
SG020121

The Whole Counsel of God – Genesis 48-50

Got questions? Email Pastor Jason at jasonduff7@gmail.com

(You can download this message as a podcast by searching Jason Duff on iTunes)

Introduction & Overview of the Section

Introduction

Tonight we are going to continue finish our look at the book of Genesis. By the end of these 3 chapters the family of Israel will be well on their way to becoming the nation of Israel as they will multiply in Egypt for the next 400 years. The last three chapters can be summarized with 3 key words, blessing, prophecy and death.

The Life of Joseph – part four – Genesis 48-50

#1 – Blessing – Genesis Chapter 48

Joseph hears that his father is about to die, so he brings his sons, Ephraim and Manasseh to be blessed by their grandfather. Jacob however does more than just bless them; he adopts them, making them official tribes of the nation of Israel.

#2 – Prophecy – Genesis Chapter 49

After blessing his grandsons, Jacob calls his 12 real sons before him. Although this chapter is usually entitled “Jacob blesses his sons”, what is really happening is Jacob is prophesying over them, letting them know what their future and the future of their tribe will entail.

#3 – Death – Genesis Chapter 50

The book of Genesis ends with death. The death of Jacob, and Joseph, yet on a happier note, the death of the guilt and sin of the brothers as Joseph eases their fears that he is harboring bitterness toward them. The chapter ends with death but that is because Genesis is not the end of the story, but as the title of the book infers, it is only the beginning.

Key Issues or Words

“Ephraim and Manasseh” (48:1) – These are the names of Joseph’s two sons which mean in Hebrew, “God has made me fruitful in the land of affliction” and “God has made me forget my sorrows.” Joseph was a slave in Egypt and was married to an Egyptian cult priest’s daughter and yet he gives his sons Hebrew names with significance to what the true God was doing in his life. Joseph was in the Egyptian culture. He looked Egyptian, he spoke Egyptian, he was in the culture, but the culture was not in him. What a great example for us!

By the way...

Genesis 50:3 – “The Egyptian mourned for him seventy days”

This “70 days” is significant, because the highest form of mourning in Egypt at this time was the mourning for Pharaoh, which would last 72 days. Normal times of morning for loved ones was anywhere from 10 to 30 days, and of course those times were personal and within the family. It is amazing that the Father of a slave would receive a time of national mourning just two days short of the time reserved for the Pharaohs. It shows what an impact Joseph really made upon the nation of Egypt and it challenges us to see the impact we can have on our culture as well.

Homework 4 Next Week – See back for Homework

Genesis 48-50

“The Life of Joseph – part four”

Introduction

- Tonight we are going finish our study in the foundational book of the Old Testament and really all of the Bible
 - Remember the content is not hard to remember, because the title says it all

The word Genesis means “beginnings”

- And truly so many things in Scripture have their beginning in the book of Genesis
 - The universe
 - Life in general
 - Man, marriage
 - Sin and evil
 - Language, government, nations
 - Specifically we will see the nation of Israel
- In fact understanding that this book means and is about beginnings really is a good way to divide up our look at this book as you can see in your book intro sheet

Outline for the Book of Genesis

Chapters 1-11 – The Beginning of all nations

- Chapters 1-2 – The Creation
- Chapter 3 - 5 – The Fall
- Chapter 6-9 – The Flood
- Chapters 10-11 – The Tables of Nations

Chapters 12-50 – The Beginning of the Jewish nation

- Chapters 12-23 – Abraham
- Chapters 24-27 – Isaac
- Chapters 28-36 – Jacob
- Chapters 37-50 – Joseph

By the time we are done this evening, the nation of Israel will be settled in the land of Egypt where they will go from a family of 70 people to a nation of over 2 million

- And how that happens and the prophecies leading up to the history of the nation of Israel is what we see this evening

So If you are looking for an outline, which always helps me to follow along and understand what is going on – these three chapters deal with and can be summarized by 3 words

Genesis 48-50

#1 – Blessing – Genesis Chapter 48

#2 – Prophecy – Genesis Chapter 49

#3 – Death – Genesis Chapter 50

- I know we wanted to end on a high note, so we will talk about death
 - But let’s deal with these one at a time

Genesis 48-50

#1 – Blessing – Genesis Chapter 48

- As his family has been settling into the land of Goshen, Joseph has been spending the last few years, buying up all the land for the Pharaoh
 - And after some time Joseph is told, your father is sick and about to die
 - So he takes his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh and they go to see Dad and granddad

Jacob sees his boy Joseph, and he sits up in bed, he has something important to do

- He is going to put his hands on his grandsons and bless them
 - You know I have really been considering this this week, of how important it is that we, especially as men put our hands on our kids to bless them, to speak truth into their lives

So often when we think of blessing our kids, we think of providing something material for them

- if I can buy them a car, that is being a blessing
 - if I can take them on vacation, that is being a real blessing
 - and I sure those things would be a blessing

But we see the patriarchs of the Bible, we don't see them bestowing gifts as much as we see them laying hands on their kids and pronouncing blessing

- my kids love to be touched, my two girls, my son, they love to snuggle close
 - and I have been thinking about this passage for a couple of weeks and as they do, I have been trying to not just wrestle them, or snuggle with them, but to pray for them, to bless them
 - and I know they are young, and maybe you have a teenage son, a teenage daughter and they are looking at you right now with a look that says, don't you touch me
- I want to encourage you, I believe our men and women, need godly, holy, not creepy, not perverted, godly touch, instilling in them blessing
 - I believe part of the problem is Dad stops being affectionate in a holy way with their daughter when they turn 12, 13 – and yet their girls still need male affection and some 14 year old boy will love to fill your place, dad
 - We see more and more today, young men who are not getting godly, holy affection from their fathers, turn to another man who pretends to provide that holy touch, but instead it is something completely different

And I have felt a command from the Lord in my life, to touch my son, to put a hand on his shoulder and bless him – you are going to be a godly man, a man who walks in purity and strength

- I don't want others telling my son who he is, what he can accomplish
 - I want him to get courage, strength as I speak truth in his life
- I want to put my hand on my daughter and speak truth into her life, you will be a woman of purity and righteousness
 - I don't want some magazine telling my girls who they are and what they need to look like
 - I don't want there to be a hole in my kids heart or my wife's heart – I want them to hear from me the good things I see in them

- We see it all through the Bible and I just want to encourage you who are parents, or grandparents, don't be afraid to pull your kids close, put a hand on their shoulder and speak truth and blessing into their lives

Jacob blesses his grandsons and tells Joseph I am going to adopt your sons, I am going to include them into my inheritance

- meaning when we leave Egypt and God gives us the promise land – they will inherit a portion of the land just as Joseph's 11 brothers would
 - And in doing this – it is interesting to see what happens

It is common knowledge that there are twelve tribes of Israel

- But in reality there are really 13 or 14 if you count Joseph and his two sons as tribes

That is why when God lists the tribes in the Bible for one reason or another, He can leave a tribe out, but still have this list be 12 names long

- A great example – when they come into the land, the priestly tribe of Levi did not inherit any land, so they are left off the list, and Joseph is represented by his 2 sons – giving you 12 tribes that get land, though the name of Joseph or Levi isn't mentioned
 - In the book of Revelation, chapter 7 they are mentioning the tribes that are sealed and protected by God – in this list there are again 12 tribes, but Joseph is mentioned, and Dan and Ephraim are left off the list – most scholars believe because it was through these tribes that idolatry entered the life of Israel
- But my point is there are always 12 tribes of Israel listed in the Scriptures, and yet it isn't always the same 12 names, so if you were ever confused by that, Genesis chapter 48 is the reason
 - Jacob adopts Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, and gives them full inheritance rights, as much as any of his actual 12 sons

But as Jacob blesses these two grandsons of his, did you notice what happened?

- As Jacob goes to bless Joseph's boys, Joseph walks them over to his father, with Manasseh toward Jacob's right hand, and Ephraim toward his left hand
 - For the custom was to bless the first born with the right hand as he would receive the greater blessing, and Manasseh was older, and Ephraim as the younger son would receive the second blessing of the left hand
- You read the phrase, "Son of my right hand", this is the implication, the son who is blessed
 - But notice this does not happen

In fact if you've been paying attention, it seems that for God to bless the younger and use him in a greater way than the real firstborn is almost the norm

- But I point that out to you because we may not see the significance of that, but the ancient Jews, in fact the ancient world – would have been amazed that this happened
 - And it just shows me once again that God does not fit into our cultural box

- We come to the Lord with all of our preconceived ideas about how He can and can not work – how this just doesn't happen, it's never been that way before here, so why try
 - And don't misunderstand me, we need to be wise and learn from those who have gone before us
 - But God won't be put in your box

And I want you to see – that He choose Able over Cain (the firstborn), and Isaac over Ishmael (the firstborn), and Jacob over Esau, (the firstborn), and Joseph over Ruben (the firstborn), and now Ephraim over Manasseh

- Because God does things differently than the world does them

Paul says in I Corinthians chapter 1...

“For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence.” – I Corinthians 1:26-29

You might say, “I'm weak, I'm not mighty, I'm despised, foolish at times”, God can't use me, then friend you are just the type of person God uses

- He does things differently than the world does

When He wants to save the Gentiles

- He calls the ultimate religious Jew – Paul the Apostle to save them, I would have picked someone who was uncouth, you know a man who could relate to the Gentile world, not Pharisee Paul

When he wants to reach the Jews

- He calls Peter, Mr. Unorthodox – to do a work in them

In the 70s when God wanted to save thousands of Hippies, He calls this old balding suit, named Chuck Smith to begin what Time magazine would later call the Jesus movement of Calvary Chapel and many other churches

- We have seen it in our church – when God wants to send somebody to reach Villa Real, in Costa Rica, he sent the two whitest people I have ever met in Phil and Rebecca, who didn't speak a word of Spanish, Rebecca was pretty preppy growing, I was her youth pastor – that's not the couple – that is the one most fantastic mission I have ever seen
- And when God wanted to plant a church from here in Paris Texas, a place that is number one – hot, humid and number two has established religious organizations – he calls this unestablished young, inexperienced kid who thinks 85 degrees with no humidity is too hot to go outside
 - And just when it was time to sit back and enjoy this huge machine that God, he called me back here to hang out with you Jesus freaks
 - You see God does things different than we would
- we need to stop making excuses of why God isn't and can't work in and through our lives, and simply submit to Him

Genesis 48-50

#1 – Blessing – Genesis Chapter 48

#2 – Prophecy – Genesis Chapter 49

- read verses 1-2 and then stop

Here in chapter 49, Jacob isn't going to just bless Joseph's two sons, He also, before he dies calls his own 12 sons to come before him and he – well the title is usually Jacob blesses his 12 sons

- But the reality is, the only son He blesses is Joseph
 - What is really going on here is Jacob is prophesying over his sons of what would happen to them, notice verse 1, “in the last days”
- Now in this context I believe the phrase, “the last days” is referring to the latter history of these tribes, what would happen to them in the future
 - Rather than what will happen to them at the end of world or something along those lines
 - He is prophesying about their future

And as we consider them individually we will see that Jacob, led of the Lord, foretells for many of them in great details what their future as a tribe of Israel would entail

- We are going to look at them individually and then I want us to consider something very important about them corporately
 - Jacob begins with the sons of his first wife Leah

The Sons of Leah – Genesis 49:3-12

Reuben – Genesis 49:3-4

- I bet as Jacob began Simeon was saying that's right Dad, “beginning of strength, right on...”
 - But then verse 4 – Jacob brings up a sin that took place in Simeon's life 40 years before this moment

A sin no doubt Simeon thought he had gotten away with – but here it was catching up with him and costing him his birthright

- Jacob says, “you're unstable” – and truly this would be the future for the tribe of Reuben
 - No leaders would come from this tribe
- In fact, just the opposite – Dathan and Abiram, who you can read about in Numbers 16, were from the tribe of Reuben and started the Rebellion at Korah that cost Israel thousands of lives
 - Reuben and his kids were unstable just like God said they would be

The Sons of Leah – Genesis 49:3-12

Reuben – Genesis 49:3-4

Simeon & Levi – Genesis 49:5-7

- Reuben's sin was sexual in nature
 - Simeon and Levi were violent, killing not just the men, but women and children and animals of the people who had raped their sister
 - And they too because of their sin would lose the rights as firstborn sons

Jacob says of them, “I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel”

- Levi would never inherit any land in the promise land, though Levi does become the priestly tribe for reasons we will see when we study Exodus
 - Simeon is assimilated into the tribe of Judah as far as land goes (Josh 15)
 - So the prophecy will come to pass exactly as God said it would

The Sons of Leah – Genesis 49:3-12

Reuben – Genesis 49:3-4

Simeon & Levi – Genesis 49:5-7

Judah – Genesis 49:8-12

Judah who definitely had his shortcomings in life, but in the end repented and took responsibility – Jacob has some good things to say about him

- From Judah would be the tribe the rulers of Israel would come from
 - After the first King, King Saul – who was from the tribe of Benjamin, every Jewish King at least from the Southern Kingdom after that point was from the tribe of Judah
 - His tribe would be the ruling tribe in Israel

Another interesting prophecy is given in context with Judah in verse 10

- Jewish scholars interpreted this verse to mean that Israel would not lose the power to govern its own affairs until the Messiah had come
 - That is why Josephus records for us that in 70 AD the religious leaders in Jerusalem ran into the streets and tore their clothes, questioning the very validity of the Bible
- You see in 70AD – Rome had taken away the right of the Jews to meet out capital punishment on their own people – and this, though they had lost many governing rights many times before, was the final straw – God's word did not come to pass
 - They had lost the scepter to rule and Messiah had not come for them
 - God's Word did not come to pass
- But what the scholars of the day did not realize, is at the same time, a young boy was up in Nazareth. A young boy from the tribe of Judah
 - Who would become Christ the King
 - God's word always, always, always comes to pass, friends

You might not see it, you might not understand it, but there is one thing God honors above His name, His Word

The Sons of Bilhah & Zilpah – Genesis 49:13-21

Zebulum would receive the land near the sea, and the tribe would trade with many nations – just as Jacob foretold

- Some great judges came from Zebulum such as Deborah and Barak

Issachar settled in a fertile valley, and the produce from their tribe blessed the entire nation

- They were used in this way to bless Israel
 - However Jewish history records they traded their liberty when they choose to live as serfs rather than labor in a less fertile district, they traded liberty for humiliation, comfort to slavery
 - Just like the Bible had foretold

Dan – not much good said about the tribe of Dan

- As we will follow their history, they could not drive out the Philistines in the land they were given in southern Israel, so the tribe of Dan went North and attacked a defenseless people called Lashish and took their land instead (Judges 18)
 - Samson – who struggled greatly with sin was from the tribe of Dan
 - And sadly it was through the tribe of Dan that idolatry entered Israel, that brought about their captivity

Gad – settled to the East of the Jordan River

- Kind of an unsettling prophecy – a troop is coming to beat you up, if you see a group of men coming at you, run boy – but we, see it came to pass
 - They were one of the first tribes to be taken over when the Assyrians invaded Israel

Asher – Jacob tells them they would be known for their ability to make wonderful bread and treats

- And Hebrew history tells us that is just what happened

Naphtali – given the land of Galilee

- The people there were known to do things differently than those in Jerusalem – they saw the day measured differently – Sundown to Sundown verses Sun up to Sun – up (Jerusalem)
 - Jacob foresees this in calling them a “deer let loose” – breaking with tradition so to speak

Then Jacob prophesies over his two favorite sons

The Sons of Rachel – Genesis 49:22-28

Joseph – Genesis 49:22-26

- He repeats what Joseph is – a fruitful bough
 - He tells him what the future will hold – blessing

Benjamin – Genesis 49:27-28

- To his other son, he is not as wonderful
 - This is just a testament that God is speaking through him
 - He calls him a ‘ravenous wolf’ – and it only take a casual look at Scripture to see this come about
- Judges 19-20 – the things that happen in the tribe of Benjamin – horrible sin
 - Saul of Tarsus – was from the tribe of Benjamin – he became Paul, but before he ravages Christians in the name of the Lord

So the prophecies are given – but before we move into chapter 50 there is something I want us to notice about these prophecies

- the future for these men and their tribes was tied into their past
 - and I want you to see this, because the same thing is true for you and me
- Listen – how we behave today, the decision we make, the choices we stand on – have an effect on who we’ll be tomorrow
 - And we need to consider that and prayerfully think it through

Tonight if you are making good choices, and following the way of the Lord, you need to see this

- Because the enemy will say to you and me – it doesn’t matter that you are living for the Lord, where is the fruit in your life???
- So just give up, just take it easy
- No – what you are doing today, effects who you will be tomorrow
- And if you are living for the Lord, do not be fooled into thinking that that is no big deal
 - It is everything

But maybe tonight you are making bad choices, and walking away from the Lord, you need to think this through too

- God is not mocked, do not be deceived, whatever a man sows, so He will also reap
 - If you sow to the flesh – you will, not you might, you will reap corruption

- Reuben, Simeon and Levi all sowed to the flesh, and most likely thought it would never catch up with them - But it did

Wow – what a wonderful message, I’m so encouraged, so you’re saying there is no hope for me then???

- No – I’m saying that unconfessed, unrepented sin, will reap corruption in your life
 - But if you are in the place tonight, instead of being discouraged by Reuben and Simeon and Levi, - be encouraged by Judah
- Friends – Judah was just as bad as his 3 older brothers, worse, I would say
 - But Judah repented, and got right with God and Man – and friends, that’s the difference

God is just – and if you choose to live in sin – you will face the just consequences

But God is also full of Grace and Mercy – and if you will repent

- He will cast those things as far as the East is from the West and He will remember your sins no more
 - Notice Jacob doesn’t say anything about Judah’s sin with Tamar, or how it was Judah who said, “let’s sell Joseph into slavery”
 - Because Judah’s sin was washed – let that be a lesson to you and me

Doing well – don’t grow weary

- Doing poorly – repent, get right
 - Because what you do right now, effects who you will be later – the future is still that – its future
 - Important lesson

Genesis 48-50

#1 – Blessing – Genesis Chapter 48

#2 – Prophecy – Genesis Chapter 49

#3 – Death – Genesis Chapter 50

- Let’s start reading in 49, verse 29 through verse 15 of chapter 50

Chapter 50 deals with death

The death of Jacob – Genesis 50:1-14

- Great mourning – 72 days was the required mourning for Pharaoh, they mourned 70 days for Jacob, his family was loved in Egypt
 - He was embalmed – brains sucked out through the nose
 - Side opened and organs removed, spices and Natron (salt) added – amazing what they did
- In Jacob’s case they embalmed him in order to transport him back to the land of Israel as he had requested and bury him next to, did you catch that in chapter 49, verse 31 – bury me next to Leah

Now wait a second that doesn’t make any sense?

- Remember Jacob’s marriage to Leah started out on a bad note – Jacob was tricked, he was deceived – He loved Rachel
 - And for Leah it was a hard life

- Yet, I believe Jacob here at the end realizes, it was the Lord, my marriage to Leah was the Lord— because you see through Leah comes Judah and from Judah comes Jesus, Shiloh – Jacob sees that now
- Through Leah – I see Jesus

So what – well, listen – this may be for just one of you tonight – listen up – We can have the Jacob attitude toward our spouses sometimes

- He tricked me – He seemed so into God, so in love with me – but now – I have been deceived, I have been tricked – the enemy wants you to quit
 - She tricked me – she said she was this way and she is not
 - I am going to quit
- I encourage you to stick it out, because you are going to see Jesus in your life as you do
 - Jesus is going to be shaped in your life through your marriage, especially the tougher that marriage is
 - Bury me next to Leah, Jacob says, amazing
 - So we see the death of Jacob...

Chapter 50 deals with death

The death of Jacob – Genesis 50:1-14

The death of the brothers’ sin and guilt – Genesis 50:15-21

- After dad dies they think Joseph is going to get them
 - It breaks Joseph’s heart because he did so much for them

It breaks his heart because they lied to him – “dad said on his death bed”

- Joseph was there when his dad died, he hadn’t said this and he didn’t need to – they don’t get it – He weeps
 - This is one of the last pictures of Christ in Joseph – Christ has done so much for you and me
 - Yet we so often have this mentality that He is mad at us, ticked with us
- What else can I do – I’ve died to keep our relationship unbroken
 - But guilt will do that to you, as it did to the brothers
 - Believe I John 1:9 – confess your sin, believe He has washed, forgiven you, cleansed you
- Joseph says, what you meant for evil, God meant it for good
 - God was at work
 - As he always is

Chapter 50 deals with death

The death of Jacob – Genesis 50:1-14

The death of the brothers’ sin and guilt – Genesis 50:15-21

The death of Joseph – Genesis 50:22-26

- Kind of a bummer ending to such a great book
 - I don’t know if you were expecting a princess to get saved or a Kingdom to be formed
 - At least a unicorn or something, but some guy in coffin, kind of a bummer
- But church, it is important to realize that Genesis is not the end of the story
 - We are building a story, we have seen how the nation of Israel was formed, how they got to Egypt

Then we will see how they get back to the promise land, how they receive the law, which they break all the time

- how the law can't save them
 - how human leaders can't save them
 - because eventually we get to Jesus
- He is the highlight of the story, He is the hero

But nonetheless we come to the end of Genesis

- and we see Joseph with his kids, kids sitting on his knee and he is blessing them
 - and by the way - This is the goal, men
 - for so many men the goal is to be like Hugh Hefner, to be rich, spend all day in your PJ with beautiful women
 - don't let spending your life in your jammies be your goal
- Joseph's life, this is my dream, to see my kids, walking with Jesus
 - You need to think generations ahead, to pray for who your kids will marry, to pray for their kids, years before they are on the horizon
 - To leave a legacy of walking with Jesus by example in your life
- This is the way we are going to effect the future
 - Have a long view, friends
 - Maybe you didn't grow up learning Bible verses, neither did I – so you have issues – decide to be a patriarch
 - You started out deep in your enemy end zone – so you walk with Jesus and advance the ball to the 30 and teach your kids to walk with Jesus, they will advance to midfield
- Teach your kids to teach their kids about Jesus, pray for them, watch them take it down to the goal line

You see I believe it may take 4 or 5 generations but if the Lord tarries I want our church family to affect this county for the name and the glory of Jesus Christ

- be a patriarch, friends

Next Few weeks

Next week – Night of Prayer and Praise

Wednesday February 27th – Pastor Rob

Wednesday March 6th – Charlie Campbell

Wednesday March 13th – The Book of Job

- love light leading in special music
 - on the back of your study guide is a reading outline

The Book of Job most likely happened during the life of either Abraham or Jacob

- so as Genesis ends the children of Israel are going to be in bondage for 400 years, multiplying
 - so we will leave them there for the next 6 weeks, 3 as you can see on the screen, then we will study 3 weeks in the book of Job

Then the Wednesday after Easter, we will begin the book of Exodus – Scott Cunningham and his daughters will be with us that night

- the Sunday before, Easter Sunday, obviously Easter in the park which will be awesome

- but that night – Leeland will be here and we are launching our Sunday Evening Service ‘Gather” and for the first few weeks, we are going to be doing a series called –The Ten
- it is my heart to look at what we believe and why its important with this Sunday night crew, so we are going to look at basic theology over the coming year, but we are going to start seeing The 10 – What are these 10 commandments and why do they matter to our lives 4,000 years after they were given
 - so it will be an tie into Wednesday Nights, so you are welcome to attend those Sunday Nights starting Easter evening – right here – great things are ahead!!!