

# genesis

## God's Book of Beginnings

### Manasseh and Ephraim (Genesis 48)

**48:1-7** Soon after swearing to bury Jacob with his “fathers” <sup>Genesis 47:28-31</sup>, Joseph was told his father was “ill”, so he went to see Jacob with Manasseh and Ephraim. As Jacob sat up in bed, he repeated God’s promises to Abraham <sup>Genesis 12:1-7</sup>, which He later confirmed with Jacob at Luz (Bethel) <sup>Genesis 28:10-19</sup>. Jacob then declared Ephraim and Manasseh would be “his”, and recounted Rachel’s death/burial near Bethlehem as he returned from Paddan <sup>Genesis 35:16-20</sup>.

Jacob’s ‘adoption’ of Ephraim & Manasseh gave Joseph a double portion of inheritance <sup>Joshua 16-17</sup>, therefore effectively passing to Joseph the birthright, originally belonging to Reuben <sup>1 Chronicles 5:1-2</sup>.

**48:8-11** With weak eyes, Israel finally noticed Joseph’s sons. Israel expressed his joy that God not only let him see Joseph, but He also “allowed [him] to see [Joseph’s] children” <sup>Psalms 103:17</sup> (his grandsons). Telling the boys to come close, he warmly kissed and embraced them.

Being almost blind himself (and possibly remembering his earlier deception before his effectively blind father, Isaac <sup>Genesis 27:1-29</sup>), Jacob requested for Joseph’s sons to be identified for him.

**48:12-16** Joseph knelt before his father, with Ephraim and Manasseh on either side of him. Israel placed his hands on the boys’ heads, with his right hand on Ephraim and his left hand on Manasseh. He then indirectly blessed Joseph by letting Joseph’s two sons represent him.

The text of Jacob’s blessing indicated the passing of the promise from Abraham to Joseph’s sons. Israel used three descriptions of God: Angel, deliverer, shepherd. The Angel Jacob referred to <sup>v.16</sup> was the Lord (Angel of the Lord <sup>Genesis 32:24-30, Hosea 12:4</sup>), who was Jacob’s deliverer (*gâ’al* : redeemer, Savior) <sup>v.16</sup> and his shepherd <sup>v.15</sup> (first use as a metaphor for God <sup>Genesis 49:24, Psalms 23:1, 80:1, Isaiah 40:11</sup>).

Jacob’s evaluation of his life here <sup>v.15-16</sup> was much more positive than his previous one <sup>Genesis 47:9</sup>.

**48:17-20** Joseph tried to correct Jacob, who put his left hand on Manasseh (first born) and his right hand on Ephraim, but Israel said Ephraim would be greater than his older brother.

Jacob's blessing of Ephraim and Manasseh <sup>v.20</sup> was his great act of faith chosen to be mentioned in Hebrews <sup>Hebrews 11:21</sup>. Jacob was a second oldest son who gained the birthright blessing by deception <sup>Genesis 27:1-29</sup>; however, he gave it freely to another second oldest son, Ephraim, in faith.

Ephraim's offspring became the most powerful tribe in the northern kingdom (Israel) <sup>1 Chronicles 12:30</sup>. By blessing Ephraim over Manasseh, Jacob was prophetically indicating Ephraim's greater future. The name Ephraim was later used to refer to the Northern Kingdom of Israel <sup>Isaiah 7:2,5,8-9,17, Hosea 9:3-16</sup>.

For four consecutive generations of Hebrew patriarchs, the given birthright standard was ignored: Isaac blessed over Ishmael, Jacob over Esau, Joseph over Reuben, and Ephraim over Manasseh.

There are many examples in the Word of God of the laying of hands on the head of a person being blessed e.g., Numbers 8:5-11, 27:15-19, Mark 10:13-16, Acts 6:1-6, 9:15-19, 13:1-3, 19:1-6, 28:7-8, 1 Timothy 4:13-14, Revelation 1:17.

**48:21-22** Israel then announced to Joseph: "I am about to die" <sup>Genesis 50:24</sup>, encouraged Joseph God would be with him (and his descendants), and said 'they' would return to Canaan (PL). Israel also gave Joseph and brothers land he "took from the Amorites with [his] sword/bow".

Jacob had purchased some land at Shechem from the Amorites <sup>Genesis 33:18-20</sup> (the same Hebrew word, *š'kem*, translated here as "the ridge of land" <sup>v.22</sup>), but the only fighting at this location during Jacob's life noted in Scripture was not led by Jacob, but by his sons Simeon and Levi <sup>Genesis 34:25-26</sup>.

## The Death of Jacob (Genesis 49b)

Only the last 5 verses in Chapter 49 will be discussed here. Having already blessed his 2 adopted sons <sup>Genesis 48:17-20</sup>, Jacob's blessings on his 12 sons <sup>Genesis 49:1-28</sup> are discussed in the final study.

**49:29-33** Just before his death, Jacob instructed his sons to bury him "with [his] fathers" in the "cave in the field of Machpelah", which Abraham had purchased from the Hittites <sup>Genesis 23:3-20</sup>.

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Jacob had earlier made Joseph swear to bury him where his “fathers” were buried <sup>Genesis 47:29-31</sup>. In addition, Jacob requested his burial be with Leah <sup>v.31</sup>, not with his first love, Rachel <sup>Genesis 29:30</sup>. Jacob’s dying instructions to all his sons about his burial <sup>v.29-32</sup> were fully carried out <sup>Genesis 50:12-14</sup>. The Biblical phrase “gathered to his people” indicated a death and a reunion with previously departed friends <sup>Matthew 8:11, Luke 16:22-23</sup>, and was applied to the deaths of Abraham <sup>Genesis 25:8</sup>, Isaac <sup>Genesis 35:28-29</sup>, Jacob <sup>v.33</sup>, Moses and Aaron <sup>Deuteronomy 32:50</sup> and Ishmael <sup>Genesis 25:17</sup>.

## The Conclusion of Joseph’s Life (Genesis 50)

### The Burial of Jacob in Canaan

**50:1-6** Following Jacob’s death <sup>Genesis 49:33</sup>, Joseph was overcome with emotion, but recovered enough to direct the preparation of his father’s body <sup>John 19:38-40</sup> for the 40 day embalming process. Out of respect for Joseph, the Egyptians mourned for Jacob 70 days <sup>Genesis 37:34</sup>. Joseph requested and received Pharaoh’s permission to “go up and bury” his father’s body in “the tomb [Jacob] dug for [himself] in the land of Canaan” (PL) <sup>Matthew 27:57-60</sup>.

Joseph was 56 years old (30 <sup>Genesis 41:46</sup> + 7 <sup>Genesis 41:47</sup> + 2 <sup>Genesis 45:6</sup> + 17 <sup>Genesis 47:28</sup>) when Jacob died at the age of 147, after being in Egypt for 17 years <sup>Genesis 47:28</sup>. In the end, Jacob lived with Joseph in Egypt the same number of years (17) that Joseph lived with Jacob in the PL <sup>Genesis 37:2</sup>.

Joseph requested medical physicians, instead of mystical religious staff to perform the embalming. Egyptian mummification was a forty-day process (including gutting, drying and wrapping the body).

**50:7-14** Joseph and a massive contingent of family members and Egyptians took Jacob’s body and left Goshen. On their journey to Mamre, the group briefly stopped near the Jordan River, where they mourned for 7 days before continuing on to the cave in the field of Machpelah. They buried Jacob as he had instructed <sup>Genesis 49:29-30</sup> and then made the return trip to Egypt.

Centuries later the nation of Israel would leave Egypt, carrying the bones of Joseph <sup>v.25, Exodus 13:19</sup>.

Having great respect for Joseph, Pharaoh sent “all” of his highest officials with Joseph to Canaan.

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The huge assembly of people stopped at “the threshing floor of Atad” on their way to the burial site to mourn for seven days. Atad was located at *'ābēl miṣrayim*: “meadow or mourning of Egypt”.

Joseph had not been back in Canaan (the PL) for 39 years (56 years <sup>see notes above – 17</sup> Genesis 37:2).

### Joseph Reassures His Brothers

**50:15-21** Following Jacob’s death, with guilt still in their minds, the brothers again became afraid of Joseph, so they sent him a message (pretending it was from Jacob) asking him to forgive his brothers. Then the brothers “threw themselves down before” Joseph <sup>Genesis 37:7</sup>, but for a second time Joseph reassured them <sup>Genesis 45:5</sup> they had nothing to fear <sup>Ephesians 4:32</sup>.

Joseph’s question “Am I in the place of God?” <sup>Romans 12:18-19</sup> and his statement (“You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good...”) to his brothers reiterated his firm belief that through His sovereignty, God used everything that had happened for His perfect will <sup>Genesis 45:5, Matthew 26:39</sup>.

Joseph displayed the Biblical principle for believers to “not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing” <sup>1 Peter 3:8-9</sup>, because (with faith/trust) God will create good from bad <sup>Romans 8:28</sup>.

### The Death of Joseph

**50:22-26** Joseph “stayed in Egypt, along with his father’s family” until he was 110 years old. As he was approaching death, Joseph again reassured his brothers that God would help them and bring them (and their descendants) out of Egypt. He then made his brothers swear an oath about the burial of his bones, similar to Joseph’s earlier promise to Jacob <sup>Genesis 47:29-31</sup>.

Joseph died at the age of 110 <sup>Joshua 24:29</sup>, which was considered to be the ideal lifespan in Egypt.

Placing a child on a person’s knees indicated the child belonged to them <sup>Genesis 48:12, Job 3:12</sup>.

In his continuing faith/trust in God, Joseph conveyed confidence to his brothers that God would bring the family out of Egypt and into the PL <sup>Hebrews 11:22</sup>. He insisted his bones be taken to the PL. About 400 years later, Moses took them <sup>Exodus 13:19</sup>, and Joshua buried them at Shechem <sup>Joshua 24:32</sup>.

Twice <sup>v.24, 25</sup>, Joseph confidently proclaimed that “God will surely come to your [Israel’s] aid” <sup>Ruth 1:6</sup>.

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