I may bless them.” <sup>10</sup> Now Israel’s eyes were failing because of old age, and he could hardly see. So Joseph brought his sons close to him, and his father kissed them and embraced them. <sup>11</sup> Israel said to Joseph, “I never expected to see your face again, and now God has allowed me to see your children too.” <sup>12</sup> Then Joseph removed them from Israel’s knees and bowed down with his face to the ground. <sup>13</sup> And Joseph took both of them, Ephraim on his right toward Israel’s left hand and Manasseh on his left toward Israel’s right hand, and brought them close to him. <sup>14</sup> But Israel reached out his right hand and put it on Ephraim’s head, though he was the younger, and crossing his arms, he put his left hand on Manasseh’s head, even though Manasseh was the firstborn. <sup>15</sup> Then he blessed Joseph and said, “May the God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked faithfully, the God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day, <sup>16</sup> the Angel who has delivered me from all harm — may he bless these boys. May they be called by my name and the names of my fathers Abraham and Isaac, and may they increase greatly on the earth.” <sup>17</sup> When Joseph saw his father placing his right hand on Ephraim’s head he was displeased; so he took hold of his father’s hand to move it from Ephraim’s head to Manasseh’s head. <sup>18</sup> Joseph said to him, “No, my father, 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 too will become a people, and he too will become great. Nevertheless, his younger brother will be greater than he, and his descendants will become a group of nations.” <sup>20</sup> He blessed them that day and said, “In your name will Israel pronounce this blessing: ‘May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh.’” So he put Ephraim ahead of Manasseh. <sup>21</sup> Then Israel said to Joseph, “I am about to die, but God will be with you and take you back to the land of your fathers. <sup>22</sup> And to you I give one more ridge of land than to your brothers, the ridge I took from the Amorites with my sword and my bow.”***

The blessing of Jacob was in several stages:

- First he affectionately embraced the grandsons. The reversal of the blessing the older son is reminiscent of the deception of Isaac, but here the patriarch himself made the change. Jacob’s move anticipated the history of the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh. While Jacob was referenced as near blind, either he could see partially or God specifically directed his actions and motions to accomplish his end. Jacob makes it very clear he was intentional in his actions for the younger.
- Second, the blessing is in the form of a hymn and uses phrases to glorify our God
- Third, the blessing features three emphases: God’s presence with the fathers, God’s care of Jacob and an invocation that he might perpetuate the patriarchal names in the prosperity of their descendants

The most important reference is to the angel who has redeemed me, which is clearly God directing and guiding Jacob's life and everything in it. Was this a direct reference to a specific angel or general reference of God's providence over his life? The only previous past incident mentioned in scripture was at Peniel. He whom Jacob feared might kill him had become his redeemer. The word used is "go'el", appearing here for the first time in scriptures. It means "nearest kin", the one responsible for defending a relative's life, integrity and property.

It is best to view these ideas expressed at its highest meaning in Christ. In his work of salvation, God has become the redeemer beyond anything Jacob imagined or would have known.

**Group Discussion:**

1. In verse 47:27-29, why do you think Jacob spoke to Joseph as if he was his superior? Do you interpret that phrase as such or is this just a show of respect to his son?
2. In verse 47:30-31, why would Joseph's simple word not be enough to satisfy Jacob on his return burial promise?
3. In verses 48:3-4, do you interpret any difference from using the phrase "community of people" as compared previously in Chapter 35 use of "Nations"? Are there differences?
4. What is the significance of God adding "as an everlasting possession" to the promise concerning land to his people? Related to both History, God and his plan?
5. In verse 48:15-16, do you believe the "Angel" referenced was a specific angel that Jacob had seen and addressed during his life? Or was this a general reference to God's providence over his life?
6. In verse 48:16 can we reasonably draw the correlation from "Jacob's Angel Redeemer" to Jesus eventual redemption for His people?