

June 26, 2011

The Younger Shall Be Greater

Genesis 47:29 – 48:22

Genesis 47:29-31 ²⁹And when the time drew near that Israel must die, he called his son Joseph and said to him, "If now I have found favor in your sight, put your hand under my thigh and promise to deal kindly and truly with me. Do not bury me in Egypt, ³⁰but let me lie with my fathers. Carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burying place." He answered, "I will do as you have said." ³¹And he said, "Swear to me"; and he swore to him. Then Israel bowed himself upon the head of his bed.

29 "put your hand under my thigh"- seen back in 24:2 for serious promises

"do not bury me in Egypt"- perhaps Israel felt Joseph's loyalties lied more locally

30 "let me lie with my fathers"- at Machpelah (23:9, 25:8-9)

31 "Israel bowed himself"- possibly praying or acknowledging Joseph's rule over Egypt

Genesis 48:1-7 ¹After this, Joseph was told, "Behold, your father is ill." So he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. ²And it was told to Jacob, "Your son Joseph has come to you." Then Israel summoned his strength and sat up in bed. ³And Jacob said to Joseph, "God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me, ⁴and said to me, 'Behold, I will make you fruitful and multiply you, and I will make of you a company of peoples and will give this land to your offspring after you for an everlasting possession.' ⁵And now your two sons, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, are mine; Ephraim and Manasseh shall be mine, as Reuben and Simeon are. ⁶And the children that you fathered after them shall be yours. They shall be called by the name of their brothers in their inheritance. ⁷As for me, when I came from Paddan, to my sorrow Rachel died in the land of Canaan on the way, when there was still some distance to go to Ephrath, and I buried her there on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem)."

5 "Ephraim and Manasseh shall be mine"- there will be no tribe of Joseph

7 Rachel's burial is still marked to this day. It is a holy site for Judaism, Christianity, and Islam

Genesis 48:8-16 ⁸When Israel saw Joseph's sons, he said, "Who are these?" ⁹Joseph said to his father, "They are my sons, whom God has given me here." And he said, "Bring them to me, please, that I may bless them." ¹⁰Now the eyes of Israel were dim with age, so that he could not see. So Joseph brought them near him, and he kissed them and embraced them. ¹¹And Israel said to Joseph, "I never expected to see your face; and behold, God has let me see your offspring also." ¹²Then Joseph removed them from his knees, and he bowed himself with his face to the earth. ¹³And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near him. ¹⁴And Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on the head of Ephraim, who was the younger, and his left hand on the head of Manasseh, crossing his hands (for Manasseh was the firstborn). ¹⁵And he blessed Joseph and said, "The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been my shepherd all my life long to this day, ¹⁶the angel who has redeemed me from all evil, bless the boys; and in them let my name be carried on, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth."

10 "eyes of Israel were dim"- so were Isaac's when Jacob tricked him!

12 "removed them from his knees"-probably seated on the bed at Israel's knees

13 Ephraim (2nd born) at Israel's left, Manasseh (1st born) at Israel's right = better blessing

14 Israel follows what had been done with Ishmael and Esau, the older passed over for the younger

Chrysostom: At this point notice, I ask you, how the good man's bodily eyes were by this time weak through old age, but the eyes of his mind were strengthened, and by faith Jacob already saw what was

going to happen. I mean, instead of heeding Joseph, Jacob crossed his hands over in blessing them and gave precedence to the younger, putting Ephraim ahead of Manasseh.

15 "God who has been my shepherd"- just as God promised at Bethel

16 "the messenger" is parallel with God ... God, this is a reference to the pre-incarnate Christ!
"who has redeemed me"- same word as Job 19:25- "I know that my Redeemer lives"

Genesis 48:17-22 ¹⁷When Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand on the head of Ephraim, it displeased him, and he took his father's hand to move it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. ¹⁸And Joseph said to his father, "Not this way, my father; since this one is the firstborn, put your right hand on his head." ¹⁹But his father refused and said, "I know, my son, I know. He also shall become a people, and he also shall be great. Nevertheless, his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his offspring shall become a multitude of nations." ²⁰So he blessed them that day, saying,

"By you Israel will pronounce blessings, saying, 'God make you as Ephraim and as Manasseh.'"

Thus he put Ephraim before Manasseh. ²¹Then Israel said to Joseph, "Behold, I am about to die, but God will be with you and will bring you again to the land of your fathers. ²²Moreover, I have given to you rather than to your brothers one mountain slope that I took from the hand of the Amorites with my sword and with my bow."

19 "I know my son, I know"- what reasons does Israel have for blessing Ephraim over Manasseh?

20 Ephraim & Manasseh – Let's put 'em on the map!

21 Israel's words of comfort and promise: God will be with you and bring you to the promised land

EPHRAIM AND MANASSEH

In Numbers 1- Manasseh is the smallest tribe in population

They both are in the rebellious northern kingdom of "Israel"

Ephraim became a very powerful tribe (Psalm 60:7) but also a bit head strong (1 Chron 7:20-21)

Isaiah 9:21- The Northern Kingdom of Israel is depicted as fighting itself by using Ephraim & Manasseh

And so in all these readings of the patriarchs and the sons of Israel we remember Romans 9:8!

Psalm 80

N: ¹Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel,

S: you who lead Joseph like a flock!

N: You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth.

S: ²Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh,

N: stir up your might and come to save us!

S: ³Restore us, O God;

N: let your face shine, that we may be saved!

S: ⁴O YHWH God of hosts,

N: how long will you be angry with your people's prayers?

S: ⁵You have fed them with the bread of tears

N: and given them tears to drink in full measure.

S: ⁶You make us an object of contention for our neighbors,

N: and our enemies laugh among themselves.

S: ⁷Restore us, O God of hosts;

N: let your face shine, that we may be saved!...

S: ¹⁷But let your hand be on the man of your right hand,

N: the son of man whom you have made strong for yourself!

S: ¹⁸Then we shall not turn back from you;

N: give us life, and we will call upon your name!

S: ¹⁹Restore us, O YHWH God of hosts!

N: Let your face shine, that we may be saved!

All: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit

As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever, Amen.