

# **Second Baptist Church of Doylestown**

## **Bible Study Notes**

**4-22-20**

### **Genesis 48**

#### **Jacob [Israel] Blesses Joseph's Two Sons - Verses 1-11**

Some time later Joseph was told, "Your father is ill." So he took his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim along with him. <sup>2</sup> When Jacob was told, "Your son Joseph has come to you," Israel rallied his strength and sat up on the bed. <sup>3</sup> Jacob said to Joseph, "God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and there he blessed me <sup>4</sup> 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.' <sup>5</sup> "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. <sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> 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). <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."

**48:1-7** There have been several references to Jacob's impending death. As his condition deteriorates, Joseph is told that his father is ill. There is no indication how this message is sent, but perhaps one of the brothers takes it upon himself to let Joseph know. It is noteworthy that he is "told this information." This is verification that Joseph is not living with them in Goshen. Word has to get out to him because he's not there with them. Upon hearing this news, Joseph goes to Goshen and takes along his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, to see Jacob. They are born to Joseph and his wife, Asenath, during the years of plenty, before the start of the famine. Their exact ages are unknown. Some scholars estimate them to be in their early twenties since Jacob lives in Egypt for about 17 years before his brothers came.

**48:8-20** Jacob gave Ephraim, instead of his older brother Manasseh, the greater blessing. When Joseph objected, Jacob refused to listen because God had told him that Ephraim would become greater. God often works in unexpected ways. When he chooses people to fulfill his plans, he always goes deeper than appearance, tradition, or position. He sometimes surprises us by choosing the less obvious person, at least by human reasoning. God can use you to carry out his plans, even if you don't think you have all the qualifications.

#### **Jacob [Israel] Blesses Joseph's Two Sons - Verses 12-20**

<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.

**48:11** When Joseph became a slave, Jacob thought he was dead and wept in despair (37:34). But eventually God's plan allowed Jacob to regain not only his son, but his grandchildren as well. Circumstances are never so bad that they are beyond God's help. Jacob regained his son. Job got a new family (Job 42:10-17). Mary regained her brother, Lazarus (John 11:1-44). We need never despair because we belong to a loving God. We don't yet know what good he may bring out of a seemingly hopeless situation.

**48:15** Jacob spoke of God as his shepherd throughout his life. In his old age, he could clearly see his dependence upon God. This marks a total attitude change from that of his scheming and dishonest youth. To develop an attitude like Jacob's, let God shepherd you as you trust in his provision and care. When people chase after what they want with no thought of God, they are willing to do anything, even what is wrong, in order to get it. It is far better to trust God and realize that all good things come from his hand.

#### **Jacob [Israel] Blesses Joseph's Two Sons - Verses 21-22**

<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."

**48:20-22** In conclusion Jacob announces that he is about to die and tells Joseph again that God will be with them and will take them back to the land of their fathers. He reminds Joseph never to think that they will stay in Egypt forever. Egypt is not the land of their fathers. They are to be in Egypt on a temporary basis. But, in reality, they will stay there for over 400 years, and 400 years just doesn't seem that temporary. It does raise the question why they didn't all leave after the famine ended in seven years. Maybe the bottom line is that things were going pretty well for them by that time. They were given everything they needed. They had settled in; no one wanted to leave.

**48:20-22** God, in bestowing blessings upon his people, gives more to some than to others, more gifts, graces, and comforts, and more of the good things of this life. He often gives most to those that are least likely. He chooses the weak things of the world; he raises the poor out of the dust. Grace observes not the order of nature, nor does God prefer those whom we think fittest to be preferred, but as it pleases him. How poor are they who have no riches but those of this world!