

GENESIS

F O U N D A T I O N S

Chapter 48, 49 & 50 Study Guide

August 29, 2004

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F O U N D A T I O N S

Genesis 48

1. THEME & AUTHORSHIP

Themes

A couple of predominate themes are found in Genesis. First is that this is a Book of Beginnings, the great introduction to the drama of redemption.

Second, God is preparing a people. He chooses and tests them. Whether it is Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, or Noah, God chooses, winnows and purges. Remember, His goal is to create a people who would fulfill Genesis 3:15. This is the initial step for man's redemption by a divine covenant made with a chosen race whose early history is here portrayed.

Author – Moses / **Date** - 1450 – 1410 BC

2. THEOLOGY

When Israel (Jacob) saw Joseph's sons, he said, "Who are these?" Joseph said to his father, "They are my sons, whom God has given me."
Genesis 48:8-9

As we see the story of Joseph coming to an end, one of the characteristics that make his walk with God so unique is his ability to see everything as from God (and at times, from God's perspective). In this verse, Joseph sees his children as a gift from God, unlike the modern person who may attribute children to purely biological causes. Many may consider this a primitive belief of people who lived in a primitive culture, but one has to ask which mindset would produce healthier and happier children: the one that sees children as a gift from God to be cherished or the one that views them as purely a result of a biological production?

Soul-Winner So What

Scripture teaches us that salvation, possessions, and children are a gift from God. Hence, sharing salvation with others should not be a chore or task, but the greatest gift that we can give.

Small Group Question

What practical ramifications would the mindsets above have in every area of a person's life if we carried them to their final conclusion? For which area of your life are you the least grateful?

3. WORD STUDIES



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Word study: Manasseh מְנַשֶּׁה Mnashsheh and Ephraim אֶפְרַיִם 'Ephrayim
Manasseh = "causing to forget" and Ephraim = "double ash-heap: I shall be doubly
fruitful"; the second son of Joseph, blessed by him and given preference over first
son, Manasseh.

Jacob, the dying patriarch, teaches these young men (about 21 years old) not to look
upon Egypt as their home nor incorporate themselves with the Egyptians, but to take
their lot with the people of God (the Hebrews). To *forget what is behind* (Manasseh)
and deserve a *double blessing* (Ephraim) is can be compared with being low in the
Church rather than sitting in a high place in the world. How interesting that these two
were blessed by poor Jacob rather than by rich Joseph.

Soul-Winner So What

It should not be a shocker to you that this world will hate you, because it also hated
Christ. You should seek your treasures in Heaven and not on earthly things. You have
heard it said before that where your treasure is, your heart is also.

Small Group Question

1. Do you compromise your testimony to be liked by the world?
2. What kind of persecution have you faced because of your relationship with Christ?
3. What other implications do see from this chapter?
4. What does it mean to choose "the disgrace of religion"? Does this mean that all
Christians must be in financial poverty?

4. Gospel & Culture

Genesis 48:14-16

*Then Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on Ephraim's head, who was the
younger, and his left hand on Manasseh's head, guiding his hands knowingly, for
Manasseh was the firstborn. And he blessed Joseph, and said:*

*"God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked,
The God who has fed me all my life long to this day,
The Angel who has redeemed me from all evil,
Bless the lads;
Let my name be named upon them,
And the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac;
And let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth."*

Jacob spent the last 17 of his 147 years with Joseph in Egypt, so he was with his
favorite son for the first 17 years of Joseph's life and the last seventeen years of his
own life. Knowing that he was about to die, Jacob called Joseph to his bed (47:31) for
the sake of blessing his Joseph's two sons.



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Later, Simeon and Levi would disappear as separate tribes, leaving Ephraim and Manasseh to take their places. Knowing that Manasseh was the firstborn, Joseph put the boy at Jacob's right, with Ephraim on the left, but Jacob crossed his arms and gave the blessing of the firstborn to Ephraim, the younger.

- According to Hebrews 11:21, what was the driving force behind Jacob's decision?
- According to Gen. 41:50 and 47:28, approximately how old were the boys when they received the blessing?
- According to (Gen. 47:31; 48:1,5,16), how many tribes descended from Joseph in comparison to the tribes that descended from each of his brothers?

Hebrews 10:9 makes reference to a divine principle. What is it?

- Where else does scripture reveal this principle? See Genesis 4:25; 25:23.
- How do we see this principle manifest through the life of Christ as described in Matthew 21:43?
- In the parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30), how can you apply this principle of *setting aside the first to establish the second* in your own life?

Soul-Winner So What

How are you using the knowledge and gifts imparted to you to lead the lost to knowledge of the Savior?

5. Attributes of God

God can appear to us.

³Then Jacob said to Joseph: "**God Almighty appeared to me** at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me

God can bless us.

³Then Jacob said to Joseph: "God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan **and blessed me**

God can make us fruitful.

⁴and said to me, "**Behold, I will make you fruitful and multiply you**, and I will make of you a multitude of people, and give this land to your descendants after you as an everlasting possession.'

God can give us land.

⁴and said to me, "Behold, I will make you fruitful and multiply you, and I will make of you a multitude of people, **and give this land to your descendants after you as an everlasting possession.**'

Soul-Winner So What



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Although Jacob thought that Joseph was dead for many years, he was actually alive and well, being used by God for great works. We need to always remember that we belong to a loving God who wants what is best for us.

Small Group Question

Is there something in your life that you thought was dead and gone, yet God restored it to you?

6. BIBLE DIFFICULTIES/PROBLEM PASSAGES

What's the significance of Israel telling Joseph of his sons?

Before this, Joseph's sons had no part of Israel's inheritance. This was the adoption process verifying that Joseph's sons would have a part of the inheritance.

BTL: at first, it appeared Israel was making a mistake, placing his right hand on Ephraim's head, but when Joseph attempted to correct him, Israel refused and said he knew what he was doing, validating that even though he was blind, it was not he himself that made decisions, but GOD.

Soul-Winner So What

Whether you feel you are an expert in area because of your studies, power or experience, you can rely on God because He has a complete perspective.

Small Group Question

In which areas of your life have you tried to correct God, only to be corrected by Him?

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Genesis 49

1. EXEGESIS & PICTURES OF CHRIST

As we finish up this book, we come to the “prophecy” that Israel gives to his boys, which in a way speaks to their future. There is a lot that can be gleaned from this chapter, but let’s look more closely at his eldest son, Reuben.

The inheritance of the firstborn usually had three different aspects. He received a double portion of the inheritance, he became the “priest” of the family, and he became the new leader of the family. Although these blessings normally were settled on the firstborn, Reuben did not receive these. Israel actually divided these three aspects of the firstborn’s inheritance: Joseph received the double portion; Levi received the priestly duties; and Judah received the kingship. Why?

First, we must consider the incident found in Genesis 35:22ff. This act was more than a sex act; it was Reuben’s act of grappling for power. Herein lies a lesson: when serving in ministry – especially leadership – make sure you respect authority and adopt the “wait until you’re asked” principle. More times than not we get ahead and try to speed things up, but we need to be willing to wait. Remember that Joseph was called and God gave him dreams, but before all that came to pass, he had to wait. Reuben didn’t wait and did not receive the blessing that would normally have been his due.

Now let’s fast forward and look at another lesson we can learn from Reuben’s descendants, the Reubenites. When the Israelites were marching toward the Promised Land and now Joshua was leader, apparently the Reubenites became enamored with the land on the east side of the Jordan. They approached Joshua and said they wanted to stay on the other side. In other words, they wanted to settle for less than what God intended. This, too is a characteristic that we as Christians must avoid.

The results for the Reubenites is that they settled. God then told Joshua that the Reubenite women and children were to stay on the east side, but the men now were to lead the army into battle. By settling for less than what God had planned and seizing power for themselves, the Reubenites became one of the smallest tribes in number. Also, you will never find a prophet, priest, king or any kind of hero from the tribe of Reuben.

Soul-Winner So What

Wait for God and never accept what seems “good enough.”

Small Group Question



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1. Give an example of a time in your life that you seized something that was not offered. What were the results?
2. Give an example of a time in your life when you were patient and faithful in the little things. What were the results?
3. Have you ever settled for second best? What were the results?

2. THEME & AUTHORSHIP

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3. THEOLOGY

Theologically, prophecy has many different dimensions. Sometimes it is simply the re-declaring of God's laws to the people. Sometimes it was used to call people back to God and His Law, yet, as in these passages, it also has a futuristic declaration. Another characteristic of prophecy is the unique way in which it is written (genre) or declared orally. In this case, God speaks through Jacob using metaphors or analogies such as saying that "Benjamin is a ravenous wolf" (vs. 27). The word usage is obviously not meant to be literal, but rather descriptive of the nature and future actions of his son.

Soul-Winner So What

If God can see everything, including our hearts and the future, we can use this information when sharing with others to help them see the limit of our own abilities and knowledge.

Small Group Question

What tools can we use to better understand prophecy within the Bible? (Answer: Commentaries, Bible Dictionaries, Bible Atlases, Study the Bible as a whole, meditate on certain passages, praying for personal revelation, etc.)

4. Gospel & Culture



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But his bow remained steady, his strong arms stayed limber, because of the hand of the Mighty One of Jacob, because of the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel... Gen 49:24

As we look to chapter 49, let's keep in mind that Jacob compares the *Angel of the Lord* (the preincarnate Christ) and the *Shepherd*.

Then he blessed Joseph and said, "May the God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day, the Angel who has delivered me from all harm... Gen 48:15-16

Because of this, we might assume that Jacob was referring to the *same Shepherd* while he was praying blessing over his son Joseph (49:24). It was the *hand of Christ*, the divine shepherd, that protected Joseph from hostile arrows.

More evidence for this view can be seen in the statement Jacob makes regarding "the rock of Israel."

Although God is often referred to in the OT as "the Rock of Israel" (Deut. 32:4, 15, 18, 30, 31, 37; Ps. 18:2, 31; Isa. 30:2), could it be that the "Rock" in our present context has explicit reference to Christ?

- Read 1 Cor. 10:1-4; Isa. 28:16; Matt. 7:24; Rom. 9:33; 1 Peter 2:8.
- What do these references of Christ illuminate when viewed in light of OT scriptures listed above?
- What can we legitimately conclude as to Jacob and Joseph's *Shepherd*?

Soul-Winner So What

If you were to have to share the gospel by using only Old Testament scriptures and promises, would you be able to show Jesus to others by doing so?

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Genesis 50

1. THEME & AUTHORSHIP

Themes

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2. THEOLOGY

When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "It may be that Joseph will hate us and pay us back..." So they sent a message to Joseph saying, "Your father gave this command before he died..."
Genesis 50:15-21

The Bible is clear that men and women are naturally sinful, self-seeking, and often times as in this series of passages, conniving. The famous Christian author Dallas Willard tells a story about Diogenes, an ancient Greek who lit a lantern each day and walked around Athens looking for an honest man. It is said, according to Willard, that Diogenes never found one. This would certainly be true of Joseph's brothers. Joseph had shown his brothers compassion, and then almost before their father is cold in his grave, the brothers are back at work with one last conniving (and unnecessary) scheme to protect themselves.

Soul-Winner So What

As witnesses for Christ, we must never lose sight of the fact that humankind is dead without Christ and that despite his love, compassion and sacrifice, many still choose to "do it on their own."

Small Group Question

How does being born again free us from our depraved state?

