

GENESIS 47:27-31 (IF I HAVE FOUND GRACE IN YOUR EYES)

Introduction: In 1941, General Douglas MacArthur was the commander of the US Army Forces of the Far East. After the attack at Pearl Harbor, the United States entered the war. Following soon after that, the Japanese invaded the Philippines.

By February of 1942 just a short time after the US entered the war, the Japanese had such a hold on the Philippines, that President Roosevelt ordered MacArthur to relocate to Australia. Upon his arrival there, he made a promise to the people of the Philippines, "I came through and I shall return."

This wasn't taken too well by Washington and they asked him to amend his words to "we" instead of "I" but he refused. For almost four years, he led the army forces under him. Eventually, the overwhelming might of the United States military beat back the Japanese to the point where his promise could be fulfilled.

On 20 October 1944, he kept his promise to the people of the Philippines, arriving on the island of Leyte. While snipers were still active around the area, and with the sound of sporadic mortar fire ringing out, he asked for a landing craft. When one couldn't be secured, he waded off the boat, through the waters of Leyte and onto the beach.

In his prepared speech, he said "People of the Philippines: I have returned. By the grace of Almighty God our forces stand again on Philippine soil—soil consecrated in the blood of our two peoples. We have come dedicated and committed to the task of destroying every vestige of enemy control over your daily lives, and of restoring upon a foundation of indestructible strength, the liberties of your people."

For almost four full years, and through much death and destruction, the people of the Philippines awaited their deliverer. Even to this day, Douglas MacArthur is a hero to the people of the Philippines. He is held in extremely high honor for having kept his word to them.

In the first year of creation, man was attacked by a much harsher foe than the Japanese. The devil himself came against us and deceived us. Humanity was imprisoned and the devil became the ruler of this world. But the Lord God promised that He would return; a Deliverer would come and cast out the aggressor.

Text Verse: Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵ who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 1 Peter 1:3-5

Those in the Philippines were confident in MacArthur and his promises, and their confidence was rewarded. Those in this world who trusted the Lord God and had been confident in His word were also rewarded. The Messiah came and defeated the devil for any and all who call on Him.

The Messiah will come again and will rule some wondrous day. This is our hope and our expectation. It is a hope which is anticipated in today's five verses and one which will surely come about. God's wonderful plan of redemption is carefully recorded for us in His superior word. So let's turn to that word again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. The days of Jacob, the Years of His Life (verses 27-28)

²⁷ So Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen;

Exactly as was promised by Pharaoh to Joseph, the people of Israel were planted in Goshen. The name Goshen means "drawing near." Egypt in Hebrew is *mitzraim*, or "double distress." It is a picture of the gentile world, without God and without the covenant blessings.

At the same time, Israel is drawing near to its deliverance from the famine and from the exile from Canaan even though it will be a 215-year wait for it

to be come about. There in this land of double distress, they will live and await their return to the land promised to them by God.

In a dramatic parallel to their situation, living in the land of distress, and yet secure in an open place, we read these words from the 118th Psalm which uses the word *metsar*, a shortened form of *mitzraim*, or Egypt -

"I called on the LORD in **distress**;
The LORD answered me *and set me* in a broad place." Psalm 118:5

The parallel is perfect to the picture in Genesis. This 118th Psalm is a song of deliverance centering on the work of the Messiah in bringing salvation to His people. It is an ideal reflection of the years ahead for Israel as they are delivered from the bonds of Egypt, which in itself is a picture of the greater deliverance of God's people from the bonds of the devil because of sin.

Everything about this time in Egypt and then the coming exodus is used to picture the incredible work of God for all people in His overall plan of redemption. One of the immediate advantages of God's plan in the journey to Egypt is that it kept the covenant people together.

If you go back through the previous 46 chapters of Genesis, there is a continual pattern of families separating. Cain was separated from his family after committing his wicked deed against Abel.

Noah and only seven family members were separated from the world they knew and their millions of extended family members as they ushered in a new life in a new age. Abraham was called out to a land he didn't know, from his family and his land.

Abraham and Lot separated because the land couldn't support them both. The same is true with Jacob and Esau. Others were separated for various reasons as well.

Isaac and Ishmael were separated by Abraham at God's direction to ensure Isaac remained the sole recipient of the covenant. Even for a time, Judah departed from his brothers and family and took up residence in Adullam

and elsewhere. Had this continued, there would have been a breach in the cohesion of the family.

However, God intended for the sons of Israel to remain united as a clan in order to establish His purposes in leading to the Messiah. If Judah had remained apart from them, or if they later separated in any other way, they wouldn't have been able to assume control of the land of Canaan.

If they did separate, they would have divided into their own warring factions, something that will actually happen later in their history. What God did in bringing Israel to Egypt is ingenious. By directing the famine as He did, they had to remain together to keep the family alive.

Eventually, they were brought down as a group and placed in one location where they wouldn't be able to divide. As shepherds, they wouldn't be welcome anywhere else. And in the location they were given, they could prosper and so have no need to move elsewhere.

Their growth then would necessitate not division, but rather even greater cohesion. The plan was ingenious. Eventually, this single and cohesive group would be brought out, as a unit, to receive the law and then be prepared to enter their promised possession.

Everything that seems random and arbitrary is exact, precise, and filled with more than just planning, but detailed pre-planning that could only have come from the divine Creator who is working out His plans within the framework of His creation. It is, to say the least, astonishing to see.

²⁷ (con't) and they had possessions there and grew and multiplied exceedingly.

The multiplication of Israel seems baffling to many scholars. The Bible records a total of 75 people within the covenant community who came to Egypt and only one named daughter. And yet, within 215 years, this small group of people will total 603,550 fighting-aged men, along with women, children, and old folks.

The number will be actually then be between 2 and 3 million people. For this reason, many disbelieve the biblical account. However, this doesn't take into consideration many things. First, Jacob had lots of daughters, not one. Only one is recorded and the reason was given many long sermons ago.

In addition to this, there would have been multitudes of unnamed servants, along with their families, who came to Egypt with them. They could have numbered in the thousands at this time. And finally, there will be, according to Exodus 12:38, a mixed multitude who will depart with them.

These would have been assimilated into the records of individual tribes of the sons of Israel. This isn't without biblical support. In Ezekiel 47, for the people who join to Israel who dwell in the land, the Lord gives them this direction -

It shall be that you will divide it by lot as an inheritance for yourselves, and for the strangers who dwell among you and who bear children among you. They shall be to you as native-born among the children of Israel; they shall have an inheritance with you among the tribes of Israel. Ezekiel 47:22

Regardless of the mixed multitude of the future though, in the immediate time while in Egypt, we are told that Israel multiplied exceedingly. It is a testament to God's hand upon them. They have been kept together, they have been given good land that produces much, and above all, they have His divine blessing upon them.

²⁸ And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years.

Jacob entered the land of Egypt in the year 2299AM at the age of 130. However, he continued on in Egypt for a total of 17 years. Interestingly, this is the same amount of time that he had with his son Joseph before he was sold off to the Egyptians by his brothers.

Like bookends on the span of Joseph's life until the death of Jacob, these two 17-year periods mean that in all, Jacob had 34 years with his beloved son. That is actually close to, maybe a bit more than, Mary had with her

own beloved Son who, like Joseph, was given the title "The Savior of the World."

²⁸ (con't) **So the length of Jacob's life was one hundred and forty-seven years.**

vayhi yeme yaakov shene ha'yav (6:10) - "and the days of Jacob, the years of his life." Again the Bible records, as it will, *the days of the life* of the man. In other words, our lives are reckoned, not so much by decades or years, but by days which accumulate into years and decades.

It is our constant reminder that each day is our only day. The ones which are past cannot be re-collected and used again. And the ones which are future cannot be counted on to come. We are to live out our one day in the presence of God, hoping for another, but understanding that He has already numbered each and He may even today require our soul of us.

Jacob was born in the year 2169AM and his death at 147 years of age occurs in the year 2316AM. Jacob, who is Israel, lived seventy-seven years in the land of Canaan before moving to Padanaram where he stayed 20 years.

After that, he moved again to Canaan and lived there for thirty-three more. And finally, as directed by God, he moved once again from the Promised land to live his 17 final years in Egypt.

The events of the life of Jacob were used in a most astonishing way to reveal future events in the history of redemption. Only God who knows all things, including the future, could have so carefully woven the stories and their intended fulfillment together.

*I called on the LORD in my time of distress
The LORD answered me and set me in a broad place
He took from me the feelings of overwhelming duress
With comfort and hope, my fears he did erase*

*The Lord is on my side and so I will not fear
He has brought me safely through the days of my life*

*He has been with me year after year
Through times of trouble, hardship, and strife*

*And so the Lord I will glorify, and Him I will praise
With all of my heart and throughout eternal days*

II. If I Have Found Grace in Your Eyes (verses 29-30)

²⁹ When the time drew near that Israel must die, he called his son Joseph and said to him,

The Bible speaks particularly of two different types of death for the individual human. There is the death of the spirit which is separation from God, and there is the death of the physical body which is the end of this earthly life.

The first death, the spiritual death, is inherited but can be reversed. In an act of faith in God's provision through the work of Jesus Christ, man is regenerated in his spirit and this is eternal; it is being "born again." For those who are never "born again" the death of the physical body means that the spirit will never be received by God.

For those, the Bible gives a term - the Lake of Fire. This is the rewards for a self-inflicted wound which has never healed. And so a wise man made it very easy for us to remember the thought by giving us these words - "Born once, die twice; born twice die once." Jacob was born twice and he had no fear of passing over that great abyss of physical death.

And in an act of grace, God bestowed upon him the knowledge that his time on earth was coming to a close. The many stings of life would be behind him and only a blissful anticipation of eternal glory would remain.

His death then can't be seen as a type of punishment, but rather as a reward. The punishment would be continuing on in a life of ever getting older and more tired of useless days under the sun. Instead, Jacob's reward would be eternal life under the heavens.

Knowing that this time of passing was closing quickly upon him, we are told that he summoned his beloved son Joseph. This meeting, which is recorded in the Bible for us to participate in, is given for us to learn from. We are to hopefully gain both insight and wisdom as we read.

The ancient ritual has been passed on to us, the blessed recipients of witnessing a drama, not recorded with a video camera, but by the mind of God as a gift for us to share in.

29 (con't) "Now if I have found favor in your sight, please put your hand under my thigh, and deal kindly and truly with me."

"Now if I have found 'favor' in your sight" is literally translated, "If now I have found 'grace' in your sight." This type of language is normally spoken of one who is in a subordinate position to one in a higher position, or one in need to one who possesses the ability to meet the need. The latter is the case here. Jacob has a need and he will make his request to one who can meet that same need.

In this request is seen a rite which is only the second, and the last time, such a rite is recorded in the Bible. When things are recorded only twice, we must ask, "Why?" And then we should determine what the significance of the occurrence is.

Both times they are noted, it is with the assumption that the one being charged understands already the significance of the rite. And so it is correct for us to infer that this was an ordinary custom of the times. And yet, it is a custom mentioned but two times. Why?

Anytime the number two is mentioned, or anytime something is recorded only twice, it is given to show us a contrast and yet, at the same time, a confirmation of something. Only twice in the Bible is someone asked to take off their shoes because the ground where they are standing is holy.

Why only two times? Why the shoes? What is the contrast between the two events and what do they confirm. These are the questions we should

continue to ask as we find these hidden treasures which are found in God's superior word.

And so, in order for us to the immediate significance of Jacob's request to Joseph, as well as the contrast and the confirmation of what it is picturing, we need to go back to the life of Abraham and read the only other time that this ritual is conducted. In Genesis 24, this is recorded -

"Now Abraham was old, well advanced in age; and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things. ² So Abraham said to the oldest servant of his house, who ruled over all that he had, 'Please, put your hand under my thigh, ³ and I will make you swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and the God of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell; ⁴ but you shall go to my country and to my family, and take a wife for my son Isaac.'" Genesis 24:1-4

Under the thigh is the source of man's posterity. It is where the life, or seed, continues on as a starting point to bring in the next generation of humanity. In Abraham and Jacob, it is the where the seed from which the Messiah would eventually come is derived, just as promised even to the first man and his wife; Adam and Eve.

Under the thigh is also where the covenant sign was given to Abraham; a sign which continued through to Jacob. It is the sign of circumcision. It is a picture of the cutting away of sin from man. It is a picture of Christ who was born of a woman, but not a man, thus cutting away the inherited sin-nature of man.

And under the thigh is the symbol of the man himself as the head and authority over his household and from whom his household is derived. Placing one's hand there in an oath is thus tantamount to professing surety of accomplishing the oath in reverence and allegiance to the superior who has requested it.

It is a picture then, ultimately, of the One from whom all life came. As Christ formed man and breathed into him the breath of life, to swear upon

the man under the thigh is to invoke allegiance to the One from whom man originally came.

It is to this sacred spot that Jacob now asks for an oath from the ruler of the greatest country on earth. And yet, despite his exalted position, Joseph is subordinating himself in this act. First, having come from Jacob, and secondly having been asked to swear to him.

29 (con't) Please do not bury me in Egypt,

The request is about his internment... It's not about something he hopes for in another, nor is it about something that will continue on the line of the people of Israel, or to usher in the Messiah. It is simply to not be buried in Egypt, the land of double-distress. It is not his home, nor is it where he wishes to be interred.

But dead is dead, is it not? So what difference does it make if he is interred in Egypt, in Canaan, or in Thailand. What possible difference could it make to Jacob after he is dead? In other words, this request must be a hope which somehow transcends this life.

30 but let me lie with my fathers; you shall carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burial place."

Jacob is asking to be taken out of the land of double-distress, the land of Egypt, and to be buried with His fathers. He desires to be placed along with them in *their* burial place. In two more chapters, we will read the same charge being given to all the sons of Israel. There it will say -

"Then he charged them and said to them: 'I am to be gathered to my people; bury me with my fathers in the cave that *is* in the field of Ephron the Hittite, ³⁰ in the cave that *is* in the field of Machpelah, which *is* before Mamre in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite as a possession for a burial place. ³¹ There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife, there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife, and there I buried Leah. ³² The field and the cave that *is* there *were* purchased from the sons of Heth.'" Genesis 49:29-32

The purchase of this cave is recorded in Genesis 23, and to understand fully the importance of it, one should go back and watch that sermon. It is where Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah, and Leah were all buried.

Instead of being buried with his beloved Rachel, he asks to be buried there instead. It is a significant spot which looks forward to the resurrection of the righteous. It is to this location that he asks for his remains to be interred.

So what is the contrast between the two accounts - that of Abraham and this of Jacob? The contrast is that Abraham was pursuing an earthly bride for his son in order to continue on the *earthly* line which would lead *to the Messiah*. Jacob, on the other hand, was looking forward to a *heavenly* reward *from the Messiah* which would be realized in eternal life.

The first was in anticipation of the fulfillment of the *earthly* promises to the covenant people; the second is in anticipation of the fulfillment of the *eternal* promises to them. The first is earthly, the hope *of* the coming Messiah; the second is heavenly, hope *in* the coming Messiah. Further, Abraham's request was in Canaan, Jacob's was outside of Canaan. The God who monitors the oaths is not limited to a territorial border.

And thus, the contrast of the two accounts gives us the confirmation of God, in this beautiful treasure we call the Holy Bible, of His Son's authority over both the earthly and the spiritual realms; He is Lord of heaven and earth. He is the Creator, and He is the Redeemer.

He is the giver of life, and He is the One who decides its termination. And yet, He is in authority even over the man in death. In all things, He is supreme over the physical and the spiritual. The confirmation of the two accounts is Jesus, the Son of God and yet the Seed of the woman.

³⁰ (con't) **And he said, "I will do as you have said."**

anokhi e'e'seh khidbarekha (6:49) - "I will, according to your word."
Without even a hint of questioning why, Joseph simply agrees to the

request. The promise is made, and the commitment rests now upon his shoulders.

"What I have spoken, will come to pass." The guarantee is from the son. The guarantee is from Zaphnath Paaneah, the Savior of the World, and the guarantee is from the lord over Pharaoh's house.

And the picture is exact. The earthly promises to Abraham and his seed were confirmed in Jesus; the heavenly promises will be confirmed in Him as well. The guarantee is from the Son; the guarantee is from the Savior of the World; and the guarantee is from the Lord over heaven's realm. The guarantee is . from . Jesus.

If you wondered why Jacob, who is actually the father of Joseph, would ask for grace in a matter, it is explained completely in the picture it reveals. We have a need, Jesus has the ability to meet that need. We don't come to Jesus and claim eternal life, we come to Him asking for His grace, and He is pleased to grant it - He can, and He will.

*Bury me with my fathers there in the cave
In the field of Ephron the Hittite which Abraham bought
And it is now the place of Abraham's grave
And Isaac, Rebekah, and Leah, and so too my burial plot*

*It is in the land promised to us by God
And this land of Egypt is not our home
Let it be temporary that here you do trod
But only to the Promised Land let your heart roam*

*Here we have no true rest, but pilgrims are we
And someday God will return us home to Canaan safely*

III. The Word of the Lord (verse 31)

***³¹ Then he said, "Swear to me."**

Jacob has had the assurance from Joseph that he will comply with his requests, but he goes further so that the matter cannot be revoked under any circumstances, by asking him to pronounce an oath about it. The word is binding when the word is spoken.

The word of the Lord which is recorded in the Bible is an oath. When God speaks, it is a vow in and of itself. Therefore, when we hear of a promise made by God, all we have to do is go to the word to find it confirmed.

We don't need to ask God to swear to His promise to grant us eternal life. His word confirms what He determines.

^{31 (con't)} **And he swore to him.**

The one who vows is expected to perform. Jacob has not only asked the ruler of Egypt, but his own son to accomplish his vow. It is under the authority of Pharaoh and it is with the assurance of the son. In this sense, we find ourselves like Jacob.

We have been given a promise and it is under the authority of God Himself. The Son has spoken, He has given His assurances, and all we need to do is rest in them. Nothing else is needed because nothing greater can be obtained. The highest of all authorities will keep His word. We can rest in this.

^{31 (fin)} **So Israel bowed himself on the head of the bed.**

To end the chapter, we read from the Hebrew text that Israel bowed himself on the head of the bed. In these five verses, he has been called Jacob twice and Israel twice. The two times he is called Jacob, it was speaking of his life - his number of years alive and his number of years in Egypt.

The two times he is called Israel, it was speaking of his approaching death and of his worship of God. There is Jacob the man of flesh and bones who walks the earth, and there is Israel who is dependent on, and in anticipation

of, his God in heaven. The two contrast and yet they confirm the physical and spiritual man who fellowshiped with God.

According to the Hebrew text, this man of God bowed himself on the head of his bed. The implication is that he worshipped God as he bowed, acknowledging Him and giving Him thanks for the surety of the promise which was just made.

However, as happens from time to time, something comes up which throws a monkey wrench into our Bible knowledge. In the book of Hebrews, this event is recorded differently. There it says,

"By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, *leaning* on the top of his staff." Hebrews 11:21

Referring to two different incidents in one verse, it says that he "worshipped, leaning on top of his staff" rather than "bowed himself on the head of the bed." And this is how the original Greek translation of the Old Testament records it - staff rather than bed.

The difference between the Hebrew word for "bed," which is *mittah* and "staff," which is *matteh*, is only a few vowel points which didn't exist when the Bible was written. They were added later to help in pronunciation, word clarity, and comprehension.

The New Testament is what is correct here and when the scribes who inserted the vowel points did so, they did it probably to keep Jacob from looking as if he were using the staff as an idol. But if he were an old and feeble man, he would worship leaning on his staff simply to stay up. So, whichever is correct, what is implied is that Jacob was thanking and praising God for what has occurred.

This is where this account ends today. It is a story of anticipation concerning the promises of God. Jacob was looking forward to the Messiah and he was looking forward to the resurrection of the righteous to eternal life. Both have been anticipated since the fall of man, and both were still anticipated at his time.

But we... we are blessed in a way that he lacked. We have the knowledge of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We have the surety that Messiah has come and that His work was sufficient to restore us to God and to make the hope of eternal life possible once again.

Like Jacob, whether on our bed, leaning on a staff, or jumping for joy at the wonderful work of Christ, we too can praise Him for His promises - because many promises are still to come. Our Lord has promised to return again and bring us unto Himself.

He has paved the way in His first coming and we will be carried along that avenue at the rapture when the reality of eternal life will be realized. But this reality, although offered to all, must be accepted in order to become reality.

Christ died for all - His atonement is unlimited in scope. However, it is limited in reality because we may choose to accept it or reject it.

Closing Verse: For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself.
⁸ For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord.
Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. ⁹ For to this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living. Romans 14:7-9

Next Week: Genesis 48:1-7 (Adoption as Sons) (120th Genesis Sermon)

On 2 September 1945, General Douglas MacArthur accepted the formal Japanese surrender aboard the battleship USS *Missouri*, thus ending World War II. After this, he was named Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers and, for all intents and purposes, was the ruler of Japan during their transition to a democratic society.

Eventually during his command of the United Nations troops in Korea, and through a disrespect of the lines of authority established by the US Constitution, General MacArthur was relieved of his command and ordered home to the United States.

Unlike the sad end to an American hero, the rule and authority of Christ will never end. His throne is an eternal one and His promises to those who call on Him are sure and reliable. Christ has come, Christ will come again, Christ is Lord of heaven and earth!

And this Lord has you exactly where He wants you and He has a good plan and purpose for you. Call on Him and let Him do marvelous things for you and through you.

The Hope of Israel

So Israel dwelt in Egypt the land
In the country of Goshen willingly
And they had possessions there, they did expand
And grew and multiplied exceedingly
And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years
Behind him were the days of trials and tears
So the length of Jacob's life, a life of joy and cheers
Was one hundred and forty-seven years

When the time drew near that Israel must die
He called his son Joseph and to him said
"Now if I have found favor in your eye
Please put your hand under my thigh
Do this my son he pled, as I will soon be dead
And deal with me kindly and truly
Please do not in Egypt bury me

But let me with my fathers lie;
You shall carry me out of Egypt
And bury me in their interment place, after I die
And he said, "I will do as you have said."
I shall do for you this thing after you are dead

Then he said, "Swear to me." Yes he pled
And so to him he swore
So Israel bowed himself on the head of the bed

In thanks to God whom he did adore
Jacob walked the earth as a man
Israel hoped in God in whom he did trust
And from the moment his life began
He was destined for more than just returning to dust

His hope like ours is in eternal days
A promise spoken by God in His word
Like Jacob then, let us fix our gaze
Upon Jesus, our life-giving Lord
In Him is found the source of life everlasting
The promise is more sure than anything at all
To Him let us all of our crowns be casting
And upon His glorious name let us call

Hosanna in the highest to Jesus our Lord
Praises, glory, and honor to the incarnate Word

Hallelujah and Amen...

מִטָּה - bed

מִטָּה - staff