

## **The Patriarchs Part 2**

In our last issue we talked about Abraham's two sons, Ishmael and Isaac, and how one son was accepted by God and the other son was not accepted. Most people say of Abraham, "Well, Abraham accepted Isaac because he was born in wedlock, through his wife, Sarah. Ishmael was rejected because he came through the handmaid, Hagar." We found out that this was not the reason one son was accepted and the other was rejected. One was accepted because he was a man of faith. One was rejected because he was a man of unbelief; he did not accept the promises of God. One was a believer, and one was an unbeliever. To prove this, we went to the next generation.

Isaac had two sons through one wife; they were twins. One was accepted (Jacob) and one was rejected (Esau), but not because of anything in the natural. The son that was rejected was a nicer man than the son that was accepted. Yet, God accepted one because he was a man of faith. He rejected the other because he had unbelief. He accepted one because he was a believer; he rejected the other because he was an unbeliever.

In the next generation, Jacob had twelve sons through two handmaidens and two wives, and all of the sons were accepted. All of the sons form the twelve tribes of Israel. The reason all of them were accepted is not because they came through a wife or because they did not come through a wife. The reason they were all accepted is because all of them were men of faith - all of them were believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. All of them accepted the Lord, as did Abraham, as did Isaac, as did Jacob. The twelve sons of Jacob now became the twelve tribes of Israel. They were all accepted because they were men of faith.

Again, Jacob had twelve sons, but as he began to prosper in the things of the Lord, Satan began to attack. First, his favorite wife, Rachel, died. Later, he lost his son, Joseph. Most of you know the story. Ten of Jacob's sons (Benjamin was not yet born) got together. They did not like Joseph because he was the favorite of his father, so they decided to get rid of him. They threw him into a pit, killed an animal, put blood all over Joseph's coat, and convinced their father that Joseph had been killed when they had actually sold him into slavery. Joseph was a slave in Egypt, and as far as

Jacob knew, his son had died. Later, Jacob's father Isaac, died. This happened just before Jacob was reunited with Joseph in Egypt. It was as Jacob continued to walk on in faith that he and Joseph were reunited.

Joseph grew up in the worst of adversity. Yet, when he first arrived in Egypt, he began to prosper. Joseph was put over Potiphar's household, and Satan tried to come against him. Potiphar's wife accused Joseph of rape, and Potiphar had Joseph thrown into the dungeon. But, even in the dungeon, Joseph exercised his faith and God promoted him to be the leader of the prisoners. Later, God took him out of prison and exalted him to the next highest position in the nation.

God gave Joseph revelations and dreams. He saw the time coming of a great famine in the land. He saw seven years of prosperity followed by seven years of famine. God used that tremendous overflow of grain to feed Joseph's own father and brothers during the time of the famine. Again, towards the end of his lifetime, Jacob was reunited with Joseph.

Hebrews 11:21 says, "By faith Jacob, when he was a-dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph."

Turn back to the Old Testament to Genesis, chapter 48. We are going to read about the time when Jacob blessed the sons of Joseph. In this chapter, Joseph has revealed himself to his father and to his own brothers. By this time, Joseph's father was so blind that he could only feel of him; and Jacob wept over him, cried over him. Then he found out that he had two grandsons.

Verses 8-13 of Genesis 48 say: "And 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 his age, so that he could not see. And he brought them near unto him; and he kissed them, and embraced them.

And Israel said unto Joseph, I had not thought to see thy face: and Lo, God hath shewed me also thy seed.

And Joseph brought them out from between his knees, and he bowed himself with his face to the earth.

And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand, and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near unto him,"

Try to picture what is happening in this verse. Jacob is old with age, and he has just met Joseph. He discovers that Joseph has had two sons, while he has been in Egypt. He tells Joseph that he wants to bless them. What is the first thing that Joseph thinks of? "Well, the youngest will not receive the greatest blessing. The oldest always receives the greater blessing; the firstborn in the family is the one who receives the blessing."

Remember that Reuben was the firstborn of the twelve sons of Jacob. But because he committed sin, God took the things that were supposed to go to Reuben and actually gave them to the other sons. The first thing that the eldest received was the rulership. The next thing was the priesthood, and the final thing was the double portion.

After Reuben lost the rulership, it was turned over to the tribe of Judah; they became the kingly tribe, and the rulers came out of Judah. Next, the priesthood was supposed to go to Reuben, but he lost it. Levi received the priesthood from the Levitical tribe came the priests from generation to generation. Finally, Reuben was supposed to receive the double portion, but the double portion went to Joseph. Joseph had two sons; the double portion was going to be divided up between the two sons.

Joseph naturally assumed that the firstborn would receive the greater blessing, so he put the firstborn in his left hand headed toward his father's right hand, because the right hand was always the greater blessing; and he took the youngest, and put him in his right hand and headed him toward his father's left hand.

Verse 14 continues" "And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands wittingly; for Manasseh was the firstborn."

I want you to understand something--Jacob was blind! He did not know which son was headed toward which hand! He could not even see his own son, Joseph! All he could do was feel of him. As Jacob put his hands out to bless Joseph's sons, he crossed hands! Why did he cross hands?

Because he remembered the promise of God that the elder shall serve the younger. He wanted the younger to receive the right hand because he remembered that in himself. It was a precedent that had been established in Genesis, from the very beginning. We found out in Adam that the older son was supposed to have the blessing, but he did not. God always transferred it to the younger son. Seth would eventually rule over Cain, and Cain was the firstborn. Then we have Isaac ruling over Ishmael, even though

Ishmael was the firstborn; the younger ruled over the elder. Jacob ruled over Esau; Jacob remembered the promise of God that the elder shall serve the younger.

Again, Jacob crossed hands and laid the right hand--the predominate hand of blessing, on the younger child and the left hand on the older child.

Verse 15: "And he blessed Joseph, and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day."

In other words, Jacob remembered that under Abraham and Isaac, that the elder would serve the younger.

Verse 16" "The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into multitude in the midst of the earth."

As the blessing was going on, Joseph suddenly realized what had happened.

Verse 17: "And when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it displeased him: and held up his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's head unto Manasseh's head."

While the blessing was going on, Joseph took his father's hand and pulled it off. He said, "Dad, you're making a mistake! You've got your hand on the wrong one." I want you to understand something; Jacob could not see with his natural eyes, but he could see with his spiritual eyes. He knew exactly what he was doing. That is why it says in Hebrews, "By faith he laid hands on them."

Verses 18-20 continue: "And Joseph said unto his father, Not so, my father; for this is the firstborn; put thy right hand upon his head.

And his father refused, and said, I know it, my son, I know it; he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great: but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations.

And he blessed them that day, saying, In thee shall Israel bless, saying, God make thee as Ephraim and as Manasseh: and he sent Ephraim before Manasseh."

Again, the precedent is established that the elder shall serve the younger. From the very beginning, God ordained that the older one be the one to rule and reign in the house; but from the time of Cain and Abel, He turned it around and the elder served the younger. My friend, I want you to understand that this is a type of the cross. On the cross, God switched hands! When Jesus went to the cross, God took the right hand, which should have gone to Jesus, the elder brother, and He put it on us; and He

put his left hand on Jesus. All the blessing that should have gone to Jesus were transferred to us; and the curse that was supposed to come on us was transferred over to Jesus! Glory to God! No wonder II Corinthians chapter 5, verse 21 tells us that "He that knew no sin (the firstborn) was made to be sin for us (the younger) that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." Hallelujah! Let's look back a moment at verse 21 of Hebrews 11: "By faith Jacob, when he was a-dying, (the Greek says while he was in the process of dying), blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff."

Jacob leaning on his staff represented the authority of the nation of Israel. As he was looking at Ephraim and Manasseh, Jacob knew that he was looking at the seed which was going to occupy the land that God had promised and that the great promise of a nation was going to be birthed from him. I want you to notice also, that while Jacob was blessing them and leaning on his staff, he was worshipping God. No wonder his eyes were so keen in faith! A person who knows how to worship God through everything, is much keener than those around them. They can see things that the natural eye can never pick up, even so much that they can be blind in their natural eyes and still be able to perceive what is going on around them.

It is interesting that the word "worship" in the Greek means "to observe face to face." My friend, you have had a face to face encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ. Do you daily come before His face? Do you worship Him? I think it is interesting to note that Jacob was worshipping God while he was about his everyday activities. Worshipping God is not always that you seclude yourself and go off somewhere in private to get alone with God; you are with God at all times! Just as Jacob, we can lean on Him, worship Him, and come into His presence, and walk according to the Word of God, that eye of faith can become more perceptive everyday to pick up things around us that no one else can!

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