



# **THE BEGINNINGS!**

**The Book of Genesis**

**Faith and the Future!**

**Genesis 48:1-22**

**Message #48 of 50 – S956**

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**Sunday Morning Service**

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# Faith and the Future!

## *Genesis 48:1-22*

### Opening Comments

- Good morning – we will be in **Genesis 48**
- Today we continue our journey through **Genesis: THE BEGINNINGS!**
- Everyone thinks about the future
- We take a step away from the now in our mind and look ahead into a time that is not yet
- Someone out there is thinking about lunch – and now more of you are – that is the future – focus on the now
- There are many things that can cause us to think about the future
- Our belly might cause us to think about lunch
- A need to lose weight might cause us to set a goal and develop a plan for the future
- There is one thing that universally causes people to look toward the future and that is death
- Either we are confronted with our own mortality through advancing age, injury, or illness like COVID
- Or it is someone close to us who is dealing with something
- Death is a part of the future of everyone who is alive
- Unless Jesus comes back before then, everyone will be confronted by the reality of death
- In our study for today, Jacob is 147 and knows that he is about to die
- How he faces his death says a lot about his faith
- A faith that can face death is a faith that can face anything the future might bring
- **Pray**

### Teaching

- **Faith and the Future!**
- Chapter 48 takes place 17 years after Jacob and his family moved to Egypt from Canaan.
- It has been 12 years since the famine ended.

- They are living in Goshen and flourishing.
- Jacob is 147 and he is sick and about to die.
- **Genesis 48:1**
- Joseph's two sons would be in their twenties
- Manasseh is the firstborn and Ephraim is the younger
- That will be important later
- **Genesis 48:2-4**
- Jacob reminds Joseph of the promises God made to him
- This is an expression of faith – faith that God is going to keep His promises to Jacob even though Jacob is not going to live to see it
- This is a comfort to me, especially as we look to the generations that are being born into the world today
- We were blessed to have our fourth great-grandchild born recently
- Without faith, it would be hard to think about her future in a culture that is confused about something as simple as the difference between boys and girls

- Charlotte is a beautiful baby girl – no confusion

- James tells us a lot about faith **James 2:20**

**But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?**

- If we believe that God holds their future in His hands then we are going to do things that prove that **Proverbs 22:6**

**Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.**

- My faith causes me to look at my culture and not be fearful or discouraged for the future of my family
- Instead, we do the work of faith to prepare the next generations to love Jesus and to share His love with others
- Jacob is blessing these boys because he believes God's Word is true
- That should be a challenge to all of us – what are we doing to prove to the world that the Word of God is true?

- **Genesis 48:5-6**

- Jacob elevates Ephraim and Manasseh, his grandsons, to the level of his sons.
- And not just equal to but above them – to the level of the firstborn son
- They are listed as two of the twelve tribes in some listings **1**

**Chronicles 5:1**

Now the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel—he was indeed the firstborn, but because he defiled his father’s bed, his birthright was given to the sons of Joseph, the son of Israel, so that the genealogy is not listed according to the birthright...

- Notice the order of the names – Ephraim the younger is named first

- **Genesis 48:7**

- Jacob left Padam Aram with four wives
- But Rachel was the love of his life
- Joseph was the first of two sons Rachel bore to Jacob.
- In Jacob’s mind, Joseph was the firstborn even though he had ten other sons born before Joseph.

- **Genesis 48:8-13**

- Jacob is about to give a patriarchal blessing over Joseph’s sons
- This was an important part of their tradition.
- When it was divinely inspired it also included a prophetic element – a prediction of the future for the person or their descendants.
- It was tradition that the firstborn be treated with higher honor than the other siblings.
- By positioning his firstborn son Manasseh ‘toward Israel’s right hand’ Joseph was setting his oldest son in a position to receive the greater blessing.
- It was not favoritism, but tradition.

- **Genesis 48:14**

- Jacob’s eyes were dim, but it was not his eyes that were guiding him
- By crossing his arms and putting his right hand on Ephraim Jacob was breaking tradition
- The Holy Spirit was leading him – he knew what he was doing

- **Genesis 48:15-16**

- Jacob bases his blessing of Joseph’s sons on three realities of his walk with God
- First – “God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked...”
- Jacob and his father and grandfather lived their lives in God’s presence – God was never far from them
- That will sanctify you – encourage you – and empower you
- Second – “God who has fed me all my life long to this day...”
- The word ‘fed’ would be better translated as ‘shepherded’

- That speaks of caring for, healing, guiding, providing for, protecting
- God did everything necessary to make Jacob's life a success
- Third – “The Angel who has redeemed me from all evil...”
- The word ‘redeemed’ means to buy back from slavery or bondage
- It includes the idea of deliverance and salvation
- Notice the word ‘Angel’ – capitalized = interpreters believe this is referring to God – God the Son, Jesus Christ
- Christ delivered Jacob from all evil
- This is the first mention in the Bible of God as our Redeemer
- It was on that basis that Jacob blessed the sons of Joseph
- The same is true for all of us – it is your relationship with God that determines how much your life blesses others
- As Joseph watches this divine moment he is not pleased
- **Genesis 48:17-18**
- Joseph believes Jacob's dim eyesight is causing him to make a mistake
- **Genesis 48:19-20**
- It was tradition to honor the firstborn more than his brothers
- But God's will is not constrained by man's traditions **Isaiah 55:8-9**  
**“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,” says the LORD. “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.”**
- The way God does things is going to be different than the way fallen mankind will.
- It should not come as a shock when God calls us to do things differently than the rest of the world because that is what He is doing.
- If you are going to be faithful to God, you are going to be called to be different
- The Bible describes all people as living in one of two realms  
**Ephesians 5:8**  
**For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light...**
- Darkness = sin, wickedness, evil – Light = purity, holiness, righteousness
- The world is a prisoner to the darkness of sin.
- That is all they know – it is all they have ever known.

- They don't understand that the darkness is not good for them and that it is not where God desires them to live.
- Jesus came as a light to the world **John 8:12**  
Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."
- When someone believes in Jesus they are brought out of the darkness and into the light **John 12:46**  
I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness.
- If someone is comfortable and satisfied in the darkness the light is unwelcome **John 3:19**  
And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.
- Our prayer for the lost might be that they become uncomfortable and dissatisfied and afraid of the darkness so that they will turn to the Light, Jesus.
- And to help them find their way, we need to be beacons of the light of Jesus Christ
- We do that by living in faith, obedience, and holiness
- And the better we do that, through the leading and power of the Holy Spirit, the better they will see the light
- Be different – not weird, just different than this world
- **Genesis 48:21-22**
- The future was not something Jacob feared
- After a lifetime of walking with the Lord and being lovingly disciplined by Him Jacob knew God could be trusted to keep His promises
- Jacob knew the gentle but firm touch of the Good Shepherd in his life, and it comforted him
- Jacob had been redeemed by the Angel of the Lord and walked in the freedom of his deliverance
- We could look back on Jacob's life and see many questionable choices and decisions
- But here at the end of his life we find a man of towering faith
- Jacob was certain about his own future, and he faced it with the courage that comes from great faith
- Jacob trusted God with his future and his life and was content

- Jacob could then turn his gaze upon the futures of those he cared about – his family
- Jacob had been blessed and he chose to bless his family
- Jacob’s ability to be a blessing was a result of his relationship with God
- I want to be a blessing in every circle of influence God has placed me in – marriage – family – church – neighborhood
- To be a blessing I will do my best to walk in the presence of God every day
- That means humbling myself before Him, loving Him, obeying Him, trusting Him
- I will do my best to let Jesus be my Good Shepherd
- I will let Him lead me, guide me, feed me, care for me, protect me, and heal me
- I will rejoice that God has redeemed me through faith in Christ
- But I will also do my best to let Him deliver me from the evil that seeks to put out the Light of Christ in my life
- Notice I said several times, ‘I will do my best’
- I am not perfect, but through faith I am being perfected – being conformed into the image of Christ
- I don’t need to be perfect; I need to walk with God, doing my human best and trust Him to do the parts I can’t
- I have no fear of the future – even as I look out into a world rejoicing in the things of darkness – God is mightier than the darkness
- Keep growing in your faith and you will be a blessing to God and others no matter what the future brings
- Let’s pray and ask the Holy Spirit to help us do that - **Prayer!**