

Through the Bible - Genesis 47-50

by Chuck Smith

The sermon explores the story of Joseph in Egypt, highlighting his rise to power, the Israelites' sojourn, and the significance of Jacob's blessing of Pharaoh.

Scripture: Genesis 47:1

Topics: "God's Providence", "Forgiveness"

Description

Chuck Smith explores the concluding chapters of Genesis, focusing on Joseph's rise to power in Egypt and the eventual reunion with his family. He emphasizes God's providence in Joseph's life, from being sold into slavery to interpreting Pharaoh's dreams and saving many from famine. The sermon highlights the importance of forgiveness as Joseph reconciles with his brothers, who feared his retribution after their father's death. Smith also reflects on Jacob's blessings to his sons and the significance of their destinies, culminating in Joseph's faith in God's promise for the Israelites to return to Canaan.

Transcript

Shall we turn in our Bibles now to the forty-seventh chapter of Genesis?

Joseph has been sold by his brothers as a slave to the traders going to Egypt. In Egypt he is resold and purchased by a man named Potiphar who was the chief captain of the Pharaoh's guard. God prospered him and blessed him in Potiphar's house. Potiphar's house was blessed because of Joseph's being there. He made Joseph the head over everything he had. But Potiphar's wife set her eye upon Joseph, sought to seduce him. When he refused her seductive ways, she became angry, accused him of attempted rape and Joseph was placed in prison in Egypt with an indeterminate sentence.

There in prison God blessed him and he came in favor of the captain over the prison and he turned the whole prison over to Joseph. And Joseph ran the affairs of the prison. And while he was there in prison, the king's butler, chief butler and chief baker of the Pharaoh both got into trouble with the Pharaoh. Perhaps there was an attempted assassination plot, maybe a poisoned bit of bread or something that the chief butler brought to the Pharaoh. And the taster who tasted it dropped over dead and so they don't know who did it, the baker or the butler. And so they're both thrown in prison until the matter can be determined.

While they are in prison they meet Joseph and Joseph becomes acquainted with them. They both of them one morning looked very sad and when Joseph questions the reason for their sadness, they informed him

of these dreams that they have had. The butler seeing a vine with three branches and clusters of grape and he squeezed the grapes into a cup and carried it to the Pharaoh. Joseph said, "Oh, that's a good dream. It means in three days you're going to be restored to your old position and you'll be bearing the Pharaoh's cup to him once again. And when you come before the Pharaoh, tell him about me, will you? I got a bum rap. I don't deserve to be here. I'm a Hebrew. The woman lied about me. Try and help me out if you would."

So the baker said, "Oh, I had a dream, too. And I had three baskets of dainties that I have baked for the Pharaoh and I was carrying them on my head. But as I was carrying them to the Pharaoh, the bird came and ate the dainties." Joseph said, "You're in trouble, man. Three days and the Pharaoh will have your head." And so evidently the baker was the one who put the poison in the bread or whatever the plot was and he was discovered. The baker was put to death, but the butler was returned to his position as the chief of the butlers bearing the cup to the Pharaoh once again. But the butler forgot all about Joseph for two years.

But then after two years the Pharaoh had a weird dream that troubled him. And he called in all of his wise men and astrologers, soothsayers, to interpret for him his dream, none of them being able to do so. Suddenly the memory of the butler was triggered and he said, "Oh, I've done a horrible thing. There's a beautiful fellow down in jail. He's a Hebrew and this fellow is able to interpret dreams. He interpreted the dream of the butler and the baker, of the baker and myself and it came out just like he interpreted. And he can interpret your dream for you." And so they sent for Joseph who shaved and took a bath and came in before the Pharaoh.

And the Pharaoh said, "I understand you can tell dreams. He said, Well, I'm in touch with God and God knows everything and God can reveal the dream in secret to the Pharaoh." So the Pharaoh explained his dream which was in double. There was first of all, the seven fat cows grazing by the Nile River and as they were feastfully grazing, seven skinny, scrawny cows came up out of the river and ate up the fat cows and they weren't any fatter after they ate them.

And then he saw the seven stalks of wheat. They were full corn and beautiful and then there came up after them seven blasted and withered ears of corn and the seven blasted, withered ones ate up the healthy ones. Now you can almost understand cows eating of each other but it's hard to understand wheat eating up other wheat. But that's the way he dreamed it. Of course, dreams do weird things. And it doesn't have to make sense in a dream, you know.

And so Joseph said, "The Lord has showed to the Pharaoh that which is going to transpire in the land of Egypt". The dreams are one, though they are diverse, yet it's one meaning. And the reason for the repetition is that it is sure. God is confirming it to the Pharaoh. There are going to be seven years of plenty in which the earth is going to just really produce plenty. But it will be followed by seven years of famine and the famine will be so great that it will eat up all of the surplus of the good years.

Now he said, "the Pharaoh should appoint a wise man over the kingdom that during the years in which the surplus exists that he might gather together all of the surplus of the good years into barns and into granaries, in order that during the lean famine years that will be coming, they'll be able to distribute it to the people, and thus survive the great famine that is coming."

The king appointed Joseph himself second in Egypt and over this project because he said "no one is wiser than you, no one else was able to tell me the meaning of the dream". And so Joseph became second in

Egypt. During that seven years, he gathered together, kept the record of the amounts of grain until they gathered such an abundance they couldn't even keep record anymore. They just piled it in and they didn't even try to count the bushels anymore.

Then began the seven bad years and the famine extended beyond the borders of Egypt and up in Canaan where Joseph's family lived. Jacob looked at his sons and he said, "Why are you guys looking at each other? I understand they have wheat down in Egypt. Go down and buy us some." And so ten of Joseph's brothers came down to Egypt to buy wheat. Joseph recognized them when they came in. They didn't recognize him. He gave them a bad time, accused them of being spies. Kept one of them hostage while he sent the other nine back and said, "Don't bother to come again unless you bring your youngest brother with you the next time and prove you're not spies".

After a lot of haggling, Jacob first of all totally unwilling to let Benjamin go, finally relented and Judah became surety for Benjamin. And they came down again to Joseph to buy wheat. And after a series of incidences, Joseph revealed himself to his brothers, who he really was. And he told them to bring their father down to Egypt because there were five more years of famine that were yet to follow. And Joseph said, "I will nourish you and take care of you here".

And so that brings us up to chapter forty-seven.

Then Joseph came and told Pharaoh, and said, My father and my brothers, and their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have, are come out of the land of Canaan; and, behold, they are in the land of Goshen (Gen 47:1).

Now the land of Goshen was actually near the Nile Delta. It was actually in the Nile Delta and it was in the northeast part of Egypt. For the most part, the Egyptians had populated the south and western part of Egypt. But up here in the Nile Delta was a very fertile land. It was great for cattle grazing and the Egyptians didn't care much for cattle grazing or sheep herding. And so it was an area that wasn't very populated as far as the Egyptians went and yet very fertile areas. So Joseph placed his family there in the area of Goshen.

And he took some of his brothers, that is five of his brothers, and he brought them before the Pharaoh. And the Pharaoh said unto his brothers, What is your occupation? And they said unto Pharaoh, Your servants are shepherds, both we, and our fathers (Gen 47:2-3).

Now the shepherds were an abomination to the Egyptians for some reason or other, and yet there is a period in Egyptian history where they had Pharaohs that were called the Hyksos king, Hyksos meaning shepherds. And it is felt that it was at this time that Joseph and the children of Israel were in Egypt that the dynasty of the Hyksos kings existed. And thus there wasn't at this particular time such a feeling against shepherds as there usually did exist in Egypt.

And they moreover said to Pharaoh, For to sojourn in the land are we come (Gen 47:4);

In other words, we aren't coming as immigrant status. We're not trying to move in and take over your land. Our purpose isn't to stay here. We're just coming down to sojourn in the land, pointing out the fact that they were shepherds. Pointing out the fact that they have brought their own herds and their own cattle and not to immigrate into the land but just to sojourn in the land. Now they may and they may not have known how long the sojourn was going to be. It all depends on whether or not they read the scriptures. Now if

they themselves had read the scriptures, they would know that they're going to be in Egypt for four hundred years. That's a pretty good sojourn.

But you remember back in the fifteenth chapter of Genesis where Abraham saw this vision: He had cut up these pieces of the rams and so forth and laid them out before the Lord and he fought the birds off all day that tried to eat the carcasses. And then in the night, a fear of darkness came upon Abraham and he saw the fire as it went between pieces of the sacrifice. And then the Lord explained to Abraham what was going on. How that his descendants were going to go down into Egypt and they would be there for four hundred years. But then God would bring them out with great substance and so forth.

So the four hundred years in Egypt was actually something that God had already revealed to Abraham. It was a part of the record, a part of the scriptures. And had they been up in the scriptures, they would have known that the time of the sojourn in Egypt would be four hundred years. This, of course, is the fulfillment of that prophecy that God did give to Abraham back there in Genesis.

And so we've come to sojourn in the land.

for thy servants have no pasture for their flocks; for the famine is sore in the land of Canaan: now therefore, we pray thee, let thy servants dwell in the land of Goshen (Gen 47:4).

So they are making now the formal request from the Pharaoh that they might dwell in the land of Goshen. Because of the famine in their own land, they ran out of pasturage for their flock.

And Pharaoh spake unto Joseph, saying, Thy father and thy brothers are come unto you: And the land of Egypt is before them; in the best of the land make your father and brothers to dwell; in the land of Goshen let them dwell: and if you know of any of them who are experts in their occupation [actually as herdsmen], then put them over all of my flocks (Gen 47:5-6).

For the Pharaoh also had a great deal of cattle.

And Joseph brought in then Jacob his father, and he set him before the Pharaoh: and Jacob blessed the Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said unto Jacob, How old are you (Gen 47:7-8)?

So he brought in now his ancient father and Jacob immediately sort of takes command. Jacob blesses the Pharaoh. Now the Bible declares that the lesser is blessed by the greater. In referring to how that when Abraham came back from the victory over the five kings and Melchizedek came out from Salem to meet him, how that he blessed Abraham. And in the book of Hebrews, it is pointed out that the lesser is blessed by the greater. And so Jacob in blessing the Pharaoh as he comes in, he blesses the Pharaoh, pronounces a blessing upon him. And thus immediately his position is recognized and the Pharaoh says, "How old are you?"

And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage (Gen 47:9)

Beautiful way to express it.

are a hundred and thirty years: few and evil have been the days of the years of my life, and yet I have not attained to the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage (Gen 47:9).

I'm a hundred and thirty years old. My days have been few and evil, hard days, but even so, I haven't attained the years. Evidently he was weakening and he knew he would never make it as long as his dad

did. His dad lived to be a hundred and seventy-five and his great grandfather a hundred and eighty. So I'm not going to make it as far as they did. Actually we see now a declining of longevity. Each generation is living shorter and shorter after the flood. Those that Shem and those that survived the flood seem to live for a long period. But immediately we see a drop-off in the longevity, probably as the result of this protective canopy of water being removed from around the earth.

As long as there was that protective canopy of water in space, it no doubt protected the earth from much of the cosmic radiation. It is the theory today of many of the scientists that the aging process is actually caused by this cosmic bombardment that our bodies are subjected to daily. All of these cosmic little neutrinos and all that come shooting through the earth and come to us from outer space. They go right through your body. But somehow they upset your cell structure so that in time, they begin to create mutant cells and they begin to create the aging process. If it weren't for this cosmic bombardment, it is possible that the body would continue to rejuvenate itself for much longer periods of time.

But such was the case prior to the flood. After the flood there was a definite diminishing of the lifespan. And so now here at a hundred and thirty Jacob is an old man. Whereas before the flood, he had just been thinking about getting married at that point and starting to raise his family, you know.

And Jacob blessed the Pharaoh (Gen 47:10),

So again he blessed him.

and he went out from before the Pharaoh. And Joseph placed his father and his brothers, and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had commanded (Gen 47:10-11).

So the area of Goshen, where later on under slave labor the Israelites would build the city of Rameses. And so in this area on the Delta of the Nile River, the good land for pasturage especially, there's where they established themselves.

And there was no bread in all the land; for the famine was very sore, so that the land of Egypt and all the land of Canaan fainted by reason of the famine. And Joseph gathered up all of the money that was found in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, for the corn which they bought: and Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's house (Gen 47:13-14).

That is, he's selling the grain and so forth. He soon depleted. the people didn't have any more money.

So when their money failed in the land of Egypt, and Canaan, the Egyptians came to Joseph, and said, Give us bread: why should we die in your presence? We don't have any more money. And Joseph said, All right, give me your cattle; and I will give you for your cattle, if your money fails (Gen 47:15-16).

And so they entered into a bartering process where Joseph would give them wheat in exchange for their cattle.

And they brought their cattle unto Joseph: and Joseph gave them bread in exchange for their horses, and for their flocks, and the cattle and the herds, and for the asses: and he fed them with bread for all their cattle for that year. The following year, they came to him again, and they said, We'll not hide it from my lord, our money is gone; you have all of our herds and cattle; there is nothing left, but our own bodies, and our lands: so why should we die before your eyes, both we and our land? buy us and our land for bread,

we and our land will be your servants: and give us seed, that we may live, and not die, that the land not be desolate. And so Joseph bought all of the land of Egypt for Pharaoh; for the Egyptians sold every man his field, because the famine prevailed over them: so that the land became Pharaoh's. And as for the people, he removed them to cities from one end of the borders of Egypt even to the other. Only the land of the priests he did not buy; for the priests had a portion assigned them of Pharaoh, and did eat their portion which Pharaoh gave them: wherefore they sold not their lands. Then Joseph said unto the people, Behold, I have bought you this day and your land for Pharaoh: here is seed for you, now you will sow the land. And so it came and so it shall come to pass when you have your increase, you'll give a fifth part to Pharaoh, and four parts shall be your own, for seed in the field, and for your food, and for them of your households, and for food for your little ones. And they said, You have saved our lives: let us find grace in the sight of my lord, we will be Pharaoh's servants. So Joseph made it a law over the land of Egypt unto this day, [that would be the time of Moses writing this account] that Pharaoh should have a fifth part; except the land of the priests only, which became not Pharaoh's (Gen 47:17-26).

So having sold or having spent all their money for food, then they traded all their cattle, their herds. When that was gone, then they traded their land. Now Joseph made quite an equitable arrangement with them. It all now belongs to the Pharaoh. Now you stay on the land; you plant it and whatever you receive, one-fifth or twenty percent goes to the Pharaoh, you keep the rest.

If you figured up how much you pay in taxes, hidden and otherwise, you'd find that they have a pretty good deal just having to pay twenty percent and that was all. They had no investment. They didn't have to even purchase the seed. The seed was given to them of the Pharaoh and they got to keep four-fifths of it, whereas one-fifth or twenty percent came to the Pharaoh. And so the taxation then in Egypt became a general twenty percent of across the board tax. That was it, no more. And it should be enough to run any government.

And Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen; and they had possessions there, and they grew, and multiplied exceedingly (Gen 47:27).

Even now while they are in Egypt, God's hand of blessing is upon them as they grow and are multiplying exceedingly, multiplying exceedingly, yes. They multiplied at the rate of about six percent a year for a time and then it slowed down. They remained in Egypt for four hundred years. When they left Egypt there were about two million of them that left, so seventy came down to Egypt. Four hundred years later, two million of them marched out. So when it says multiplied exceedingly, you can see that yes, indeed, that is what happened.

But in dealing with population ratios, if they increased the population at the rate of five percent a year, in two hundred years they would go from a hundred to over two million. Now five percent a year isn't that much. It means only five children per one hundred people. And that is not at all an unlikely kind of a population growth factor. And so they increased at probably at about a three-percent rate during the period of time that they were in Egypt.

So that by the time they left Egypt four hundred years later, the seventy that came down with Jacob multiplied into a great host of two million people led by Moses; six hundred thousand adult males above the age of twenty-one. So that figures then the women and for each man there's probably a woman, and then all of the children that they would have, estimated about a two million population leaving Egypt under Moses. So multiplied indeed.

And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt for seventeen years: so that the whole age of Jacob was a hundred and forty seven years (Gen 47:28).

When he appeared before the Pharaoh, he said, "How old are you, old man?" He said, "I'm a hundred and thirty years old". And so he lived another seventeen years there in Egypt, so his total years being a hundred and forty-seven.

And the time drew near that Israel must die: and he called his son Joseph, and said unto him, If I have now found grace in thy sight, put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh, and deal kindly and truly with me; bury me not, I pray, in Egypt: But I want to be buried with my fathers, and you shall carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their buryingplace. And he said, I will do as you have said. And he said, Swear unto me. And so he swore unto him. And Israel bowed himself on the bed's head (Gen 47:29-31).

Or on the headboard of the bed. Now Jacob about ready to die, he's first of all concerned with his burial. He doesn't want to be buried in Egypt. His grandfather Abraham had bought a parcel of land--or great grandfather. He wants to be buried back there where Abraham had bought the parcel of land in the cave of Machpelah.

Now he asked Joseph to swear unto him, putting his hand under his thigh. This is the same kind of an oath that Abraham demanded of Eliezer or his chief servant when he sent him back to Haran to get a bride for his son Isaac. He said, "Swear to me, put your hand under my thigh and swear to me". Now the same thing is asked of Joseph by Jacob that he would swear to him, Don't bury me in the land of Egypt. Carry me back where my fathers are buried" actually, where Leah was buried and the rest of his grandfather and grandmother and father and mother.

Chapter 48

So it came to pass after these things, that one told Joseph, Behold, your father's sick (Gen 48:1):

He's dying.

and so Joseph grabbed his two sons to go and visit his father for the last time, Manasseh and Ephraim. And one told Jacob, and said, Behold, your son Joseph is coming unto you: and so Israel gathered together his strength, and he sat up on the bed. And Jacob said to Joseph, God Almighty appeared unto me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and blessed me, and he said unto me, Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and I will make of thee a multitude of people; and will give this land to thy seed after thee for an everlasting possession. And now thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt before I came in the land of Egypt, are mine; even as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine. And thy issue, whichever you have after them, will be yours, and will be called after the name of their brothers in their inheritance. And as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan in the way, and when there was yet but a little way to come to Bethlehem: and I buried her there in the way of Ephrath; the same is Bethlehem. And Israel beheld Joseph's sons, and said, Who are these? And Joseph said to 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 (Gen 48:1-9).

So as Joseph comes in to his father, Jacob first of all rehearses to Joseph the fact that God met him in the area near Bethel, Luz, which was later called Bethel, the house of God. And it was there that God promised to give unto Jacob and to his seed that land as an everlasting covenant. Now it is interesting that

God gave to Abraham the promise, to Isaac the promise, and now to Jacob God spoke and gave the promise of this land. After Jacob there is no account of God's appearing to any of the sons of Jacob to confirm the promise that He made.

God made the promise to Abraham, confirmed it to Isaac, confirmed it to Jacob. But now Joseph hears it from his dad, not from God directly. But now his father is relating to him the promise of God. How that God promised to me and to my seed that land, everlasting covenant. And so he is relating it on to Joseph.

Now, he said, the two sons that have been born from you here in Egypt I'm claiming them. They're going to be mine. If you have any more children after this, they can be named after you. But these two I'm claiming for me, they're going to be just like Reuben and Simeon and they will get their inheritance in the land.

Now it was customary that the oldest son receive a double portion of the inheritance. But here Jacob is promising to Joseph the double portion; the double portion will be in Ephraim and Manasseh. So he gets the double portion of the blessing from Jacob in that Ephraim and Manasseh, the two sons born of Joseph will become tribes and will inherit the land as tribes. By which we then see that there are more than twelve tribes of Israel, because Ephraim and Manasseh became tribes and received their inheritance in Israel. So Joseph becoming two, Ephraim and Manasseh, in reality, there are thirteen tribes in Israel.

Now Jacob also said, "Any that are born after this, they're yours. But these two are mine." So it is interesting that in one of the listings of the tribes, there is actually a listing of the tribe of Joseph. So if indeed there were descendants of Joseph and there was a tribe of Joseph, they did not receive any actual inheritance in the land, but the inheritance went to Ephraim and Manasseh. But the land was divided into twelve portions and apportioned out to the twelve tribes, but the thirteenth tribe was the tribe of Levi. They did not receive any portion in the land but actually dwelt in about forty-eight cities that were given to the tribes of Levi, but no portion of the land was apportioned out to them.

But it is interesting that we always read of twelve tribes. You never read of the thirteen tribes of Israel but of the twelve tribes of Israel. And whenever there is a listing of the tribes, there are always a listing of only twelve. At some times, one tribe or another is deleted from the listing of the twelve.

For instance, when we read of the twelve tribes of Israel that are sealed in the book of Revelation, chapter seven, the tribe of Dan is missing from that list. Usually in the listing of the tribes, the tribe of Levi is missing from the list, but Levi is inserted in Revelation chapter seven, and the tribe of Dan is deleted from the listing of the tribe as those who will be sealed during the Great Tribulation, the hundred and forty-four thousand sealed to be spared a portion, at least, of the Great Tribulation that is coming.

Twelve is a symbolic number. It is the number of human government. And that is the reason why you have twelve apostles, twelve tribes, though there may be more than the twelve. In talking about governmental purposes, there are always twelve listed and only twelve for the purpose of human type of government. Twelve is the number of human government. So the twelve tribes of Israel, though in reality there were thirteen actual tribes or possibly if indeed the tribe of Joseph existed separate from Ephraim and Manasseh you had fourteen tribes but never a listing of fourteen, only of twelve.

So here he claims the two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. They're just going to be like Reuben and Simeon and they shall receive their inheritance in the land. And so then Israel, and no doubt his eyes were failing him, and he saw just the shadowy figure of Joseph's two sons who at this time were probably in their

twenties. They weren't just little kids. They were probably in their twenties at this time because Joseph by this time was fifty-six years old. And so his sons are in their early twenties at this point.

And so Jacob sees these two others and he said, Who are these? And Joseph answered, "These are my two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim".

And Joseph thought that they bring them near to him and he kissed them and he hugged them. And Israel said to Joseph, I had given up ever seeing your face: and, lo, God is even showing me your children (Gen 48:10-11).

He had really figured that he would never be able to see the face of Joseph again. But God in His grace, not only did he get to see Joseph again but Joseph's children.

And Joseph brought them out from between his knees, and he bowed himself with the face to the earth. And 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 unto him. And Israel stretched out his 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 (Gen 48:12-14).

So as Joseph brought the two sons up to his father in order that they might receive a blessing from his father, he brought them up so that Jacob's right hand would rest upon Manasseh and his left hand would rest upon Ephraim, because Manasseh was the older and thus the first blessing to go to the older son. But as he brought them up in this order that the old man might just lay his hands on the two boys, the old man crossed his hands. And he put his right hand over here on Ephraim and his left hand over here on Manasseh and began to bless them. And Joseph said, "Wait a minute, dad, wait a minute, you got a mistake here". And he says, "Oh, son, I know what I'm doing". And so Ephraim was then blessed and given a place of prominence over Manasseh though he was not the firstborn.

Now this is not the first time this happened. Even with Jacob himself, the old man that was doing this, he was not the firstborn. His brother Esau was firstborn and yet the blessing had come to him. And so now he is doing the same thing with his grandsons crossing his hands and pronouncing the greater blessing upon Ephraim.

And he blessed Joseph, and said, God, before whom my father Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day (Gen 48:15),

That's an interesting phrase, isn't it? Recognizing that his provision the bottom line had come from God. Sure he'd been out there working. Sure he'd been out there taking care of the cattle and the sheep and so forth. And yet when it comes right down to it, I depend upon God for my sustenance. If God doesn't sustain me I'm not going to be sustained. God has fed me all the days of my life.

And the Angel which redeemed me (Gen 48:16)

Now this is interesting, he blessed Joseph and said, "God before whom my father Abraham and Isaac did walk." That is, God the Father. "The God which fed me all the days of my life to this day." That would be the work of the Holy Spirit in the ministry to the saints. "The Angel which redeemed me from all evil." That would be the work of Jesus Christ, the Redeemer. And so here you actually have the trinity of God being mentioned in the prayer of Abraham. God of my father Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; the God who has fed me; the Angel of the Lord who redeemed me.

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 a multitude in the midst of the earth. And when Joseph saw that his father had laid the right hand on the head of Ephraim, it displeased him: and he held up his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. And Joseph said to his father, Not so, father: for this is the firstborn; put your right hand on 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 set Ephraim before Manasseh. And Israel said to Joseph, Behold, I'm dying: but God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers. Moreover I have given to you one portion above your brothers, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow (Gen 48:16-22).

And so one portion more; two portions going to Joseph and thus the birthright being passed on to Joseph; his receiving of the two portions.

Chapter 49

And Jacob called his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days (Gen 49:1).

This is probably the grandest hour of the old man Jacob. He had had some pretty rough hours. Life had been hard. As he said to the Pharaoh, "My days had been a hundred and thirty years and few and evil are the days of my pilgrim". They had been tough years. But he rose to the grandest hour in the hour of his death. Gathering his sons together just before he dies in order that he might prophesy to them and of them that which should befall them in the years to come.

Gather yourselves together, and hear, ye sons of Jacob; and hearken to Israel your father. Reuben (Gen 49:2-3),

The boys, now standing around the bed, probably in order of their birth. "Reuben,"

thou art my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power (Gen 49:3):

It should have been Reuben, the firstborn. And yet you're as,

Unstable as water, you will not excel (Gen 49:4);

And it is true that none from the tribe of Reuben ever did excel in anything. Just wasn't there. Later on Reuben desired to receive his portion and his inheritance really outside of the land. And he never did excel; the tribe never did excel.

because you went to your father's bed; then you defiled it: you went up to my couch (Gen 49:4).

Actually you remember that earlier in the story it tells how that Reuben went to his father's concubine Bilhah. And so Jacob didn't say much about it then, here at his death he brings it up and points out this characteristic of weakness, which will be a mark and a trait of Reuben, "unstable as water", keeping him from excelling.

Simeon and Levi are brothers; they are instruments of cruelty in their house. O my soul, come not thou into their secret; into their assembly, my honour, be not thou united: for in their anger they killed a man, and in their selfwill they digged down a wall (Gen 49:5-6).

It is also translated in the Revised; "They hamstrung an ox".

Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel (Gen 49:7).

So the tribes of Simeon and Levi were not to dwell together. They were brothers; they seem to be closer than any of the other brothers. These two seem to pair off together, but the common bond between them wasn't a good bond. It was the fact that they were both ill tempered, violent tempers. "Cursed be their anger" and their self-will. But that seemed to bind them together, but when you come into the land, you're going to be scattered. The tribe of Simeon was really scattered through the land. And of course, Levi never did receive any inheritance within the land but dwelt in the forty-eight cities that were appointed unto Levi. And so the prophecy was fulfilled.

Now, and he gets to Judah.

Judah, thou art he whom your brothers shall praise (Gen 49:8):

The word "Judah" does mean praise.

thy hand shall be at the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee (Gen 49:8).

So he's now prophesying really that from the tribe of Judah shall come the kingly reign. "Your father's brothers will bow down before you." Evidently with Judah there was a real change of character.

Now when Joseph's brothers were thinking about killing him and just leaving him in the pit to die, when they saw the caravan coming towards Egypt, it was Judah that suggested that they sell him to the people in the caravan. Probably not knowing Reuben's plan to come back and get him out of the pit and knowing the brothers' full intention to just kill him, figured to save his life by selling him and at least he'll be alive. He can be sold as a slave to Egypt but at least he'll be alive, and the suggestion of Jacob was probably to spare the life of Joseph. But even over this he no doubt had remorse and later on, when Jacob said, "I won't let Benjamin go down", Judah said, "Dad, I'll be the surety for him. I'll hold me responsible". And he was probably the most responsible of the sons.

Now when they came to Egypt and Joseph put his silver cup in Benjamin's sack and when they came and they unloaded the sacks and they saw the cup and they said, "We don't want you all, we'll just take this kid back and let him be the slave. Judah came back and he said, "Look", he said, "I'll give myself for my brother. I'll become your slave, let him go back to his dad." And Judah became the spokesman and he stepped up and showed really a lot of courage, a lot of real metal at this point.

So that this is beginning to develop in Judah and now Jacob carries it on in the prophecy and begins to prophecy the fact that Judah shall actually become a ruling tribe. The father's children will bow down before thee.

Judah is a lion's whelp: and from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up (Gen 49:9)?

And so Judah became really--the symbol of Judah was the lion and there began then to be the prophecy of the Lion of the tribe of Judah that would come. Of course, it was fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be (Gen 49:10).

Now this prophecy was fulfilled. Shiloh indicating or bespeaking of the Messiah that was to come, the Savior. The word Shiloh came from the root of peace, shalom. "And until peace comes", and the peace, the Prince of Peace, of course, Jesus Christ. Now the sceptre did not depart from Judah until the coming of the Lord but thirty years after Jesus was crucified or forty years after, the sceptre departed from Judah. So that means that the Messiah would have to have come sometime before 70 A.D. in order that this prophecy of Jacob be truly fulfilled, otherwise, the whole prophetic thing is off.

So we know that Shiloh did come, the peace of Israel did come, even Jesus Christ. And when He came, He said, "If you only knew the things that belong to your peace in this thy day but they are hid from your eyes". The day of His coming as the Messiah, the official day of His coming as the Messiah. His proclamation as the disciples were crying, "Hosanna, Hosanna", as He came to the city of Jerusalem. Looking over the city that day, weeping over the city, He cried, "If you only knew the things that belong to your peace, shalom, until the Shiloh, shalom, come. And so unto him shall the gathering of the people be." Actually He will be the ruler. Binding his foal unto him, that is Shiloh, Christ, the gathering of the people.

Binding his foal into the vine, and his ass's colt in the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and clothes in the blood of grapes: His eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk. Zebulun [the next] shall dwell at the haven of the sea [or towards the sea]; and shall be a haven of ships; and his borders shall be unto Zidon (Gen 49:11-13).

So Zebulun was given that area in the northern part of Israel, portion of which is now Lebanon. However, he never did take the full portion that was promised.

Issachar is a strong ass couching down between two burdens: And he saw that rest was good, and the land it was pleasant; and he bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute (Gen 49:14-15).

In other words, he's strong as an ox but he's lazy. And thus, a characteristic of the tribe of Issachar was though they were strong, yet they were lazy. And thus became a servant to tribute.

Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel (Gen 49:16).

The word Dan means judge.

Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse's heels, so that his rider shall fall backwards (Gen 49:17).

Now Dan, of course, inherited the northernmost part of the land in the area just at the base of Mount Hermon in the area which is today the Hula Valley, which lies between the mountains of Lebanon and the Golan Heights. This valley of the upper Jordan upwards from the Sea of Galilee in this area of Upper

Jordan was the area where the tribe of Dan settled clear on up. Let's see, the ruins of the city of Dan is just about four or five miles from the base of Mount Hermon. So you're clear up on the upper end of the valley, and Dan was a tough tribe and did protect the nation Israel from the attacks of nations coming down from the north.

Now here in the midst of the whole thing, verse eighteen, not related to any of the prophecies to his sons, Jacob cried.

I have waited for thy salvation, O LORD (Gen 49:18).

The word "salvation, O LORD", or translated "salvation, O LORD", is actually Yashua or the name Jesus. I have waited for "Jesus, Yashua", or the "Lord's salvation" or "Jehovah's salvation". And so it's very interesting this is the first mention of the word salvation in the Bible. And its mention is just in the prophecy of Jacob as he cries out now in the midst of his prophesying over his sons; "I have waited for Yashua." "I've waited for Jesus" or later, "Joshua" but "Yashua" is the Hebrew word here. And it's translated "Thy salvation, O LORD."

The tribe of Gad, [Gad means a troop but] a troop shall overcome him: and he shall overcome at the last (Gen 49:19).

Gad again with the Reubenites took up inheritance outside of the land of Israel and they were overcome early but yet the prophecy is in the end they will overcome.

Out of Asher his bread shall be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties (Gen 49:20).

And so the baker tribe, those that would go into the baking industry yielding royal dainties, great pastries. And some of the tribe of Asher are no doubt over there today because man, some of the greatest bread and pastries you've ever eaten in your life.

Naphtali is a hind let loose: he giveth goodly words. Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall: The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him: But his bow abode in strength, the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel:) Even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb: The blessing of thy father hath prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brothers (Gen 49:21-26).

Joseph separate from his brothers, a beautiful individual; so the great blessing that was pronounced upon him. He's a fruitful bough. He would be a fruitful person. Tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh became great and fruitful tribes. "A bough whose branches run over the wall." So not only being blessed but becoming a blessing to others. And though he was to go through great trials and did endure great trials. "The archers have sorely grieved him, shot at him, hated him".

All of those arrows of hatred and bitterness and jealousy and envy and temptation and false imprisonment and lies shot at him and yet his bough abode in strength. No retaliation. No striking back. Willing to commit judgment to God to whom judgment belongs. Turning the other cheek. His bough abode in strength and the secret of his strength was that his hand, the hand of his arms was strengthened by the mighty hand of Jehovah. God was holding his hand. God was giving him the capacity to restrain. His capacity was not a

natural capacity. It was a supernatural capacity. He was being held by God in restraint.

And God can hold us in restraint. I think that we as Christians too often are willing to excuse the demonstrations of our old nature saying, "That's just me". Yes, that's just you, curse you! God wants to make a new you. God wants to help you. God wants to strengthen you. And we're not to just live in a peaceful co-existence with our old nature and with our old man. We by the Spirit are to mortify the deeds of the flesh. And we just can't pass things off as, "Well, that's just the way I was born".

That's the way you were born in corruption from your parents, but you've been born now by incorruptible seed. You're supposed to be different. And if you're not different, something's wrong with you or wrong with your experience with God. Because anyone who is truly born of God is going to manifest a changed life and a changed nature.

The purpose of being born again is that you might have a new nature--a nature now after the Spirit, no longer after the flesh. "That which was born of the flesh is flesh," (John 3:6). Crucify it. Renounce it. Learn to hate it, in order that we might live and walk now after the new nature, the nature of Christ. Born of His incorruptible seed, I now have a new nature. "For if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; everything is become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17). And if you're still going around manifesting the old nature all the time, and giving way to the old nature and giving place to the old nature, something is definitely wrong with your relationship with God and you need to repent and reckon that old man to be dead.

Don't cuddle it. So many people are proud of their nasty temperaments, proud of their ability to tell people off. And they've given away so many pieces of their mind, there's very little left. Nothing to be proud of. It's something to be ashamed of. "God forgive me". I reckon that old man, that old nature to be dead. I don't want him. I don't want any part of him. I desire that new nature after Christ. That nature of love and tenderness and forgiving and kindness and compassion. I desire that Christ be formed in me and His likeness within me, and thus give no place to the flesh. Make no provision for the flesh to fulfill its desires.

And as Christians, unfortunately, too many are making provision for the flesh to fulfill its desires. And you're not really walking after the newness of life in Christ Jesus, walking after the Spirit; and thus, you are a monstrosity. You're still a spiritual infant. Though maybe you trace your born-again experience back some fifteen, twenty, twenty-five years, you have never developed spiritually. You still don't know how to talk. You still can't walk. You're still there rattling your crib and demanding that people bow and acquiesce to your wishes and your demands. Feed you when you're hungry. Rock you when you're upset and just to take care of you as a little infant. And you've never grown. You've never developed. And that's all right for a stage of your Christian experience when you're first coming into Christ and all. That's fine that you be cuddled and taken care of and be fed and all. But it's time that you grow up. But spiritual immaturity is a great tragedy.

And as the scriptures said, At the time when you should be actually able to eat meat, you still have need of milk because you've not been able to take meat up till now and even now, he said, you're not able to bear it. So I still have to feed you with the milk of the Word. But at the beginning you are to "desire the sincere milk of the word, that you might grow" (1 Peter 2:2). But there comes a time when we grow beyond the bottle itself and we need nourishment other than just the bottle. You need to grow up. You need to renounce the old nature and the old man. We need to begin to seek that nature of Christ to be perfected in us that we might be what God wants us to be.

And so Joseph, the secret of his strength was God was holding him. God will hold you. God will help you. God will give you control. You don't have to be Simeon and Reuben or Simeon and Levi. You can have the control of God. And Joseph blessed, special blessings. "The blessings of your father have prevailed. Blessings of the progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they'll be on the head of Joseph."

Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf: in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he will divide the spoil (Gen 49:27).

Benjamin was tough. It was one of the most toughest tribes in Israel. They were the greatest fighter. Their career was marked by disaster. They were almost eliminated at one time as a tribe in Israel because of wickedness. All of the tribes of Israel gathered against Benjamin and were scarcely able to defeat them. They were so tough. From Benjamin came the first king of Israel, even Saul. From Benjamin came the great apostle Paul. Tough characters indeed, able to endure just far beyond the normal enduring capacity of a person. Tribe of Benjamin.

And these are the twelve tribes of Israel: and this is it that their father spoke unto them, and blessed them; every one according to his blessing he blessed them. And he charged them, and said unto them, I am to be gathered unto my people: bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, in the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite for a possession of a buryingplace. There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah. The purchase of the field and of the cave that is therein was from the children of Heth. And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into his bed, and he yielded up his spirit, and was gathered to his people (Gen 49:28-33).

So this is his dying act: this pronouncement of the future of his sons. And then even as he had told Joseph, "Swear to me you'll bury me not in Egypt but back in my own land", and Joseph sworn. Now he's demanding the same thing from his sons. "Now, look, bury me back there in the cave that Abraham bought, where I buried Leah. I want to be buried by her. Put me back there." It is interesting that the love that he had for Rachel, that he didn't desire to be buried in the tomb of Rachel that still existed near Bethlehem. "But bury me next to Leah actually there in the cave of Machpelah."

Having said this, the old man pulled his legs back up into bed and that was it. He was gone.

Chapter 50

And Joseph fell upon his father's face, and he wept upon him, and kissed him. And Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father: and the physicians embalmed Israel. And forty days were fulfilled for him; for so are the days which they take to embalm them: and the Egyptians mourned for him for seventy days (Gen 50:1-3).

Now embalming processes took forty days and the period of mourning in Egypt for a great person was seventy days. And so it fulfilled the traditional things.

Now it would be interesting if you could find the cave of Machpelah because though you wouldn't find any remains of Abraham and Isaac and their wives, you should find a coffin and the mummified body of Jacob still existing there. And so it would be interesting if you could come across the cave of Machpelah and go

down in and see the mummy Jacob because of the embalming of Egypt. He would be preserved like King Tut and some of the others who were embalmed by the Egyptian arts of embalming. Also Joseph was embalmed. So you ought to be able to find Joseph, too. That is, if you're interested in looking for mummies. One thing you'll never find, that's the body of Jesus.

And when the days of his mourning were past, Joseph spoke to the house of Pharaoh, saying, If now I have found grace in your eyes, speak, I pray you, in the ears of Pharaoh, saying, My father made me swear, saying, Lo, I'm going to die: in my grave which I have digged for me in the land of Canaan, there shall you bury me. Now therefore let me go up, I pray thee, and bury my father, and I will come again. And Pharaoh said, Go up, and bury your father, according as he has made you to swear (Gen 50:4-6).

Now though he was buried in a cave and they didn't need to dig the grave that way, yet in these caves they dug niches in the walls and they would lay the bodies in these niches in the wall.

If you've been to the catacombs in Rome, you've seen it there, the niches in the walls that they have dug out for the bodies. And the same is true in Israel; there are caves right up at the top of the Mount of Olives just below the Intercontinental Hotel. There is an interesting burial cave there and all of these niches in the wall of the cave that they dug out for the various people, who in times past were buried in them.

And so he had dug out his own niche and so that's where he means "in the grave, which I dug". He had dug out his niche in this cave when he dug out Leah's niche. He probably no doubt dug out his own niche to be buried by her in the cave.

And so Joseph is now asking the Pharaoh for permission. And of course, they at this time have become an important part of the whole Egyptian prosperity and the Egyptians probably did not want them to leave at this point. And so to ensure the fact that they aren't just migrating back now to Canaan, he's asking permission to go and to bury his father but with the assurance that we will come back again to the land. "And I will come again", he declares, in verse five. And Pharaoh said, "Go up, and bury your father, according as he made you to swear."

And Joseph went to bury his father: and with him the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his house, and all of the elders of the land of Egypt, And all the house of Joseph, and his brothers, and his father's house: only their little ones, and their flocks, and their herds, they left in the land of Goshen (Gen 50:7-8).

So they didn't take the children but the adults all went. Of course, leaving their children and the herds was one of the greatest guarantees that they're not immigrating back but they're just going for the burial. Now a great multitude went.

There went up with him both chariots and horsemen: and it was a great company of people. And so they came to the threshingfloor of Atad, which is beyond Jordan, and (Gen 50:9-10)

As they came up, they actually came up on the eastern side crossing above the Red Sea coming up on the eastern side of the Dead Sea into the area about where Joshua crossed in the area of Jericho. And from Jericho coming up the pass towards Jerusalem veering to the left, coming up through the area of Bethlehem across through the valley of Eshcol and to Hebron where the cave existed.

So they came up on the east bank of the Jordan because there are more fresh water supplies on the east bank. Coming up the West Bank of the Dead Sea, it would have been a long, hard journey without water because there are very few water tributaries coming into the Dead Sea from the west side. But there are

some good streams and springs on the east side of the Dead Sea. So that's why they made their journey up that way, then crossed the Jordan river on the north side of the Dead Sea and then on up. As I said, that valley towards Jerusalem, cutting across to Bethlehem and down through the valley of Eshcol to Hebron where Jacob was to be buried.

But they stopped for a little celebration on the east side of the Jordan River and,

there they mourned with a very great and sore lamentation: and he made a mourning for his father for seven days. And when the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning in the floor of Atad, they said, This is a grievous mourning to the Egyptians: wherefore the name of it was called Abelmizraim, which is beyond Jordan (Gen 50:10-11).

And so they, of course, didn't know probably that it was actually Jacob that his sons Joseph, they just figured they were all Egyptians.

And his sons did unto him according as he commanded them: for the sons carried him into the land of Canaan, and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah, which Abraham bought with the field for a possession of a buryingplace of Ephron the Hittite, before Mamre. And Joseph returned into Egypt, he, and his brothers, and all that went up with him to bury his father, after he had buried his father (Gen 50:12-14).

Now this was Jacob's desire and it was probably a desire; it did express faith, the faith of Jacob that this is the land God has given us up here. And so by faith Jacob made mention of his bones before he died asking them to bury him back in the land. It was a mark of faith. But really it was putting upon the family certainly an unnecessary burden. To carry that body all the way from Egypt clear on up to Hebron to bury it there, what an unnecessary strain and burden he's putting upon the family. But there was a special purpose for it and so it was an expression of faith. This is the land that God has promised. This is the land where I want to be buried.

But let me tell you something. God hasn't promised me any land and I don't care where they bury me because I think that we make much too much fuss over the old house. Once the spirit has departed, all it is an empty shell. It's the tent in which the person used to dwell. But they now have a "building of God, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Corinthians 5:1). And I think that we make much too much fuss over the old tent.

Sure we sorrow. And there's nothing wrong with sorrow. Surely we grieve and that's only natural. We're going to miss them. We can't help but miss them. There's nothing sinful or wrong with sorrowing or grieving because a loved one has been taken from us. But to make a big fuss over the body, to get all upset because the casket, you know, just isn't what you wanted or the florist just didn't fix the flowers right, and you know to have a big old thing, such a shame.

My wife said to me the other day, "What do you want me to do with you if you should go before I do?" I said, "I really don't care. Cremate me if you want and scatter my ashes in a big surf." You know it really doesn't matter. Once I leave this old tent, it really doesn't make any difference. You say, "Oh, but cremation. Can Christians be cremated?" I look upon cremation as just a speeding up of nature's process. Cremation will do in thirty-seven minutes what nature will do in thirty-seven years. I see no problem with it spiritually. In time if there were going to be time, the body is just going to go back to the dust again, the tent.

But the tent is me. It has never been me. It has only been the place where I have been living. Now we learn to relate people to the body and that is rightfully so. But once the person's spirit leaves the body, we shouldn't relate them to that body anymore. "Behold, I show you a mystery though; We're not going to all sleep, we're all going to be changed, in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye" (1 Corinthians 15:51,52). I'm looking forward to that.

Now when Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, Aha, Joseph will now hate us, and he'll certainly require from us all of the evil which we did him (Gen 50:15).

He's going to get even now. He's going to requite us all of that evil.

And they sent a messenger unto Joseph, saying, Your father did command before he died, saying, So shall you say to Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin; for they did unto thee evil: and now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father. And Joseph wept when they spoke unto him (Gen 50:16-17).

They sent messengers to Joseph saying, Your dad Jacob before he died said, "Hey, treat your brothers all right, will you?" And the brothers came in and said, "You know, hey, we're the servants of your father's God. Please, you know, forgive us the things that we've done." And Joseph wept before them.

And his brothers also went and they fell down before his face; and they said, Behold, we'll become your slaves. And Joseph said unto them, Don't be afraid: for am I in the place of God (Gen 50:18-19)?

Now this is a very illuminating phrase because it shows that Joseph has a right estimate of things. That is, that judgment belongs to God. Am I in the place of God? Am I in the place of bringing retribution? Am I in the place of bringing judgment? Am I in the place of bringing vengeance upon you? God said, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord" (Romans 12:19).

Therefore, it is not up to me to bring judgment or vengeance upon a person who I feel has wronged me. That's God's place. It isn't my place at all. And Joseph recognizing it as God's place then had the right attitude towards his brothers in this whole thing. Am I in the place of God? That shows us actually the secret behind his attitude is his commitment to God, and that area to God. And we also need to commit to God that area of judgment.

There are people that will say horrible things against you if you do anything. If you don't do anything, no one's going to say anything. But if you dare to do anything for the Lord, you're going to get your critics. Now you can waste your time going around trying to answer all your critics or you can just go on doing the work of the Lord and let the Lord take care of the critics that rise. And if you have the right perspective, you'll just leave that in the hands of the Lord. You'll not try to defend yourself or whatever. But, you know I think it's one of Satan's tricks really to get us off of the real work of God and into the area of Apologetics and Defense, get us fighting.

Fighting communism. Fighting liberalism. Fighting, you know, so many different things. And we're no longer really proclaiming the power of God and the love of God and the work of God, but we're fighting now all of these, you know, entities that are out there, fighting the devil. I think that it's a trap that it's easy to fall into.

But as for you, [Joseph said] you thought evil against me; but God intended it for good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, the salvation of many people alive (Gen 50:20).

Now your intentions were evil. You were wrong. Your motives were wrong, but even behind it God was working. The Bible says that God uses "the wrath of man to praise His name" (Psalm 76:10). It is interesting to me how so many times God turns the tables on the devil. He'll prepare a trap for the children of God and God will just turn the tables on him.

Now here the brothers of Joseph, their intentions were evil, no getting around that, but behind it God was working for good. And this is true all the way through life for "no weapon that is formed against you will prosper. This is the heritage of the children of the LORD" (Isaiah 54:17). Though man may intend to evil and to hurt you and all, God is able to turn it around and to bring good from it. We need to have that kind of confidence in God that "all things are working together for good to those who love God and are called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28). And even though a person might maliciously seek to malign you and hurt you, God can turn it for good. You meant it for evil but God has intended it for good, for the salvation of many people.

Now therefore don't be afraid: for I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spoke kindly to them. And Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he, and his father's house: and Joseph lived a hundred and ten years (Gen 50:21-22).

So another fifty-four years after his father's death.

And Joseph saw Ephraim's children to the third generation: and the children also of Machir the son of Manasseh were brought up on Joseph's knees (Gen 50:23).

So he was a great grandpa and brought up his grandkids on his knees, bounced them around and had the joy of seeing not only his grandchildren, but his great grandchildren. And I don't know, grandkids are great and I suppose great grandkids are just that much more. So he had the joy of bouncing his great grandkids on his knees.

And Joseph said unto his brethren (Gen 50:24),

And that it would indicate that some of his brothers were still alive perhaps at the time that he was going to die.

I'm going to die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he swear to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. And Joseph took an oath of his children of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and shall and ye shall carry up my bones from here. So Joseph died, being a hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a casket in Egypt (Gen 50:24-26).

Now Joseph didn't put them to all the trouble of carrying his bones back immediately, the body back immediately, but he at least--when you leave here and you go. And so some three hundred years later when they left, they took this casket of Joseph and the children of Israel carried it out of the land of Egypt and they brought it into the land and buried him in the land of promise. So Joseph again expressing that same faith of Jacob. This isn't my land. I'm a stranger and a pilgrim here. I want to be buried in the land that God has promised unto us.

And so the Jews' love for the land isn't something that has arisen lately. It isn't something that has risen because of the persecution in Germany or the persecution in Russia or elsewhere. That love for the land has been something that has been planted in them from the beginning. Even before they possessed the

land, that love for the land was there in their hearts. And Joseph said, "Hey, keep me h

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