

A Daily Devotional Study Guide

The Book of Genesis

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth - Genesis 1:1

WEEK 14

“Future Generations”

Study: Genesis 47:27-48:22

Reading: Proverbs 13:13-25

Memory: Proverbs 3:3

What Does the Bible Say?

Israel and his family settled in the land of Goshen and there God blessed them in a great way. They were very fruitful and multiplied in possessions and children. Jacob lived for 17 more years after he moved his family to Goshen. When he knew he was about to die, he called Joseph to him. He had Joseph put his hand under his thigh, which was a symbol of making a promise, and swear to him that he would not bury him in Egypt. When he died, Jacob wanted to be carried back to the land of Canaan where he could be buried with Isaac and Abraham. Joseph agreed to this and swore to his father that he would bury him according to his request (vs 27-31).

Sometime after Joseph swore to his father, he was told that his father had become sick. Joseph took his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim so they could see their grandfather one more time before he died. When Jacob heard that Joseph was there, he strengthened himself enough to sit up in bed and greet his family. Jacob then began to bless Joseph, declaring how God had blessed him and promised him that he would be fruitful and would multiply and would give him the land of Canaan to possess. Though Joseph's sons Ephraim and Manasseh were born in Egypt, Jacob still counted them as part of his family and they would have the status of children just like Reuben and Simeon. Ephraim and Manasseh would receive the same inheritance that the other sons of Jacob would receive. Jacob then made reference to the loss of his wife Rachel. Here Jacob seems to be referring to the reason why he was placing the sons of Joseph on the equal plain as his other children. The reasoning seems to be because of the great sorrow he experienced with the loss of Rachel and then the supposed loss of Joseph (vs 1-7).

Jacob then asked Joseph about his sons. The phrase at first seems a little odd, as if Jacob had never seen them before, but I would be pretty sure that he had. He could have asked because his eyesight was going and he wanted to make sure they were Joseph's children. It could also be that

he did this in reference to the blessing he was about to offer. Joseph took the kids and put them near Jacob. He placed Manasseh towards the right hand of Jacob and Ephraim on the left hand of Jacob. The blessing was distributed with the right hand, and Joseph fully expected Jacob to put his right hand on Manasseh. Instead, Jacob switched his hand and put his right hand on Ephraim. In the blessing, Jacob declared that he desired his name and the name of his father and grandfather to be carried on through the power of God to all generations (vs 8-16).

Joseph didn't like what Jacob did and tried to switch Jacob's hands, but Jacob declared that he knew what he was doing. Jacob declared that both Manasseh and Ephraim would become great, but Manasseh would serve his younger brother. This did come true many years later as Ephraim became the dominant tribe of the north (vs 17-20).

Israel then turned to Joseph and told him that he knew he was about to die. He told Joseph that God would be with him and would deliver their descendants back to the promise land one day. Jacob made reference to a land on a mountain slope that he took from the Amorites. We are not told of any conquests Jacob had, but this must have been something that took place, though we are not sure exactly how or when (vs 17-22).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Do you have a vision for your family and future generations? One thing that seems to be lacking in the minds of many people today is a vision for the future generations. Many of the Bible characters in the Old Testament were concerned about what would happen once they died and were no longer in their earthly bodies. Though this can be taken too far at times, I believe many people don't think enough about it. They live for themselves and what pleasures they can have today without regard to future posterity. In my opinion, this is leading to a great demise in our nation as each successive generation often cares less and less about those that come after them. As a believer, this care should be a part of your life. Not that you should be overly concerned about it, but when you make choices, you need to consider how those choices will effect generations to come. Take time to evaluate if you are living for the momentary pleasures of the day or if you are living with the long term in view. When you live with others in view, you often live with a greater purpose. As you live with a greater purpose in life, you will often find much more enjoyment than when you live only for yourself.

Where did the children of Israel settle (vs 27)?

How did God bless them (vs 27)?

How long did Jacob live in Egypt (vs 28)?

What did Jacob ask Joseph to do (vs 29-30)?

Why do you think he specifically asked Joseph?

Why do you think Jacob was so insistent (vs 31)?

What was happening to Jacob (vs 1)?

What did Jacob recount (vs 2-4)?

What did Jacob declare about Joseph's children (vs 5-6)? What do you think this meant?

What did Jacob have to do many years before (vs 7)?

Why do you think Jacob asked about Joseph's sons (vs 8)?

What did Jacob want to do (vs 9)?

What did Jacob do with his hands (vs 12-14)?

What blessing did Jacob declare (vs 15-16)?

Why do you think Joseph didn't like what Jacob did (vs 17-18)?

Why did Jacob not move his hands (vs 19)?

What blessing did Jacob give (vs 20)?

What did Jacob say God would do (vs 21)?

What was Jacob giving to Joseph (vs 22)?

“Long Term Consequences”

Study: Genesis 49:1-12

Reading: Proverbs 3:1-35

Memory: Proverbs 3:3

A few years ago, some sport leagues started to be sued by former players because of the long term consequences they were facing as a result of the sport. Those who played the sport knew there was a risk, but some sports had started to hide the greater risks that their athletes were facing. After players had been out of their sports and started facing many more physical problems than they expected, many of them banded together to sue the leagues over neglect. Though many of these athletes were getting big paychecks, the long term physical pain was much greater than the things that money could buy. The move by former players forced the leagues to be more open about injuries and to take greater care in protecting their players.

Today, we are going to see it is very easy not to think about the long term consequences we will face by choices we make today.

What Does the Bible Say?

Realizing his death was imminent, Jacob called all of his children to him so he could bless them and also declare what was going to happen to them in the future. Apparently, Jacob had been given some type of prophetic gift from God to know how things were going to happen. He addressed his children from oldest to youngest and began by stating that Reuben had been his first born and had brought him great joy. Reuben helped him realize his dream of becoming a father, but Reuben would not be the leader of Jacob’s children. Because he chose to sleep with his father’s concubine Bilhah (Gen 35:22), he had defiled his “father’s bed.”

As a result, he was losing the privilege of having the preeminence among his brothers (vs 1-4).

Neither Simeon nor Levi would be blessed in a great way either and this was because they chose to enact vengeance upon the people of Shechem for the defilement of Dinah. Their anger not only caused them to kill the men, but they wiped out most of the city, killing the women and children along with the animals. Jacob pronounced a curse on them

because of their actions and told them that they would be divided and scattered in the land of Israel (vs 5-7).

Next was Judah. He received a better report from his father. He was told that he and his descendants would be praised, and they would have the power to defeat their enemies. The other sons of Israel would bow down to Judah. The power of Judah would be renown and many would not dare to fight against Judah, knowing that they would lose. From Judah would also come the line of kings and the people would bow down to honor and follow the king. The land of Judah would produce abundantly. This was symbolized by saying that the people of Judah would let their donkeys eat from the vine. It appears that “washing clothes in wine” and the “blood of the grapes” were symbolic terms for an abundance of produce. This abundance of good would also lead to great health, causing the eyes to be bright and the teeth to be white (vs 8-12).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Do you realize that your actions will affect you now and for generations to come? When you act rashly on your emotions, you are often not considering the immediate and long term consequences of your actions. Though Reuben, Simeon and Levi didn’t think about the consequences for their choices, they were to face them and face the agony that came along with those choices. This doesn’t mean that God is out to get you or hurt you, but it does reveal that your wrong choices do have consequences.

It is unclear why Judah was blessed, since we know that he committed sin and also took the lead in selling Joseph into slavery. We can see the mercy and grace of God, that, though at times we deserve much worse, God chooses to bless us instead. This doesn’t mean that you sin in order to test His grace. The best way to make sure you stay in His grace is by living for Him and daily submitting to His plan for your life.

Suggestions for Prayer

* *Ask God to help you seek His will when making choices.*

Thought for the day

Why did Jacob gather his sons (vs 1)?

How do you think Jacob knew what was going to happen to his children (vs 1)?

How was Reuben described (vs 3)?

What characterized Reuben's life (vs 4)?

How were Simeon and Levi described (vs 5)?

How had they been a source of violence (vs 6)?

Why do you think Jacob said he wanted nothing to do with their plans (vs 6)?

How had they expressed anger (vs 7)?

What was going to happen to their descendants (vs 7)?

What were the brothers of Judah going to do (vs 8)?

How was Judah described (vs 9)?

Where else in Scripture are the children of Judah associated with a lion?

What position would the descendants of Judah have (vs 10)?

How did that come true?

What do you think verses 11-12 meant?

Why do you think it is important to note that Jacob predicted that the tribe of Judah would be the ones who ruled over the people?

What is this a prophetic vision of Jesus?

Why do you think the Old Testament continually points to Jesus?

“Predicted Future”

Study: Genesis 49:13-33

Reading: --

Memory: Proverbs 3:3

What Does the Bible Say?

The next son that Jacob addressed was Zebulun. He declared that Zebulun would dwell by the sea shore and become a safe haven for ships. This is an interesting prophecy because Zebulun never settled near the sea, but they were on the Via Maris, a vital and important trade route. They benefitted from the sea trade because of this (vs 13).

The prophecy about Issachar declared that he would be like a donkey who would be known for hard labor. They would eventually be servants and slaves to others, taking on the brunt of hard labor (vs 14-15).

Dan was told that his people would judge the tribes of Israel, but they would also be a stumbling block to the nation. They would be like a serpent that would bite a horse causing the rider to fall off. The descendants of Dan were known for bringing idol worship into the nation and corrupting others. The tribe of Dan was omitted from the list of the tribes in Revelation 7:4-8, most likely because of their corruption. In verse 18, Jacob called out for the salvation of the Lord, perhaps this was because of what he saw in his vision about Dan (vs 16-18).

The people of Gad would settle on the east side



of the Jordan opening themselves up to constant raids. These raids would make them become strong warriors who could often resist these attacks and lend aid to other tribes who were being attacked (vs 19).

Riches were to come to the tribe of Asher and they would yield food for kings. When the tribe of Asher entered the Promise Land, they were given very fertile land north of Mt. Carmel, the area of the Jezreel Valley, that produced abundant crops (vs 20).

Naphtali would be a mountain people who would risk their lives in battle (Judges 5:18). They would be like a doe that was free to roam and who bore beautiful fawns (vs 21).

Jacob blessed Joseph in a great way and declared that he was like a fruitful vine by a spring that grew abundantly. Though enemies would try to attack the sons of Joseph, they would hold steadfast and be victorious. One of the main reasons they would stay strong is because they trusted in the mighty God of Jacob. He would be a shepherd to them and like a stone that would not be moved. God would assist them, and they would be blessed with the blessings of heaven. Jacob wanted the blessing that had been passed down to him through Abraham and Isaac to be passed through Joseph and his children (vs 22-26).

The tribe of Benjamin would be known as ferocious warriors who would make quick work of their enemies. They would become wealthy by dividing the spoils of the nations they conquered (vs 27).

When Jacob finished talking to his sons and gave the prophecies concerning them, he told them that he was about to die. He also told them that when he died he wanted to be buried with his father and grandfather. Abraham had bought the cave of Machpelah from the Hittites to be a burying place for their family and Jacob wanted to be buried there. They agreed to do this and when he finished talking, he closed his eyes and died (vs 28-33).

Suggestions for Prayer

* *Thank God for His power to deliver you from your enemies.*

Thought for the day

Where did Jacob say Zebulun would settle (vs 13)?

What would they become (vs 13)?

How was Issachar described (vs 14)?

Why were his descendants described this way?

What do you think verse 15 means?

****Much of the land that was given to Issachar was farm land. Some of the best farm land in the nation of Israel. It was the region where the Jezreel Valley connected to the Jordan Valley. This land would produce abundant crops, but would also be the route that many invading armies would use when attacking the land.*

What would Dan become (vs 16-17)?

How did the tribe of Dan eventually become a great problem for the rest of Israel?

Why do you think verse 18 is put in there?

What problem would Gad have (vs 19)? Why?

What would Asher produce (vs 20)?

How was Naphtali described (vs 21)? Why?

Why is there no “Tribe of Joseph” in the Bible?

What does verse 24 reveal about God’s protecting hands?

Why do you think special blessings were given to Joseph (vs 25-26)?

How is Benjamin described (vs 27)?

Why do you think that these prophecies about the children of Israel are included in this passage?

“A Time for Mourning”

Study: Genesis 50:1-14

Reading: Ecclesiastes 3:1-22

Memory: Proverbs 3:3

When our family announced that we would be leaving the church that I pastored and worked at for almost 20 years, it was a very difficult announcement for me to give and an equally difficult announcement for the congregation to take. For the next few weeks it felt like we had died and a funeral had taken place since there was so much sadness. I wanted everyone to be happy because we knew it was what the Lord wanted, but I also realized that what the Lord wants is not always easy. Sometime after we left, we talked to a few of our close friends and they expressed how they had gone through stages of grief. Though they would see us again, the closeness that we once had would not be experienced again since the relationship we had with them would be different. It was during this time and through other circumstances that I started to gain a deeper understanding of grief and realized more how God has created us for relationships.

Today, we are going to see how great mourning took place when Jacob died and we will be reminded that there is a time for everything in life.

What Does the Bible Say?

The death of Jacob was hard on all his children, but it appears to have been very hard on Joseph. After all, he experienced deep emotions throughout the whole process of being separated and reunited with his father. Though Joseph was one of the youngest sons, God had raised him up to a leadership position. When Jacob died, Joseph took charge and commanded his servants to embalm Jacob. This process took 40 days and even after the 40 days were over, there was still a great mourning process for Jacob that took place for another 30 days (vs 1-3).

Following the time of weeping, Joseph asked Pharaoh if he could fulfill his father's request and take the body of his father and bury him in the land of Canaan. Pharaoh honored this request and allowed Joseph and his brothers to travel to Canaan to bury Jacob. The group that traveled up to Canaan must have been very large because most of the immediate

family members traveled together to honor Jacob. This must have been an emotion filled time for Joseph because he hadn't been to that region for 30 plus years, and the last time he was in Canaan was when he was sold into slavery (vs 4-9).

Verse 10 gives us a few details about this return trip that are quite interesting, though there is much information that we don't have. It says they reached the "threshing floor of Atad." We are not sure who Atad was, but we must assume that this place was still known when the Israelites traveled back to the promise land. Another interesting thought is that it says they were "beyond the Jordan" (ESV). This is normally a reference to the east side of the Jordan river. A straight route to the cave where Abraham was being buried would not have taken them near the Jordan river. One of the major trade routes of the day was "The King's Highway" which traveled on the east side of the Dead Sea and the Jordan River. This is the route which the Israelites took during the Exodus. Perhaps this threshing floor was just east of the Jordan River right before crossing the river. It very well could be that they traveled this route for safety reasons, especially since the Canaanites thought that they were Egyptians. It appears that before crossing the Jordan to bury Jacob, they held their last time of mourning, which lasted for seven days (vs 10-11).

The sons of Israel did just as their father had commanded and took him to the Cave of Machpelah where they buried him with Abraham and Isaac. Following the burial, they chose to return to Egypt where they had established their homes, and there the sons of Israel lived out the rest of their days (vs 12-14).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Do you take time to mourn the loss of the ones that you love? Sometimes, in the Christian community, we view mourning as a negative thing. After all, the person we knew and loved is often a follower of Christ and will be in heaven. Yes, we can rejoice for them, but God made us for relationships here on this earth. When that relationship no longer exists, it is as if a part of us is missing. The example here of Joseph and his brothers reminds us that it is okay to mourn the loss of one you love. Though Jacob had lived many years and expected to die, losing him was not easy for anyone. Choose to allow others time to mourn and realize that it is okay yourself to mourn as you lose those who are near to you. There is a certain healing that comes by your emotions and expressing your deep heartache when you experience loss.

How did Joseph respond to the death of his father (vs 1)?

What did he order his servants to do (vs 2)?

Why do you think this is mentioned?

Why do you think we are told that the Egyptians wept for Joseph for 70 days (vs 3)?

What did Joseph desire to do (vs 4)?

Why did Joseph want to do this (vs 5)?

Who traveled with Joseph (vs 7-9)?

Why do you think that so many people traveled with him?

Why do you think they stopped to mourn before entering the land of Canaan (vs 10)?

What did the people of Canaan declare (vs 11)?

What does verse 12 declare? Why do you think this is important?

Where did they bury Jacob (vs 13)?

Why do you think it was important for Jacob to be buried with his father and grandfather?

****This is still a sacred site today that is visited by both Jews and Muslims.*

What did Joseph do after he buried Jacob (vs 14)?

Why do you think they decided to return to Egypt?

Why do you think the process of mourning was such a big deal?

What can you learn about the process of mourning from this?

“Great Forgiveness”

Study: Genesis 50:15-26

Reading: Matthew 18:15-35

Memory: Proverbs 3:3

There was a man at the church I pastored who had become bitter at some of the members of the church. He chose to stop coming to church, thinking that he was punishing them. One day, he asked me what I thought they would do if he came to church. I think he was expecting me to say that they would be upset or bothered, but I told him that they would welcome him with open arms and would tell him how glad they were that he was there. This was not the answer he wanted to hear. He didn't realize that his anger and bitterness was affecting him far more than it was affecting the others that he was angry with.

Today, we are going to see the need to offer true forgiveness. We will see that Joseph lived much differently than his brothers because he lived in the freedom of forgiveness while his brothers lived under the constant weight of guilt.

What Does the Bible Say?

The death of their father was a very emotional time for all of Jacob's family, but what made it worse for the older brothers of Joseph is the fear that Joseph would now pay them back for what they had done to him. It is amazing to think about the guilt that these men were carrying even after 30 years. What they decided to do was to send a message to Joseph declaring how their father had commanded him to forgive them for their wrong acts. Apparently, they thought using an instruction from Jacob would carry more clout than if they just asked for forgiveness themselves. They also asked for forgiveness, but they were doing everything they could do so that Joseph would not repay them for their evil. The response of Joseph was not anger, but weeping. We are not told exactly why he wept. Perhaps it was because his brothers were finally asking forgiveness, or it could have been because he felt bad for them because they were carrying such a burden of guilt (vs 15-17).

Following the message, his brothers went to Joseph and fell down before him and submitted themselves to him as his servants. Joseph was not holding on to any animosity towards his brothers, but instead he told them that he was not in the place of God to cast judgment upon them. They had no reason to fear because he was not angry with them. He

realized that they did something that was terribly evil, yet God used their evil act and turned it into something good. Despite their choice to sin, the nation of Israel was spared from death by starvation because of it. The brothers of Joseph had no reason to fear because Joseph would continue to take care of them and help provide for them. He spoke with great kindness to them and comforted them, helping them understand what true forgiveness was (vs 18-21).

Joseph lived for about 50 some years after the death of Jacob. (He was around 17 when he was sold into slavery. He was 30 years old when he became ruler. His father came to live in Egypt around 10 years after Joseph became second in command. His father lived for 17 years in Egypt.) Joseph was able to see his children, great grandchildren and great, great grandchildren be born before his death. When he knew he was about to die, he told his brothers that he didn't want to be buried in Egypt but wanted to be buried with his father. The sons of Israel promised they would take his bones to the land of Canaan. Joseph died when he was 110 years old and they embalmed him and put him in a coffin. He wouldn't be taken back to Canaan until the Israelites conquered the promise land (vs 22-26).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Have you experienced true forgiveness from others? Have you given others true forgiveness yourself? Is there anyone you can't stand to be around, or you think bad thoughts every time you see them or hear about them? Forgiveness is something that is very easy to talk about, but it is very hard to practice. The only way to offer true forgiveness is to realize who God is and who you are. When you realize how much God loves you and how He has chosen to forgive you, and you understand His great sovereignty in all the wrongs that have been done to you, you can have the ability to truly forgive. There is nothing that happens in your life that is out of the control or plan of God. Some of these things are not always done with a good heart, but they are all part of His plan. God doesn't want people to sin, but he uses the sin of men and the evil deeds that are performed. He can turn them around to produce good for those involved. Take time today to evaluate your life and see if there is any area where you are not offering forgiveness to others. Joseph forgave his brothers way before they asked for forgiveness. Though they lived under a cloud of guilt, he lived in the great freedom that forgiveness offers. You don't have to be a slave to bitterness, but can find great freedom in forgiveness.

What did the brothers of Joseph fear (vs 15)?

Why do you think they were afraid of this?

Why do you think they reminded Joseph what Jacob had said (vs 16)?

What did the brothers ask Joseph (vs 17)?

What did Joseph's brothers do (vs 18)?

Why is the fact that they bowed before him so interesting?

****One of the things that caused their hatred of Joseph was his dreams that they would bow down before him.*

What did Joseph declare (vs 19-20)?

What does this reveal about his trust in God?

What did Joseph understand about the sovereignty of God (vs 20)?

Why is it difficult to have this same attitude when others hurt you?

How can you develop this attitude in your life?

What did Joseph say he would do for his brothers (vs 21)?

How long did Joseph live (vs 22)? What was he able to experience (vs 23)?

What did Joseph say was going to happen (vs 24)?

What did Joseph ask his family to do (vs 25)?

What happened to the body of Joseph (vs 26)?

Take a moment to reflect on the whole story of Joseph. Why is this story such a powerful lesson to you today?

Memory Verses

Proverbs 3:1 My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments, 2 for length of days and years of life and peace they will add to you. 3 Let not steadfast love and faithfulness forsake you; bind them around your neck; write them on the tablet of your heart.