

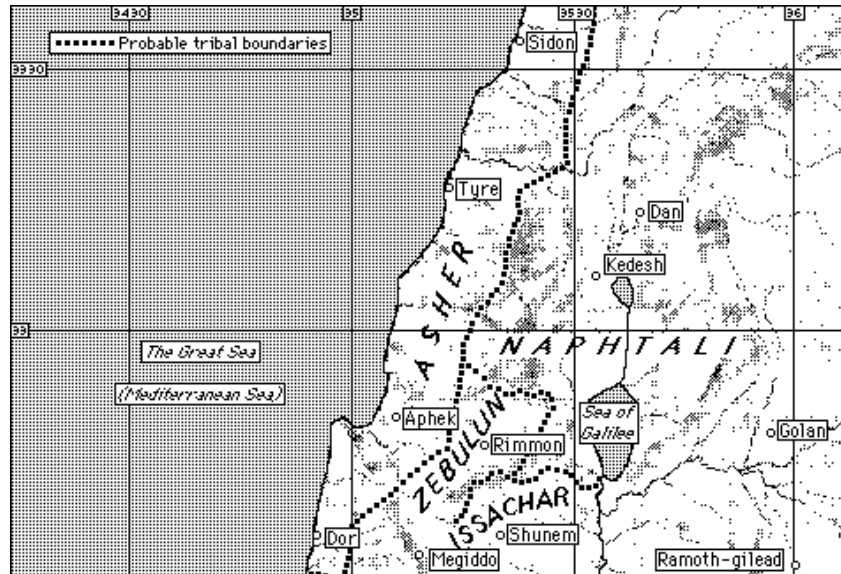
Life of Joseph

Lessons in Humility, Leadership and Forgiveness

Jacob's Last Days

- Jacob realized that his days were drawing to a close, so he asked Joseph to take an oath to bury him with his fathers [Gen 47:28-31].
 - Jacob spent his final 17 years in Egypt [v. 28].
 - The placing of the hand under the thigh signified commitment to an oath [v. 29, Gen 24:1-9].
 - Jacob asked for burial in the cave of Machpelah [v. 30, Gen 23:17-20; 25:9-10; 35:27-29].
 - Joseph said he would do as Jacob had asked, but Jacob insisted he make an oath [vv. 30-31].
 - Jacob (Israel) being carried out of Egypt is a type of the eventual departure of the people of Israel from Egypt (~400 years later).
- Joseph received news that Jacob was ill, so he took his sons to see him [Gen 48:1-2].
 - Joseph was hoping his father would impart a blessing on his sons before he died.
 - In their final days the patriarchs provided for future heirs (see Gen 24 and 27).
 - The bestowal of blessing by a dying patriarch carried authority [Gen 25:5; 27:36-37].
- Jacob started the conversation by recounting God's promises to him [Gen 48:3-4].
- He then declared Joseph's sons to be as his own [Gen 48:5-6].
 - By comparing them to Reuben and Simeon, Jacob was declaring them to be full heirs [v. 5].
 - Any other sons born to Joseph would share in the inheritance of Ephraim & Manasseh [v. 6].
- Jacob then reflected upon Rachel's death, revealing his motivation for increasing the number of her tribes [Gen 48:7].
 - Jacob viewed Rachel's death as premature, so she was not able to have as many children as he hoped she would.
 - Rachel died in Canaan which is where the inheritance of Ephraim and Manasseh would be.
- Jacob then gave a blessing to Ephraim and Manasseh [Gen 48:8-20].
 - Jacob did not recognize Joseph's sons, partly because his eyesight was so poor [vv. 8-10].
 - Jacob was overjoyed at seeing Joseph's "seed" again recognizing them as descendants [v. 11].
 - Joseph responded with respect by humbly bowing before Jacob [v. 12].
 - Joseph presented his sons with Manasseh on Jacob's right, but Jacob crossed his hands to put his right hand on Ephraim [vv. 13-14].
 - ✦ The right hand on the head signifies preference.
 - ✦ This preference would normally be given to the firstborn.
 - ✦ This reminds us of Jacob and Esau where the older son would serve the younger [Gen 25:23] and Jacob took Esau's blessing [Gen 27:22-29].

- Jacob displayed his faith by calling upon God to bless Joseph's sons [vv. 15-16].
 - ✦ God had been with Abraham and Isaac.
 - ✦ God was Jacob's shepherd.
 - ✦ God was Jacob's redeemer – the only use of this term (גא'ל, ga'al) in the book of Genesis.
- Joseph tried to correct Jacob's "mistake" by trying to move his right hand, but Jacob told Joseph that there had been no error [vv. 17-19].
- Jacob understood how God could bless the younger brother according to His plan rather than the normal custom of man.
- Jacob ended the blessing by equating Joseph's blessings with his sons' blessings [v. 20].
- Ephraim had been put ahead of Manasseh and the half-tribe of Ephraim would prove to be a leading tribe in the northern kingdom, much greater than Manasseh.
- Knowing his death was imminent, Jacob passed the torch to Joseph [Gen 48:21-22].
 - The phrases "God will be with you" and "bring you back" are also directed to the people of Israel indicating Joseph will now be their leader [v. 21].
 - The separate portion of land Jacob gives to Joseph is uncertain because this conquest is nowhere else recorded in Scripture [v. 22].
- Jacob gathered his sons together to tell them about what was to come [Gen 49:1-28].
 - The gathering was around Jacob's deathbed and he implored them to listen to his final message to them [vv. 1-2].
 - Jacob then pronounced a prophetic oracle to each one of his sons, giving them a blessing (and chastening) as was appropriate [v. 28].
 - Reuben, his firstborn, should have been the preeminent one, but would not be because he defiled his father's bed [vv. 3-4, Gen 35:21-22].
 - Simeon and Levi would be scattered because of the violent vengeance they had carried out against the Shechemites [vv. 5-7, Gen 34:25-29].
 - The tribe of Simeon was dispersed among the territory of Judah and the Levites were scattered among all the territories as the priestly tribe.
 - Judah the "lion" would have preeminence among the tribes and the scepter (kingship) of Israel would come through this line [vv. 8-10].
 - King David was of the tribe of Judah and Jesus Christ (the one to whom the scepter belongs) is a descendant of David.
 - When Christ returns at the Second Advent He will reign as king of Israel on the Davidic throne and rule over all of the nations.
 - In the Millennial Kingdom fulfillment of Jacob's prophecy, there will be an abundance of crop production during Christ's reign [vv. 11-12].
 - Zebulun would be very involved in seaborne trade, although its territory did not border the Mediterranean [v. 13].



- Issachar would find itself laboring for others as it would be subject to occupying forces [vv. 14-15].
- Dan was supposed to provide justice, but would choose treachery instead [vv. 16-17].
- In the time of the judges, the tribe of Dan would be the first to engage in idolatry.
- Jacob interjects with a reminder to his sons that true deliverance comes from the Lord [v. 18].
- Gad would face frequent attacks, but would prove to be valiant warriors [v. 19].
- Asher would enjoy fertile and productive times in the land [v. 20].
- Naphtali would enjoy prosperity as it roamed free in its territory [v. 21].
- Joseph would experience abundant blessings from God in victory and prosperity [vv. 22-26].
- Jacob extended his blessings to Joseph who was head over all the tribes at the time.
- Note the names of God mentioned...
 - ✦ Mighty One of Jacob
 - ✦ Shepherd
 - ✦ Rock of Israel
 - ✦ God of your father
 - ✦ Almighty (Shaddai)
- Benjamin, despite being a small tribe, would be mighty warriors [v. 27].
- This was Jacob's final blessing to his sons and his prophetic utterances were right on target for each of them [v. 28].
- Jacob told his sons that he was about to die and reiterated his request to be buried with his fathers [Gen 49:29-33].
 - This was the family burial plot and Jacob wanted to be buried there, not in Egypt.
 - Once Jacob was confident that Joseph would make sure he was buried there, he was at peace and breathed his last breath.