

## Lesson 10    2<sup>nd</sup> July, 2017

### Jacob at Life's Sunset

#### Lesson Scope: Genesis 48

*References in brackets refer to Genesis 48 unless otherwise noted*

#### Lesson Focus

Jacob's pilgrimage of 147 years (47:28) had been filled with joys and sorrows, and successes and failures. He had now been in Egypt for seventeen years, and his life was soon to end.

When Joseph brought his two sons, who were about twenty to twenty-five years old, (41:50; 45:6; 47:28) from where they were living among Egyptian culture to see their grandfather, Jacob strengthened himself. He in faith took this opportunity to do what he could to pass his faith and its blessings on to these young men.

Although Jacob's physical eyes were dim, his eye of faith was not. He saw beyond Egypt to Canaan, the fulfilling of God's promises to him.

Note that Joseph's sons were not just young children, but were about twenty to twenty-five years old. Although the elderly today may not carry the authority in family life that Jacob did, their influence in church and family life is very important.

Although we are focusing on the contribution of grandparents, the conviction and vision is applicable to any age.

"Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." Being thankful for God's past blessings and claiming His promises nurture the living faith of aging saints.

**Lesson Aim:** To see the response of faith in the sunset years.

**Theme Verse:** Psalm 90:12. So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

#### Lesson Text

##### Claiming the Promises

Genesis 48:1-4

And it came to pass after these things, that *one* told Joseph, Behold, thy father *is* sick: and he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. <sup>2</sup> And *one* told Jacob, and said, Behold, thy son Joseph cometh unto thee:

and Israel strengthened himself, and sat upon the bed. <sup>3</sup> And Jacob said unto Joseph, God Almighty appeared unto me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and blessed me, <sup>4</sup> And said unto me, Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and I will make of thee a multitude of people; and will give this land to thy seed after thee *for* an everlasting possession.

### **Conferring the Blessing**

Genesis 48:5-22

And now thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt before I came unto thee into Egypt, *are* mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine. <sup>6</sup> And thy issue, which thou begettest after them, shall be thine, *and* shall be called after the name of their brethren in their inheritance. <sup>7</sup> And as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan in the way, when yet *there was* but a little way to come unto Ephrath: and I buried her there in the way of Ephrath; the same *is* Bethlehem. <sup>8</sup> And Israel beheld Joseph's sons, and said, Who *are* these? <sup>9</sup> And Joseph said unto his father, They *are* my sons, whom God hath given me in this *place*. And he said, Bring them, I pray thee, unto me, and I will bless them. <sup>10</sup> Now the eyes of Israel were dim for age, *so that* he could not see. And he brought them near unto him; and he kissed them, and embraced them. <sup>11</sup> And Israel said unto Joseph, I had not thought to see thy face: and, lo, God hath shewed me also thy seed. <sup>12</sup> And Joseph brought them out from between 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 unto him. <sup>14</sup> And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid *it* upon Ephraim's head, who *was* the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands wittingly; for Manasseh *was* the firstborn. <sup>15</sup> And he blessed Joseph, and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, <sup>16</sup> The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, 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> And when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it displeased him: and he held up his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's head unto Manasseh's head. <sup>18</sup> And Joseph said unto his father, Not so, my father: for this *is* the firstborn; put thy right hand upon his head. <sup>19</sup> And his father refused, and said, I know *it*, my son, I know *it*: he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great: but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of

nations. <sup>20</sup> And he blessed them that day, saying, In thee shall Israel bless, saying, God make thee as Ephraim and as Manasseh: and he set Ephraim before Manasseh. <sup>21</sup> And Israel said unto Joseph, Behold, I die: but God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers. <sup>22</sup> Moreover I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow.

## **Questions for Study**

### **Claiming the Promises**

1. What was the source of Jacob's strength in his old age?
2. Of what value was Jacob's recounting of the story of his meeting with God (48:3-4)?

### **Conferring the Blessing**

3. Why did Jacob adopt Joseph's sons?
4. What blessing did Jacob bestow on Joseph's sons?
5. How did Jacob receive his knowledge of the future?
6. How can we lay the groundwork for faith in succeeding generations?
7. What spiritual blessings can we impart to the rising generations?
8. What vision should we have for our people?

## **Analyzing the Passage**

What were Joseph's goals in taking his sons along to visit Jacob? Possibly it was primarily for the contact his sons could get with the godly line. Perhaps he was hoping they could receive the blessing of their grandfather.

Jacob spoke of God's promise to him at Luz (Bethel) when he fled from Esau (48:3, 4). He spoke tenderly of Rachel's death (48:7). God had done for Israel more than he could have imagined. Not only did he see Joseph alive, but he also saw Joseph's seed.

Jacob took Joseph's sons as his own, giving each an equal share of inheritance with Joseph's brothers. This gave Joseph, Rachel's oldest son, a double portion of the inheritance. As a result of the failures of Reuben, Simeon, and Levi, Judah held the leadership position.

It appears, by Jacob's further blessing (48:16), that he was trying to ensure that Joseph's posterity would bond with and be recognized among Jacob's sons rather than embrace the Egyptian culture in which they were growing up. Jacob wanted his name and the name of his fathers to be on these young men rather than the name of Egypt. Even though Joseph's sons had an Egyptian mother, Jacob showed clearly that they would have part in the inheritance of Canaan.

The parcel of ground given to Joseph (48:22) may be what Jacob purchased (33:19). It is spoken of in John 4:5 and possibly in Joshua 24:32.

## **Principles and Applications**

### **Claiming the Promises**

1. Though weakening physically, the faithful find strength in their sunset years for spiritual exercise (48:1-2). The young may tend to trust in their natural strength. The middle-aged person might trust in his wisdom and accomplishments. Far too often God needs to take away our strength, our health, our wisdom, or our money so that our faith may cling to Him. Although voices, hands, and feet may decline in ability, the heart can sing and worship, and the mind and life can be a light to guide those who follow.

2. Faith reflects on God's providence and trusts in His promises (48:3-4). Faith sees the workings of God in hard times of the past. It leaves the unknown of the past and future in the hand of the Almighty God in whom faith rests completely. Can we trust God so completely that we lay the full outcome of our lives upon Him? May we say with Paul, "I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38-39).

### **Conferring the Blessing**

3. Faith lays the groundwork to aid succeeding generations in finding and experiencing redemption and a place among God's people (48:5, 6). Our choices today will make it either easier or harder for our children to accept and appreciate the faith of the saints. As faithful parents and grandparents speak of God, the church and its leaders, their forefathers, those around them, and their children, they look beyond their own spiritual health to the health of their children and grandchildren. Positive, respectful words can promote proper concepts of God and His people, while negative words inspire and support rebellious attitudes.

The faithful dress themselves and their children simply, considering the significant and long-term effects this will have on coming generations. In business, in one's purchases, and in all of life, the faithful strive not only to protect their own spiritual lives, but also to inspire the faithful values of older generations in the rising generations.

4. Faith mingled with the sorrows of life mellows the heart (48:7). The unbelieving are hard and cold and shake off the sorrows of life with laughter and jokes. In contrast, as men of faith look over the sorrows of life, their

hearts are soft and tender. Faith believes God was working in all of life and blossoms into a sure and longing hope of a glorious resurrection and of meeting faithful loved ones in the world to come.

5. Faith rejoices in the goodness of God (48:8-11). We are not worthy of the goodness of God. Faith receives the blessings and goodness of God with thanksgiving and humility. It also enables us to see the goodness of God even in circumstances that cause carnal men to become bitter.

6. In their sunset years, the faithful cling tenaciously to truth (48:14-19). As they have refused to accept unsound doctrine all through life, so they refuse to let the changing pressures dissuade them from the firm truths of God's Word.

7. The faithful leave a legacy with their posterity (48:14-22). Their life is an example in prayer and trust, and of the peace and joy that is found only in Christ. It is a testimony of God's grace for life's trials and of assurance of salvation in the face of death. They desire to leave an example of sound doctrine and practice, and to direct any glory that come to God, the giver of all good.

8. The faithful desire to see their posterity identified with their spiritual heritage (48:15-16). As Jacob saw that popularity in Egyptian culture posed a threat to Joseph's sons, so the man of faith sees earthly prestige as a threat to spiritual life. He desires most of all that his posterity identify with his godly heritage. Faith teaches, promotes, and defends the doctrine and practices of the Word. The elderly encourage the younger to ho and practice the faithful values of the past, and they are willing to share their insights to help others. They are interested in the spiritual life of the church tomorrow and do what they can to instill in the next generation deep sense of the need of God's grace and sustaining power.

9. Faith gives the godly a vision for the future (48:19-22). Do we have a vision of a faithful church? Do we have a vision of young people growing up in purity and sobriety, and homes being established where a family raised with the burden fora godly seed? Do we have a vision for simple occupations? "Where there is no vision, the people perish" (Proverb 29:18). The faithful seek to pass the torch on to the next generation and to encourage the younger to take up their responsibilities.

10. Faith is confident of God's continued presence with His people (48:21). Men of faith die in peace, knowing that God will be with their posterity as He was with them.

## **Important Teachings**

1. Though weakening physically, the faithful find strength in their sunset years for spiritual exercise (48:1-2).
2. Faith reflects on God's providence and trusts in His promises (48:3-4).
3. Faith lays the groundwork to aid succeeding generations in finding and experiencing redemption and a place among God's people (48:5-6).
4. Faith mingled with the sorrows of life mellows the heart (48:7).
5. Faith rejoices in the goodness of God (48:8-11).
6. In their sunset years, the faithful cling tenaciously to truth (48:14-19).
7. The faithful leave a legacy with their posterity (48:14-22).
8. The faithful desire to see their posterity identified with their spiritual heritage (48:15-6).
9. Faith gives the godly a vision for the future (48:19-22).
10. Faith is confident of God's continued presence with His people (48:21).

## **Answers to Questions**

1. What was the source of Jacob's strength in his old age?

His strength came from God, through faith. His eye of faith caused him to put significant effort into this spiritual exercise.

2. Of what value was Jacob's recounting of the story of his meeting with God (48:3-4)?

It reaffirmed God's plan in his own mind. It connected these young men with the blessing that was the reason for the separation between the Hebrews and the rest of the world. It took them to the God of the Hebrews, more than just connecting them with the family. This was God's blessing.

3. Why did Jacob adopt Joseph's sons?

He was reserving a special inheritance for them and a place in future Israel to assure that his posterity would accept Joseph's sons as their brethren. He wanted to make it easier for Joseph's sons to bond with his posterity rather than with the Egyptians.

4. What blessing did Jacob bestow on Joseph's sons?

He desired that they find the same protection from God that he had experienced through life (48:16). He placed upon them his own name as well as the name of Abraham and Isaac. He desired that they would multiply greatly.

5. How did Jacob receive his knowledge of the future?

Through his eye of faith and his connection with God, he caught a vision of what lay ahead. He had developed and maintained a living relationship with God.

6. How can we lay the groundwork for faith in succeeding generations?

We should have our lives grounded firmly in the truth of God's Word. We must practice what we know is right and require it of our children. Carefulness to speak respectfully of God, church leaders, civil authorities, neighbors, and our own children goes a long way in developing proper attitudes toward God and authority. We should be pointing our children to God and the truth in everyday events. Supporting practical church application to truth can give a basis for future generations to live by.

7. What spiritual blessings can we impart to the rising generations? Leave a faithful example. Do what we can to help them be involved in the work of Christ's kingdom rather than the world. Share experiences and reasons for practices that can help the next generation develop convictions that will strengthen and bless them. Give encouragement in adversity, support in weakness, and counsel in perplexity. Time cannot reveal all the blessings of a faithful life.

8. What vision should we have for our people?

To succeed, we must desire a church grounded in Bible truth and must practice that truth in everyday life. We need young people who heed instruction; parents and grandparents who diligently teach the truths of God's Word; parents raising families with a burden to pass on the faith; and houses, vehicles, and businesses that are examples of simplicity and godliness. Each church member must willingly fill his place and keep himself separate from worldly fashions, pleasure, and all uncleanness so that someday he can be on God's right hand, separate from the rejected world.

### **Summarizing the Lesson**

God had appeared to Jacob at Bethel and blessed him. Jacob's life, typical of men, seemed to rise and fall. But as he faced life's experiences his faith grew. Now as his life neared its close, his faith clung to God's promises and his prophetic vision enlarged. May God grant us a growing faith that will bring our souls safely to rest. May He grant us an expanding vision for the spiritual welfare of our posterity.

### **Research Guide**

1. Read about Jacob's encounter with God in Genesis 28.
2. First Chronicles 5:1, 2; Genesis 34:25-31; and Genesis 35:22 relate to the change of the birthright from Reuben to Judah and Joseph.