

Blessing Ephraim & Manasseh

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[0 : 00] Now as we turn to this end of chapter 47 and on into chapter 48, we see that Jacob is now coming towards the end of his earthly pilgrimage.

We read Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt and the country of Goshen. They had possessions there and they grew and multiplied exceedingly. We must take this to be perhaps not necessarily during the time of famine, but certainly during the 17 years.

But Jacob himself is there. They begin to prosper when the famine years are over. They flourish in a way that perhaps the Egyptians didn't. They are not slaves in the way that the Egyptians now are to Pharaoh.

They prosper and the Lord blesses them and they multiply exceedingly. Jacob lived in the land of Egypt 17 years. So the whole age of Jacob was 147 years.

You remember that when he first came to see Pharaoh, we see in chapter 47 there, he asks him how old he is at verse 9. He says he's 130. So he's 17 years in Egypt and dies aged 147.

[1 : 06] Some commentators have pointed out the perfect symmetry of God's work of grace. How Jacob is nourished by Joseph in the land of Egypt 17 years.

Just as Joseph has been nourished by Jacob in the land of Canaan in the days of his infancy and his youth 17 years before he is sold into slavery there.

So there is this perfect symmetry with God. It's an aside. It's just a little detail. But it's one of these little things that the more details we uncover, the more we see how perfectly God has everything just so and just right in his scheme of providence and salvation.

Verse 29. Now, time of course that Israel must die.

We mentioned, of course, this morning when we were looking at the state of men after death and resurrection and so on, that unless we are here when the Lord comes back, we shall all die.

[2 : 16] Hebrews 9.27. As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment. There is only one life. One shot we get at it in this world. Once we die.

And after this the judgment. So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many. He does not die multiple times upon the cross. He is offered up once as the perfect sacrifice for sin.

He dies once just like every other man, woman and child in this world will die once. So Christ dies once upon the cross. And no amount of sitting at the Lord's table or sanctifying and administering the elements of the Lord's Supper will ever represent or repeat that perfect sacrifice.

There is no such thing as another sacrifice for sin. But as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment. So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.

And unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time when he comes back without sin unto salvation. And that is the salvation he will work for all who have trusted and believed in his name.

[3 : 27] As indeed we must take it that Jacob himself, the patriarch, has trusted in his Savior, in the Lord, God of Israel, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and in the Messiah who was to come.

So he is trusting in the Lord. But he must die. The time comes when he must adhere. He had wrestled with the angel of the Jabbok River and prevailed. He had been given the new name, Israel, meaning literally a prince with God.

And yet this is an appointment which is inescapable. His candle, as one commentator has put it, his candle is not put out.

It's not blown out. But rather it has been preserved. He has been kept. And it has burned all the way down the candlestick. All the way down to the socket.

The Lord had kept and preserved Jacob from being slain by his brother Esau. Remember way back when he had first deceived him to get his own father's blessing.

[4 : 28] Esau wanted to kill him. But he wasn't allowed to kill him. The Lord prevented that. In the days of their youth he had to flee. He preserved him from dying when he was exposed to the extremes of heat and cold and hunger and thirst and frost.

While keeping Laban's flocks and herds. Remember how he says to him how he was in all these extremes of weather. How he suffered. How he could so easily have perished out there looking after all the flocks and herds of his father-in-law.

But he didn't die then. He was preserved from the vengeful wrath of the Canaanites. After Simeon and Levi remember had murdered Shechem and all the men of his city.

The Canaanites could so easily have overwhelmed Jacob and his small band of extended family. But the Lord put the fear of God upon them all. And they were preserved from that vengeful attack. He didn't die then. He didn't die of a broken heart when Rachel was taken away from him. After Joseph had disappeared. He could so easily have simply turned his face to the wall and perished.

[5 : 33] But he didn't die then. He didn't die in the famine. When there was no food to be had. Because God sent Joseph ahead to preserve life. And he didn't starve at that point.

But now God's appointed time was approaching. The time drew nigh that Israel must die. Through all these trials and tribulations the Lord had kept it.

Because his time was not yet. And he still had a purpose to fulfill. And that will be the case for every single one of us. Particularly for the Lord's people. But also for every soul who is brought into the world.

Here there is a time for each of us. There is a purpose we have to fulfill. There is a set number of days and years. Which are our allotted span. And until those are complete. We are effectively immortal.

But when the hour comes appointed by God. We cannot go a step beyond it. The time drew nigh that Israel must die. He had been preserved through so many trials and difficulties.

[6 : 36] He was 147 years old. But eventually the candle burns all the way down to the socket. And the light goes out. In terms of this world.

Although at this point where it says the time drew nigh that he must die. And it may yet be plenty of time before the 147 years is fulfilled. We don't know exactly at what point this is being written.

And the reason for saying that is you know. If you go back for example to when Jacob first swindles his older brother. Out of the blessing. You go back to Genesis 27.

We see there. It came to pass when Isaac was old and his eyes were dim. So that he could not see. He called Esau his eldest son. And said I'm my son. And he said unto them. Behold here am I. Behold now I am old.

I know not the day of my death. Now therefore take I pray thee. Thy weapons. Thy quiver and thy bow. And go out to the field. Make me some venison. And make me savoury meat. Such as I love.

[7 : 34] And bring it to me that I may eat. And that my soul may bless thee. Before I die. Now we don't know exactly what age Isaac is at this point. But given that there's already been a reference to Esau marrying his Hittite wives.

When he is 40 years old. And Esau and Jacob were not born until Isaac was 60 years old. We don't know how long he's already been married to these even wives. But let's say it's five years at the most.

This means that Isaac is 105 or thereabouts. Which means he still actually has 75 years to go. At the point when he thinks that he is about to die.

When he thinks he is not long for this world. Esau likewise at verse 41 of that chapter. He hated Jacob because of the blessing where with his father blessed him. And Esau said in his heart.

The days of mourning for my father are at hand. Then will I slay my brother Jacob. He thought Isaac was about to die soon. But he lasted another 75 years. So we don't know for certain that the time drew neither Israel must die.

[8 : 37] Exactly how many years there are to go. This could just mean that there's a year to go. A couple of years to go. He has to set his affairs in order. But it is drawing near. He recognizes the approach.

The onset. And he knows that there are things that he must do. And settle first of all. One of these is for his burial. As we see here. If now I have found grace in thy sight.

Could I bring thee thy hand under my thigh? This is a curious and unique. We might say patriarchal form of swearing oath. And taking a solemn undertaking.

We only find it one other place there in chapter 24. Where Abraham's steward. His servant. Swears about finding the wife for Isaac in the same way.

Putting a hand under the thigh. As Abraham instructs him to do. It is a patriarchal form of blessing. And of swearing and oath. Probably it is intended to be closeness.

[9 : 34] Intimacy. And submission. Because in order to do it. You have to effectively be on your knees. In front of the patriarch. To place your hand under the patriarch's thigh.

You have to be effectively on your knees before them. So it is submission. It is servitude. It is faithfulness. Also it is thought it might be that it is placing the hand closely and intimately within the thigh area.

Perhaps even placing it upon the circumcised organ. As the means by which life is produced and reproduced. And the covenant perpetuated through the posterity of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and so on.

We don't know exactly the details. However indelicately might sound to us. But it is named here. And it is named in chapter 24. And it indicates a particularly patriarchal solemn form of swearing. That this was something for which having sworn in this way Joseph could not evade. He wants to be buried not in the land of Egypt. But with his fathers.

[10 : 40] And this is not for sentiment or nationalistic ideas. It is for the promise of the covenant. That he will be buried with Abraham and with Isaac. And there he will be laid so that when the resurrection comes.

We've looked at and talked about this morning. He will rise with them in the last day from the soil of the promised land. Not in heathen Egypt. This is what he begs of his son.

And bury me not I pray thee in Egypt. But I will lie with my fathers. Thou shalt carry me out of Egypt. Bury me in their burying place. And he said I will do as thou hast said.

And swear to me. And he swore unto him. And Israel bowed himself upon the beds. So this is the first promise. That when the time comes. His mortal remains will be laid in the soil of the promised land.

So that when the last trump sounds. That is the spot. The cave of Machpelah. That Abraham purchased from the Amorites. Where Abraham is buried. And Zerah his wife.

[11 : 42] Where Isaac is buried. And Rebekah his wife. And as he says at the end of chapter 49. Where likewise he buried Leah. Verse 31 of chapter 49.

That's where he wants to be with his fathers. So when the resurrection comes. They will rise from the same spot. The statement of faith. In the inheritance to come.

That's where it amounts to. And on then into chapter 48. Where we might say that this chapter. Is taken up with the blessing upon. Joseph's sons.

Ephraim and Manasseh. And again a little sort of point in passing. We might find it helpful. Or you might not. To regard this chapter as perhaps.

In chronological terms. A throwback. To perhaps. Just the immediate aftermath of verse 12. In chapter 47. Rather than.

[12 : 37] Perhaps coming immediately. After the end of chapter 47. You know. It says. Time draws nigh. That Jacob is about to die. And then. We have this incident with Ephraim and Manasseh.

Some things suggest. That it is not actually taking place. At that stage. After. Jacob is about. To pass away.

Because. Apart from anything else. There are little hints. Within it. That suggest that perhaps. You know. Verses. 8 to 11. Imply. A first meeting. Israel beheld Joseph's sons.

It said. Who are these? And Joseph said unto his father. They are my sons. Whom God hath given me in this place. He said. Bring them. I pray thee unto me. And I will bless them. And the eyes of Israel.

Were dim for age. So he could not see. That might be why. He didn't recognize them. And he brought them near unto them. And he kissed them. And embraced them. And Israel said unto Joseph. I have not thought to see thy face.

[13 : 34] And lo God hath shored me also thy seed. Now that. That is a form of speech. Which would be perfectly appropriate. If Jacob is meeting Joseph's sons. For the first time.

In Egypt. It's a surprising form of speech. If he has been in Egypt for 17 years. While the boys are growing up. And at this stage. Now they must be.

If you do the arithmetic. Given that they were both born. During the seven years of plenty. We don't know exactly when. But then you've got the seven years of famine. And it's sort of two years. Into the famine. That Jacob and his family come down. So you know. At the time. When they. When Israel comes. Comes into Egypt.

They would be. Perhaps. You know. Seven. Nine. Twelve years old. At the most. But. But if. If it's just before his death. Then in there.

[14:30] Mid-twenties. And. The fact is. That also. They're described here. Verse 12. Joseph brought them out. From between his knees. Now that's sort of. You can almost imagine.

A father with two little young children. Toddlers perhaps. Or young children. So. Bringing them out. Sort of in front of his legs. To the grandfather. And then sort of. Hugging dad's legs. Kind of thing. If they're not sure. About this old man. And that all makes perfect sense. Taking them in his hand. One hand. For the eldest. One hand. For the youngest. Bringing them forward. For the blessing. It doesn't really ring.

Quite so true. For. Great big lummoxes. In their mid-twenties. You know. With their father. It just doesn't. It implies. Young boys. Plus the fact that.

You know. He says. At verse 16. The angel which redeemed me from all evil. Bless the lads. Now this is a term. That is used about. About Benjamin.

[15:24] The lad. You know. In verse. Chapter 44. Where we read. For example. At verse 20. He said. We have a father. An old man. And a child of his old age. A little one.

And his brother is dead. And he alone is left of his mother. And verse 22. We said unto my lord. The lad cannot leave his father. But if he should leave his father. His father would die.

Again. In verse 31. Of the same chapter. It shall come to pass. When you see it. The lad is not with us. He will die. This is a phrase used about Benjamin. A phrase that implies his youth.

A child. And again. We talked previously. About how it's likely. That within the Genesis account here. There are sort of. The consortium. The layers. Of the narrative.

Like if you've got a piece of cloth. And it's folded over. And then folded again. And then folded again. The bits you see right close to you. Are the edges of the folding. And although they look like they're right up close.

[16:22] In fact. There may be quite a bit of time. In between them. In the narrative. With the folding. As it were. Of the narrative. And I think this chapter 48. Means it to yourselves.

It's not authoritative. I can't say that. But I would suggest to you. It would make most sense. If we understood it. As a description. Of what happened.

When Joseph first introduced. His sons to Jacob. And that this is being recounted. Subsequent. To the promise. That Joseph makes.

To his father. When he feels his time. Drawing here. This implies. A first meeting. It implies. The youthfulness. Of the boys. It implies.

Rather. That it is. From the midst of chapter 47. Rather than. After the end of it. But that's. It's just an implication. You don't have to take it. As definitely said. But clearly.

[17:18] The blessing. Is for these two boys. Over and above. All the other tribes. Of Israel. All the other. Headship. So we see then.

At verse 5. Where he says. 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. Now why does he name. Reuben and Simeon. Explicitly. As opposed to. You know. Why not Naphtali. And Gad. And Asher. And you know. Levi. And Judah. And all the others. It is implied. Here. That he is effectively. Adopting them. Not merely as his grandsons. Which they were of course. In blood. But effectively.

Giving them position. As though they were his immediate sons. Not only giving them position. But giving them the position. Of the eldest. And the second eldest.

[18:14] Of the first born. And the next born. Remember that Reuben was the eldest. Biologically. Simeon was the next eldest. Then Levi. Then Judah. So when he says.

As Reuben and Simeon. They shall be mine. There is almost imprecation here. That they will be treated. They will be regarded. By me now. As my first and second born.

In the place. That would have been occupied. By Reuben. And Simeon. Now. One reason for. For doing this. Of course. We see that he says. It says at verse 22. I have given thee.

A portion. Above thy brethren. A double portion. He is giving to Joseph. Now the double portion. Was the prerogative. Of the first born. And so he is effectively.

Making Joseph. And these sons. The first born. Of his twelve sons. In first chronicles. We read it. Chapter five. Verse two verses. Now the sons of Reuben.

[19:10] The first born of Israel. Brackets. For he was the first born. But for as much. As he defiled. His father's bed. His birthright. Was given.

Unto the sons. Of Joseph. The son of Israel. And the genealogy. Is not to be reckoned. After the birthright. For Judah prevailed. Above his brethren. And of him.

Came the chief ruler. But the birthright. Was Joseph's. Now the birthright. Was not Joseph's. By virtue of biology. But the birthright. Is Joseph's.

By virtue of the fact. That Jacob. Is saying. He is now. Regarding. Joseph's sons. As being. His two. Elders. Firstborn. Not as grandsons. But as immediate sons.

Thy two sons. Ephraim. And Manasseh. Notice he names. Ephraim first. Although he was the younger. Which were born unto thee. In the land of Egypt. Before I came unto thee. Are mine. As Reuben.

[20:05] And Simeon. This shall be mine. And thy issue. Which thou begetttest. After them. In other words. If Joseph had any more sons. Will they be treated as grandsons. But of course. We don't actually know.

Of Joseph. Having any other children. Other than. Ephraim. And Manasseh. As far as we know. These are the only children. That he had. And he goes on. To describe. The way by which.

The Lord helped him. Sustained him. And the tragedy. That he suffered. With the. With the loss of Rachel. And so on. And then. Joseph brings. His sons. For blessing.

And he brought. John brought them both. Ephraim in his right hand. Verse 13. Inna. Toward Israel's left hand. And Manasseh. In his left hand. Toward Israel's right hand.

And he brought them. The young. And Israel stretched out. His right hand. And laid it. On Ephraim's head. In other words. Crossing his hands over. He's putting his hands. On the heads.

[21:00] Of Joseph's sons. Ephraim's head. It was the young man. In his left hand. Upon Manasseh's head. Guiding his hands. Wittingly. For Manasseh. So was the firstborn. Now when it says.

Wittingly. It can only mean. That this is something. Which God. Is moving. And inspiring him to do. Because it cannot be saying. Oh yeah. There's Manasseh. Right. I'm just going to cross over here. And there's Ephraim. Right. Cross my hands over. Because he cannot see. Clearly. We are told that. Verse 10. The eyes of Israel were doomed for age. So that he could not see. And he brought them near unto him.

And he kissed them and embraced them. Now of course we're taught. In 2nd Corinthians. Chapter 5 verse 7. That we walk by faith. Not by sight. And here is Jacob putting his faith into practice.

We know that he is putting his faith into practice. Because we are told explicitly in Hebrews 11 verse 21. And by faith Jacob. When he was a dying. Blessed both the sons of Joseph.

[21:59] And worshipped. Leaning upon the top of his staff. Now. While the writer to the Hebrews mentions. The sons of Joseph. As opposed to all the sons. Of Jacob.

Which are mentioned of course. By receiving their father's blessing in chapter 49. He mentions them explicitly. Here as receiving the blessing of Jacob.

By faith. He is not seeing. Oh well I like. I like Ephraim better than Manasseh. I like the look of him better. I'll cross my hands over. No. He cannot see. If he is guiding his hands wittingly.

It is not from his own personal knowledge. It is not by sight. It is by faith. That's what Hebrews tells us. By faith. He blessed the sons. Of Jacob.

And likewise. He is with the gift of prophecy. Given to him as a prophet of God. Verse 19. As a patriarch. His father refused. And said. I know it my son.

[22:54] I know it. He also. That is Manasseh. Shall be great. But truly his younger brother. Shall be greater than he. And his seed. Shall become a multitude of nations.

How does he know this? He knows this. Because the Lord is inspiring him to say it. Is giving him to exercise the gift of prophecy. As a prophet. Capital P. Of the Lord. And enabling him to foretell.

Some of what will be. In the future. And he. That is Jacob. Blessed Joseph. Verse 15. And said. God before whom my fathers.

Abraham and Isaac did walk. The God which fed me. All my life long. Unto this day. The angel. Which redeemed me from all evil. Blessed 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. What he is also doing here. We have to remember. Is that he is effectively claiming. [23 : 53] What is. You know. In fact. To very much. Egyptian boys. For part of. What would be. That he spies. Hebrews. A nation.

He is saying. You know. Whatever you may think. That you think. You're a little Egyptian prince. This is your real inheritance. It is the inheritance. Of your forefathers. Abraham and Isaac. And me Jacob.

I am putting my name upon them. That my name be named on them. And the name of my fathers. Abraham and Isaac. Let them grow into a multitude. In the midst of the earth. If you think about it. Ephraim and Manasseh. Their mother is Asenath. The daughter of the priest of On. Her father is a pagan priest. In the capital. Of ancient Egypt. As it was then. So he's a pagan priest. She's the daughter of a priest. She's to all intents and purposes. A princess. Of Egypt. Really. And Jacob is now. The power. And Joseph is now. The power in the land. Effectively.

[24 : 47] A prince of Egypt. His sons. Born to this. Egyptian princess. Will be brought up. With all the privilege. And wealth. And rank. Of princelings. Of Egypt.

With all the knowledge. And all the wealth. That surrounds them. Their father is as high up. The food chain. As it is possible to be. Only Pharaoh. Is more important. Than he is. Think of the privilege. And the power. Into which these boys. Are born. Of half. Egyptian parentage. In Egypt. They are born.

They are effectively. Two thirds. Egyptians. Themselves. And yet. The inheritance. Which Jacob. Is claiming. For them. Is that. Rather than all.

The wealth. And prosperity. Of Egypt. For a season. There is a greater. Inheritance. For them. And that is the inheritance. Of their covenant. Fathers. Which. Might not mean a lot.

[25 : 41] To the boys. At this stage. In their lives. But. They would come. To see. And recognize. That their true. Inheritance. Lay. With the Hebrew. People. The shepherds.

Whom the Egyptians. Despised. And so on. God. Before whom. My fathers. Abram and Isaac. Did walk. The God. Which fed me. All the days. Of my life. You see. He had asked.

For a huge amount. When the Lord. Appeared to him. And before. When he appeared. To him. At Bethel. And when he. Watched over him. And when he saw. The you know.

The Jacob's ladder. As it were. The angels. Ascending. And descending. At the end. Of chapter 28. We read. Jacob. About. About. About. Saying. If God. Will be with me. And will keep me.

In this way. That I go. And will give me. Bread to eat. And raiment. To put on. So that I come again. To my father's house. In peace. Then shall the Lord. Be my God. And this stone.

[26 : 34] Which I set. For a pillar. Shall be God's house. And of all. That thou shalt give me. I will surely give the tenth. Unto thee. He has fed me. You know. Without fruit. We perish. We die. And we need fruit.

Effectively. Every day. God doesn't necessarily need to. To have the future. Stretching out before us. An abundance of wealth. Abundance of fruit. If we have sufficient. For one day.

Then sufficient unto the day. Tomorrow. Are the evils thereof. You know. Give us this day. Our daily bread. It's what Jesus teaches. His disciples to pray. And day. By day.

By day. For a hundred and forty seven years. The Lord has fed. And provided. For Jacob. The God which fed me. All my life.

Long unto this day. The angel. Which redeemed me. From all evil. Notice how he mentions. The angel. In the same breath. As God. The angel. Is effectively.

[27 : 29] The personification. Of God. The presence of God. Which means. It can be no. Mere. Angel. No mere. Messenger. From God.

Because angels. As messengers. Have no. Divine. Initiative. They simply. Bear messages. Backwards and forwards. Between heaven and earth. When Jacob sees his vision.

He sees this ladder. Going up and down. To heaven. The staircase. Angels ascending. And descending on it. But none of them. Has any power. To redeem. The angel. Which redeemed me. From all evil. It must be God. Therefore it must be. God the son. Because God the father. Does not come down. And walk upon the earth. God the father. Does not appear.

On the earth. When Moses. Pleads with the Lord. That he would provide. You know. Guidance and help. For them. God says. In Exodus 23. Verse 20. Behold. I send an angel.

[28 : 22] Before thee. To keep thee. In the way. And to bring thee. Into the place. Which I have prepared. Beware of him. And obey his voice.

Provoke him not. For he will not. Pardon your transgressions. For my name. Is in him. My name. Is in him.

Now. Of whom does the Lord say. That his name is in him. Well we think of the prophet Isaiah. Chapter 9. Verse 6. And the promise. Of the child will be born. Unto us a child is born.

Unto us a son is given. The government shall be upon his shoulder. His name. Shall be called wonderful. Fine. Cancer. The mighty God. The everlasting father.

The prince. Of peace. The mighty God. My name. Is upon the everlasting father. The name of the father. Jesus says. In John chapter 10. Verse 30.

[29 : 19] I and my father are one. This is no mere angel. No ordinary angel. This is God. Who has preserved and protected him. And he's effectively. God the son.

Prior to his incarnation. Prior to his appearance in the flesh. The angel which redeemed me. The God which fed me all my life long to this day. The angel which redeemed me from all evil. Bless the lads.

No angel can redeem. Anyone. No mere angel. This angel is God personified. God personified. Only God can redeem.

Only God the son. Is the redeemer. There is only one mediator between God and man. The man Christ Jesus. There is only one redeemer. And that is Christ. Therefore if it is saying.

The angel which redeemed me. From all evil. Bless the lads. This is what we have. We have only one mediator.

[30 : 16] We have only one hope. We walk by faith. Not by sight. We walk in the way. That the Lord will lead us. We are protected.

By the Lord. Likewise. Mere angels. Mere messengers. Cannot do it. It is the Lord alone. Who is able to do it. We read in 1 Corinthians.

Chapter 5. Of course. I think we are in 2 Corinthians. I think it is. Chapter 5. Where we read of how the rock. That went before. The children of Israel. No.

It is 1 Corinthians right now. The rock that went before them. That rock was Christ. That protected them. That sustained them. They drank of that spiritual rock. I was going to check the 10 verse 4. I beg your pardon. They all drank the same spiritual drink. They drank of that spiritual rock. That followed them. That rock was Christ. How does a rock follow them? A rock can't go following them. Through the wilderness. It is a spiritual rock.

[31 : 13] The rock of the resurrection. The angel of the covenant. Which protects and redeems them. Joseph should not have been surprised.

He should not have been surprised that the blessing was on the younger. rather than the elder. I mean. If he himself is receiving the blessing. If he himself is being given the inheritance of the firstborn.

And he's you know. He's practically the youngest of all. That we've got here. He's the youngest of all. The sons of Jacob. And there he is receiving the blessing.

And his two sons inheriting the blessings. Of the eldest too. Then you know. It's not just that he's getting it. So why shouldn't Ephraim. But this is so often.

So frequently. The way that the Lord works. This is what we have here. In Genesis. In chapter. Well even right at the beginning.

[32 : 12] Where you've got Cain and Abel. You know. Which one is the blessed? Which one is the one who is righteous before God? It's not Cain the eldest. It's Abel. The younger. Okay. He gets killed pretty quick.

But you know. His blood cries from the ground. He is the righteous one before God. Who brings with faith. His sacrifice to the Lord. Likewise. If we see in chapter 10.

In verse 21. Unto Shem also. The father of all the children of Eber. The brother of Japheth. The elder. Even to him were children born. Shem is not in fact.

The first born of Noah. As we looked at. When we were doing these earlier chapters. We think. Oh yes. Shem, Ham and Japheth. The sons of Noah. We think. Shem must be the first born. Ham is the younger one. And Japheth is the youngest of all.

Well Ham is in fact. The younger son. In other words. The middle son. Of Noah. Not the youngest. But the younger. For we read. Verse 24. Of chapter 9.

[33 : 07] Noah awaked from his wine. And knew what his younger son. Had done unto him. That is Ham. So we think. Okay. Fair enough. He's still the middle. Shem is the eldest. Japheth. Japheth is the youngest. That's why we say.

Shem. Ham and Japheth. But when you look in chapter 10. You see that Japheth's children. And offspring. Are listed first. They are listed first. Because Japheth is the first born. Unto Shem also the father.

Verse 21 of chapter 10. And the children of Eber. The brother of Japheth. The elder. Even to him were children born. And yet God is described. Chapter 9. Verse 26. Of Genesis.

He said. Blessed be the Lord. God of Shem. And Cain and Sheldon. His son. Japheth may be the first born. Biologically. But clearly. It is through Shem. That the covenant line.

Was to descend. He is the God of Shem. Likewise. Isaac. Jacob's father. Was younger than Ishmael. He was not the first born. In that sense. He was the one.

[34 : 02] Who inherited. The promises. He was the child. Of the covenant. Jacob himself. Had inherited the promises. Of the covenant line. Although. Esau was older than him. So.

Joseph. Why. If he is inheriting. The blessings of the first born. Why. Should he be surprised. That God. Would choose. Perhaps. To put the blessing.

Of the first born. Upon. The younger. Son. Why. The first born. Flesh. Should be aggrieved. Well. You might think. Oh. Well.

I'm the first born. I should be the one. Who inherits. Okay. Who made you the first born. Did you earn it. Did you buy it. Did you have any control. Over it. Whatsoever.

If you are the first born. According to the flesh. It's nothing you've done. It's nothing that you have merited. It's just what you happen to have been born. It is something you have received.

[34 : 56] Whether we are the first born. According to the flesh. Or whether we are the first born. According to the promise. And the inheritance. It is something. God. Does. It is God's providence.

It is. It is. It is. Out working. Graciously. The first born. According to the flesh. Neither earned. Nor chose. Their first born status. We are his.

We are in God's hands. We are his creation. We are his workmanship. He is able to do with us. As he pleases. And so we have it.

As we read in Galatians chapter 4. Verse 28. We brethren. As Isaac was. Thinking of Jacob's father. Are the children of promise. But as he that was born after the flesh.

That is Ishmael. Persecuted him that was born after the spirit. Even so it is now. Nevertheless.

What saith the scripture. Cast out the born woman and her son. For the son of the born woman.

[35 : 57] Shall not be heir. But the son of the free woman. So then brethren. We are not children of the born woman. But of the free. Our inheritance is not because of the flesh. Not because of Hagar and Ishmael.

Not because of Esau. His father's personal favorite. But because of the inheritance. Because of the promise. Because of the covenant. If we are redeemed at all.

It is because of God's covenant mercies. We are his to do with. As he will. We are his to be caused. To be born first.

After the flesh. Or to be born last. After the flesh. None of us has the least iota of control. Over where we come in a family order. We have no control over who our parents are.

We have no control over our nationality. Or our country of origin. Or any of these things. It is all down to God's gracious providence. And if we are elect according to his grace and mercy.

[36 : 57] That too is nothing of us. It is all of God. And we are inclined to say. Oh well that is not fair then is it? We should have some control over it.

If we had any control over it at all. We would perish. It is as though somebody were to say. When you are up in a jumbo jet. Thousands of feet up in the air. And say well I think it is very undemocratic.

But if I as the pilot. Just decide to land this plane all by myself. Why don't we take a boat. And see who amongst you. Would like to come and land this jumbo jet. Oh me, me, me. Oh I want to leave shortness.

So you sit up with the controls. And think right what do I do now. If it is up to you. That plane is going to crash. And everybody in it is going to die. And likewise if it is up to us. We do not have the

power.

The means, the expertise or the knowledge. We do not have any way of saving ourselves. Much less of anyone else. It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed.

[37 : 52] They are new every morning. Great is thy faithfulness. It is the Lord's work. That enables one to be brought within his covenant of grace.

Regardless of their position in the family order. It is God that gives the double portion of blessing. As Jacob pronounces it here upon the heads of Joseph's sons.

And puts the younger before the elder. Behold I die. He says verse 21. But clearly not just yet. But God shall be with you.

He is not saying singularly to Joseph. You remember. The authorised version is very clear. The and that was singular. You is a plural. He is speaking to Joseph and to his sons.

God shall be with you. And bring you. Plural. Unto the land of your fathers. Moreover I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren.

[38 : 50] Which I took out of the hand of the Amorite. With my sword and with my bow. Now the word that is translated as portion. Literally in the Hebrew. It is the word Shechem.

And this indicates that it is the place that Jacob bought. Legally. Lawfully. From the sons of Hamor. Shechem's father. At the end of chapter 33. If you turn back to it.

You will see it there from verse 18. Towards the end of the chapter 33. Jacob came to Shechem. A city of Shechem. Which is in the land of Canaan. When he came from Paddan Aram. And pitched his tent before the city.

And he bought. It is legally his. A parcel of a field. Where he had spread his tent. At the hand of the children of Hamor. Shechem's father. For a hundred pieces of money.

And he erected there an altar. And called it El Elohe Israel. God the God of Israel. Now if he says. Well if he bought it. And paid for it. Why does he say. He took it out of the Amorite's hand. By his sword and by his bow.

[39 : 48] Well almost certainly. He subsequently left the place. In one of his many travels. And they simply occupied it again. When he came back to claim his inheritance.

They resisted him. And he had to fight for it. So he had to take it back. Out of the hands of the Amorites. With my sword and with my bow. So this portion.

Literally Shechem. And the word Shechem. Means again literally shoulder. If you think about it. The shoulder was in any of the sacrifices. Or the feasts that the Israelites had.

It was considered the choice portion. The best of the meat. The very best of the beast. That was saved for the most honored guest. And he has given him the portion.

The shoulder. The Shechem. The ultimate inheritance. In fact all the inheritance. That he lawfully has. In the promised land. He is giving it.

[40 : 44] To Joseph and to his sons. Which I took out of the hand of the Amorite. With my sword and with my bow. They will all have their various portions. But Joseph will have a double portion.

In his two sons. Whom Jacob takes. As his own. Putting the younger. Before the elder. Because our privileges. In the sight of the Lord.

Are not down to our biology. Or down to our physical attributes. They are down to the grace of God. Now this place in Shechem. Of course. We read of it in chapter 4. Of John's account of the gospel.

Where we read. He must needs go. So Jesus must needs go through Samaria. He cometh to a city of Samaria. Which is called Sychar. Sychar is the New Testament name. For Shechem.

The Old Testament place. And we are told. It's near to the parcel of ground. That Jacob gave to his son. Joseph. Now Jacob's well. Was there. A well that he digged.

[41 : 38] Verse 12. The woman of Samaria. Says to Jesus. Art thou greater than our father Jacob. Which gave us the well. And drank thou of himself. And his children. And his cattle. This is the place where Jesus met.

With the woman of Samaria. Sychar. Shechem. The well. The parcel of ground. Which Jacob gave to his son. Joseph. And this is him doing it. This is him apportioning it.

To him. This becomes part of his. Inheritance. We belong to the Lord. To do with as he will. If he should shut us out.

From his grace. Then it is no more than our sins deserve. If he should open his blessings wide to us. It is privilege beyond what we have ever deserved.

But since we are not given to know. Either the number or identity of all God's elect. From the beginning of time to the end. All we can do is respond.

[42 : 36] To the invitation that he makes. He does not give to us to know. The identity of the elect. Nor the number of the elect. Nor the eternal destination.

Of any other person around us for certain. But he makes his invitation. And he makes it genuinely. Come unto me. All that labor and our heavy laden.

And I will give you rest. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. And thou shalt be saved. Now of course we are told. As he says to Joseph his son.

Behold I die. He thinks he is not long for this world. And so he says to behold I die. But he wants to bless his children. He wants to give him this inheritance.

We might think from this chapter. And the previous chapter. This chapter. The end of the previous chapter. That Israel is about to go any second. We don't know how long that is still to go.

[43 : 32] But what we can say with certainty is. There is a whole chapter of blessings still to come. In chapter 49. That is when Israel.

When Jacob distributes his fatherly blessings upon his 12 sons. The 12 tribes of Israel. And you know as you will see there in chapter 49. When we come to it.

He is no fool. He knows both the virtues. And also the vices. Of all his individual sons. And he apportions his blessings accordingly.

But there is a whole chapter of blessing. Still to come. You and I may be within a short time of our last breath. Behold I die. The time may draw an eye when Israel must die.

The time may draw an eye when you and I must die. But there is time yet for blessing. There is a chapter yet of blessing. Still in Jacob's breath. Still to be given.

[44 : 31] And there is a whole chapter. Perhaps yet to be written. In your life or in mine. Depending on the time that remains to us. Behold I die.

Yes we do. We do not know the day of our death. We do not know how long we are given. But we do know that the Lord has given us. A set amount of time.

And until that moment. He gives us all that we need to continue. The God who fed me day by day. All that my life long to this day. Will continue to do so.

Until the days are fulfilled and the number expired. And there is a chapter yet to be fulfilled. A chapter of blessing yet to be received. If only we will have it.

And go forward into it. That is the case literally. In terms of the pages of scripture before us. A chapter yet to be fulfilled in Jacob's life.

[45 : 27] And a chapter yet to be fulfilled in your life and mine. It may be a long chapter. Or it may be a short one. We do not know. But we do know. That the Lord freely offers us to go forward into it.

With him. Whatever may be your physical condition in this world. You may be the youngest. You may be the poorest. You may have the least number of gifts.

You may have the least number of what you consider positive attributes. But God's promises are not dependent upon age or position or strength or privilege. They are freely offered to the youngest. To the least. To the outcast. To the poor in this world. That the Lord may be exalted. By taking that which is least. And making it greatest.

Because he is the greatest of all. Let us pray.