

Jacob Blessed His Family

Key Verse: “*Israel said unto Joseph, I had not thought to see thy face: and, lo, God hath shewed me also thy seed.*”
—**Genesis 48:11**

Selected Scripture:
Genesis 48:8-21
tribal heads, would provide Joseph a double portion of the inheritance.—Gen. 48:5,6

BEFORE JACOB DIED, HE

adopted Joseph’s two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, as his own. This would ensure that his favorite son, Joseph, would receive a double portion. In effect, Jacob was elevating Joseph to his own status so that when the land of Canaan would be divided in the future, Ephraim and Manasseh, as tribal heads, would provide Joseph a double portion of the inheritance.—Gen. 48:5,6

“Israel beheld Joseph’s sons, and said, Who are these? And Joseph said unto his father, They are my sons, whom God hath given me in this place. And he said, Bring them, I pray thee, unto me, and I will bless them. Now the eyes of Israel were dim for age, so that he could not see. And he brought them near unto him; and he kissed them, and embraced them.”—vss. 8-10

Our Key Verse is an acknowledgement by Jacob of God’s love and faithfulness in permitting him to see Joseph again after such a lengthy interval during which period he had been grieving for his lost son that he believed was dead. There was also added joy for Jacob in being able to confer blessings upon his two grandsons out of Joseph’s loins.

Although Joseph was second in authority in all of Egypt, he manifested great reverence towards his father, bowing in his presence. Jacob blessed his grandsons, giving the birthright to Ephraim despite Joseph's efforts to have his firstborn, Manasseh, receive the position of preeminence. Evidently Jacob's actions reflected God's foreknowledge in the matter as the tribe of Ephraim grew to be larger and more influential than Manasseh's descendants.—vss. 13-20

At this stage in his life, when Jacob's end was approaching, he probably thought about the great privilege of sharing the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant with his descendants as he recalled the message he received so long ago. "Behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."—Gen. 28:13,14

The followers of Christ during this Gospel Age look forward to being participants in an even higher and heavenly calling. "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ." (Gal. 3:16,27-29; 4:6,7) What an incentive for being faithful to the Master! ■