

EXPOSITION OF GENESIS

Message #96

Genesis 48:1-14

Of all of the stories of Jacob's life, the one that ends up in the great faith chapter of Hebrews 11 is the speech he gave just before he died (Hebrews 11:21). In fact, it is what Jacob said before he died which takes up most of the rest of the book of Genesis.

THOSE WHO WILL BE HONORED FOR THEIR FAITH ARE THOSE WHO CONTINUE TO DO THE WILL OF GOD AND COMMUNICATE THE TRUTH OF GOD UNTIL THE END OF THEIR LIVES FOR ALL THEIR FAMILY TO SEE.

As we have said time and time again from Genesis, age will never be an acceptable excuse for apathy, for sin, for lack of commitment or for a lack of focus on God's Word.

RESPONSE #1 - Joseph's response to news that Jacob was dying. 48:1

The Hebrew word "sick" is one that means Jacob was worn down in strength and is dying due to some sickness or disease (Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 279). Obviously this sickness was what God was going to use to take Jacob into eternity (47:29). We need to doctrinally understand this point, sometimes sickness or disease is part of the process God uses to take an honored believer home.

Joseph immediately took his two sons - Manasseh and Ephraim, to see him. Keep in mind that these boys are the offspring of Joseph and Asenath, the daughter of a heathen Egyptian priest (41:50-52). These two are not pure Israelite and Joseph was very concerned about what would happen to them.

RESPONSE #2 - Jacob's response to the news of Joseph's arrival. 48:2-14

Way of Response #1 - He strengthened himself and sat up. 48:2

When we compare the statement of Hebrews 11:21 with this, we may assume that Jacob, who obviously was very weak, mustered enough strength to sit up, move to the side of the bed and lean on his staff. He did this being very old and very sick. This was a major act of faith in order to make a statement for God and to worship God.

Way of Response #2 - He remembered God's promises. 48:3-4

Jacob's final moments of life were spent thinking about the promises of God. Truth is, neither Jacob nor his seed had received the Promised Land and still haven't to this day, but Jacob was a man who took God at His Word and he trusted that God would literally give Israel her land.

Way of Response #3 - He adopted Joseph's sons. 48:5

Jacob decrees that Joseph's sons, born in Egypt, born of a heathen Egyptian priest's daughter, would be his own sons to the extent that he would consider them on the same level with Reuben and Simeon. In other words, they would actually form two of the tribes of Israel (Ezekiel 48:1-7).

Way of Response #4 - He blessed Joseph's grandsons. 48:6

Not only did Jacob declare Joseph's two sons blessed, he pronounced a blessing on all Joseph's family. We do know that Manasseh produced offspring by a Gentile concubine (I Chron. 7:14), which makes a Gentile lineage link very real.

Way of Response #5 - He remembered his wife. 48:7

As Jacob saw Joseph and his sons, he could not help but be reminded of Rachel, Joseph's mother. Jacob loved Rachel and had worked 14 years to earn her (29:20, 30). He had known several women in his lifetime, but the one he really wished he could share this moment with was Rachel. It is very possible as he neared his death that he was anticipating seeing her again.

Way of Response #6 - He blessed Joseph's sons. 48:8-14

It seems that prior to this moment the meeting had probably been between Jacob and Joseph and either the two boys entered after verse 7 or Jacob, with poor eyesight, saw them starting at verse 8. Since he had to ask who the two were, we know that his eyesight was very poor (48:10), something that will become very profound at verse 14.

Jacob asked Joseph to bring him his two sons so he could bless them (48:9). When the boys came, he kissed each one and embraced each one (48:10). This act would allow these boys to realize that they were accepted as full sons.

Verse 13 is very important - Manasseh was the oldest son and Ephraim was the younger son. Since Joseph was standing in front of Israel, the right hand of Israel should go on the eldest son Manasseh and the left hand should go on the youngest son Ephraim. Joseph did everything in his power to orchestrate this, but directing Ephraim to Jacob's left hand and Manasseh to Jacob's right hand. But **verse 14** makes it clear that Israel crossed his hands and being guided by God and knowing the will of God, he reversed it. His right hand went on Ephraim and his left went on Manasseh.

Jacob knew more about the will of God than Joseph and he was concerned that God's will be done until the end of his life.