



Genesis 46-48

As we pick up the story in Chapter forty-six, we find that Joseph told them to bring Jacob back to Egypt because there were to be five more years of famine. They sent carts from Egypt in order that Jacob and his family might make the journey with all of their children and grandchildren down into Egypt. When the brothers got home and told their father that Joseph was alive and lord over Egypt, second in command to Pharaoh, Jacob could not believe until he saw the carts and things sent by the Pharaoh and then he cried, "Joseph is, indeed, alive and I will go down to see him before I die."

"And Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beer-sheba, and offered sacrifices unto the God of his father Isaac." (Gen.46:1).

They rolled up their tents, along with their goods and put them in the carts that had been sent from Egypt. They left the area of Hebron and began their journey toward Egypt and came to Beersheba. Beersheba is on the edge of the desert, which is the edge of the land of Canaan or "land of promise." Once you leave Beersheba you are in the wilderness area.

Beersheba held a lot of memories for Jacob, for he lived there, as a child, with his grandfather, Abraham, and his father, Isaac. They had built an altar there in Beersheba and Jacob offered sacrifices on that altar.

At this point, Jacob could have been one hundred and thirty years old and traveling on a cart wasn't too comfortable for him; but, his decision to go was one of deep emotion. Hearing that Joseph was alive and so anxious to see his son, he just decided to go and see him and didn't really inquire of the Lord or seek His will. Maybe, he was remembering how God had told Isaac not to go down to Egypt. He probably began to wonder if God was in this whole move. Maybe I should inquire of God whether or not I should go. I don't want to go against God's will even though my heart is drawing me there and so, he offered sacrifices (plural) to the God of his father Isaac.

There were three basic sacrifices of the old testament. The "sin offering" whereby, a person would offer an animal unto God. They placed their hands upon the head of the animal, confessing their sins and transferring them over to the animal; then they killed the animal and offered it unto God for their sin.

This was done that the door would be opened for them to have fellowship with God. Sin breaks fellowship with God. The bible says, "The wages of sin is death" (Rom.6:23). Spiritual death is alienation from God. The sin, in your life, is the first thing that must be dealt with if a man is going to come back to God.

In the Old Testament, they had the sin offering that placed the guilt upon the animal and you could then approach God. In the New Testament, we have Jesus Christ who bore our sins for us and became our sacrifice. He died in our place. "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." (Is.53:6). "For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." (II Cor.5:21).

Jesus is our sin sacrifice. He has borne our sins making fellowship with God a reality for you and for me. "But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." (I John.1:7).

The second sacrifice was the "burnt offering" which was the sacrifice of consecration. I want to consecrate my life to God, I want to submit myself to the will and the plan of God. The burnt offering was an important sacrifice, whereby they were submitting or yielding themselves to the will of God.

The will and desire of Jacob's heart was to go see Joseph, but, what does God want? The burnt

offering was to defer his will to the LORD's will.

The third sacrifice was the "peace offering," where you would burn the fat of the lamb, which was God's portion, and then sit down and eat and fellowship with Him. It was a communion offering where you would sit and commune with God. Jacob offered to God the sacrifices and that night God spoke to him.

"And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob. And he said, Here am I." (Gen.46:2).

God, who at different times and in different ways spoke to our fathers, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son. (Note Heb.1:1). In those days God dealt more directly with people. What would you think if in the middle of the night you would hear your name being called by God? Wouldn't it be awesome?

God now speaks to us through Jesus Christ, through the Word of God. It doesn't preclude God speaking to us through visions and I believe such a thing is a possibility. It doesn't preclude God speaking to us through dreams, in fact we are told in the scriptures that in the last days as God pours out His Spirit upon all flesh, our young men will see visions and the old men will dream dreams. Now to my knowledge I have never had a dream with spiritual significance. I have had some pretty weird dreams but I put them off to onions on the hamburger before I went to bed. Onions can give you dreams in color almost; but, I have never had visions of great spiritual significance. I have had some visions where only "you" visualize something.

When I was living in Corona, I was contracting, building a motel and offices up in Idlewild. I was driving back and forth quite a bit, because, I was teaching Bible studies in Corona. I would come back for the Bible study in the evening and then get up early in the morning and head back up the hill to work on this project. I had a radio broadcast in Corona and so I would listen to it on the way to work and sort of critique it; but, in the process of time, the static on the car radio was so bad that it was hard to hear.

One morning, as I was passing March Field on my way to San Jacinto, I turned off Highway 395 and the radio became unintelligible because of the static. I said, "Lord I have to make this stupid drive because of teaching a Bible study and the only thing I can do to redeem the time is to listen to the radio. What is wrong with the dumb radio?"

I got a vision of an interesting little socket type of a connection that was sort of hanging loose and just barely holding on. I pulled off the side of the road, popped the trunk lid, climbed in underneath to see the rear speaker and there was this little connection that I saw in my mind dangling loose just like I saw it in my mind. Pushing the thing together tight, I got back in the car, and the radio was clear as crystal.

I didn't drive up the mountain that day, I floated up the mountain. God "can" speak to us through visions or dreams, but, that isn't the general method by which God speaks to us today. In the Old Testament days, they didn't have the full revelation of scripture that we are privileged to have.

In a night vision, he heard his name being called, Jacob, Jacob. That was his old name, God had given him a new name. Notice it says, "Israel took his journey and came to Beersheba and God spoke to Israel."

Israel is his new name, it means "governed by God," but God doesn't call him by the new name. Why? Because he is acting after his old nature.

The name Jacob means "heel catcher" or one who overcomes you by grabbing your heel. The schemer. The conniver. The guy who lives by his own wit and so God calls him by the old name, Jacob, and he repeats it. This might have been to put emphasis upon the fact that he was not acting in accordance with the new nature, but he was still acting in accordance with the old nature.

Jacob had been given this new name thirty-five years ago, but, here he is still acting like a "heel catcher." Unfortunately, many times with us, even though; we have been born again and have been walking after the spirit or living a new life in Christ, sometimes we revert back to the old nature. The old nature loves to get even, but I thank God the new nature says, "Forget it, let it go, what difference does it make."

"And He said, I am God, the God of thy father; fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation." (Gen.46:3).

In the Hebrew it is I am, El Elohim. I am God, the God of your father. Do not fear to go down to Egypt. That very command indicates why Jacob stopped in Beersheba. He became fearful. Now God had promised to Abraham He was going to make his descendants so many you couldn't count them. God had promised to make a great nation. That promise was then given to Isaac and now to Jacob and God is repeating it. I will make of you a great nation there.

"I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again; and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes." (Gen.46:4). The promise of God's presence. This was not a one way ticket, it is going to be a round trip.

These are the things that God promised: I will be with you, I will make you a great nation while you are there, I will bring you back again and Joseph will put his hands upon your eyes. This is a reference to death. Joseph will be there when you die, he will be the one to minister to you. It is interesting that when a person is dying, they often want those that they love and are close to them to be by their side in death. Of course with Jacob his desire, no doubt, was to have his son Joseph near him in death and God assures him such will be the case. He will be the one who pulls your eyelids down over your eyes.

"And Jacob rose up from Beersheba; and the sons of Israel carried Jacob their father, and their little ones, and their wives, in the wagons which Pharaoh had sent to carry him. And they took their cattle, and their goods, which they had gotten in the land of Canaan, and came unto Egypt, Jacob, and all his seed with him.

"His sons, and his sons' sons with him, his daughters, and his sons' daughters, and all his seed brought he with him into Egypt." (Gen.46:7).

"And these are the names of the children of Israel, which came into Egypt, Jacob and his sons; Reuben, Jacob's firstborn. And the sons of Reuben; Hanoch, and Phallu, and Hezron, and Carmi. And the sons of Simeon; Jemuel, and Jamin, and Ohad, and Jachin, and Zohar, and Shaul the son of a Canaanitish woman. And the sons of Levi; Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. And the sons of Judah; Er, and Onan, and Shelah, and Pharez and Zarah; but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan. And the sons of Pharez were Hezron and Hamul. And the sons of Issachar; Tola, and Phuvah, and Job, and Shimron. And the sons of Zebulun; Sered, and Elon, and Jahleel. These be the sons of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob in Padan-aram with his daughter Dinah; all the souls of his sons and his daughters were thirty and three." (Gen.46:8-15)."And the sons of Gad; Ziphion, and Haggi, Shuni, and Ezbon, Eri, and Arodi, and Areli. And the sons of Asher; Jimnah, and Ishuah, and Isui, and Beriah, and Serah their sister; and the sons of Beriah; Heber, and Malchiel. These are the sons of Zilpah, whom Laban gave to Leah his daughter, and these she bare unto Jacob, even sixteen souls." (Gen.46:16-18).

"The sons of Rachel Jacob's wife; Joseph, and Benjamin. And unto Joseph in the land of Egypt were born Manasseh and Ephraim, which Asenath the daughter of Poti-pherah priest of On bare unto him. And the sons of Benjamin were Belah, and Becher, and Ashbel, Gera, and Naaman, Ehi, and Rosh, Muppim and Huppim, and Ard. These are the sons of Rachel, which were born to Jacob; all the souls were fourteen." (Gen.46:19-22).

"And the sons of Dan; Hushim. And the sons of Naphtali; Jahzeel, and Guni, and Jezer, and Shillem. These are the sons of Bilhah, which Laban gave unto Rachel his daughter, and she bare these unto Jacob; all the souls were seven." (Gen.46:23-25).

So, it gives the names of Jacob's sons, first of all those that were born by Leah and the names of their children and in some cases grandchildren. Then the sons of Zilpah, who was Leah's handmaid and their children and then Rachel, and her two sons Joseph and Benjamin and their children and interestingly enough Benjamin was a pretty prolific guy, he had ten sons.

For the most part, the girls are not mentioned; except, the one girl, Dinah, who was in an earlier incident and so her name comes up for mention. A grand-daughter is mentioned but there were a lot more girls that weren't mentioned, because they didn't count in those days.

"All the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt, which came out of his loins, besides Jacob's sons' wives, all the souls were threescore and six. And the sons of Joseph, which were born him in Egypt, were two souls; all the souls of the house of Jacob, which came into Egypt, were threescore and ten." (Gen.46:26-27). All of Jacob's descendants who went to Egypt, that came from his body, that is not counting the girls and the wives of his sons were sixty-six persons. Joseph has two sons, who were born in Egypt; so, all the persons of the house of Jacob, who went to Egypt were seventy. Seventy is a number that quite often relates to Israel. You will find that God rounds numbers off into symbolic numbers and seventy is a symbolic number for Israel.

It is interesting that Moses appointed seventy elders to oversee Israel. Later when Jesus sent his disciples out, He sent out seventy disciples to go minister to the house of Israel. In Daniel chapter nine, the angel said, "There are seventy sevens that are determined upon the nation of Israel," so, seventy is a number that relates to Israel and it could be that when Jesus said to Peter, "You should forgive seventy times seven, again, it could be a reference to God's forgiveness and love for Israel if she will just turn and repent, she will find forgiveness even yet till seventy times seven.

God said that He would make of Jacob a great nation there in Egypt. When they left Egypt four hundred years later there were six hundred thousand adult males over the age of twenty.

It is estimated that there was probably between one million, six hundred thousand and two million people who made the Exodus with Moses. God made of him a great nation in the four hundred years that they were in Egypt. You might say that sounds impossible, but, if you take the age of Jacob at the time that he was married and the number of descendants he had by the time he went to Egypt it was a six percent per year increase in the population of the family. If you had a hundred people and you had a 5% per year increase in population, in two hundred and twenty-five years you have a population of more than two million. It was seventy that went down, six hundred thousand adults males over the age of twenty that came out, four hundred years later.

"And he sent Judah before him unto Joseph, to direct his face unto Goshen; and they came into the land of Goshen." (Gen.46:28).

Judah volunteered to take Benjamin's place earlier as a slave to Joseph and is beginning to assume a position of authority within the family. He seems to show more responsibility than the others. Reuben is unstable as water, Simeon's got a hot temper and so he sends Judah down ahead of them to let Joseph know that they are on the way and to direct him to the area of Goshen.

Now Goshen is in the area of the Nile delta and it was about nine hundred square miles in area. It was rich agricultural farm land and that is the area where Jacob and the family were to settle.

"And Joseph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet Israel his father, to Goshen, and presented himself unto him; and he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while." (Gen.46:29). Here is this emotional, dramatic, scene where Joseph whom Jacob loved so dearly, and thought he was dead, were reunited. At one time Jacob thought all things were against him, but, he didn't know the plans that God had for him. As they are there weeping on each other's shoulders, it is almost more than Jacob can believe. The son that I thought was dead, is not only alive but is here and I am seeing him. It is just a beautiful, beautiful picture.

"And Israel said unto Joseph, Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive. And Joseph said unto his brethren, and unto his father's house, I will go up, and shew Pharaoh, and say unto him, My brethren, and my father's house, which were in the land of Canaan, are come unto me." (Gen.46:30-31).

"And the men are shepherds, for their trade hath been to feed cattle; and they have brought their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have. And it shall come to pass, when Pharaoh shall call you, and shall say, What is your occupation? That ye shall say, Thy servants trade hath been about cattle from our youth even until now, both we, and also our fathers; that ye may dwell in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians." (Gen.46:32-34).

It is true that in the Egyptian art uncovered by archaeologists, shepherds are always dirty looking and usually crippled. They are looked upon with scorn by the Egyptians. Egypt at this time had the highest culture of any place in the world. Here is a bunch of hick farmers coming into this cultural area and the culture of Egypt looked down upon shepherds. They were an abomination. They didn't want anything to do with them. No doubt in God's plan to keep his people separate from the Egyptians, he allowed, in the process of time, this feeling in the hearts of the Egyptians towards shepherds; so, that there would be no intermarrying or intermixing. God wanted to keep them a pure and separate people, though they lived in the land of Egypt.

Otherwise, Pharaoh could have said, "Come on, move on in and there would have been a mixing of the two races. The family of Israel would have been swallowed up by the Egyptians and that would have been the end of the story. To keep the Israelites a separate race through which the Messiah would come, he had placed in the Egyptians this abhorrence towards shepherds.

Just tell the Pharaoh that you are shepherds. That will turn him off and you can have the land, he will be glad to let you stay here in Goshen.

"Then Joseph came and told Pharaoh, and said, My father and my brethren, 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).

"And he took some of his brethren, even five men, and presented them unto Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said unto his brethren, What is your occupation? And they said unto Pharaoh, Thy servants are shepherds, both we, and also our fathers. They said moreover unto Pharaoh, For to sojourn in the land are we come; 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.47:2-4).

Notice they didn't say, we have come to dwell or we have come to stay, we have only come to sojourn. The bible tells us concerning the fathers: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; that they dwelled as strangers and pilgrims on this earth. We don't belong to this earth, we are just passing through. We are strangers and pilgrims here. It is sad when we start feeling at home in this corrupted society. The more I read the newspaper and watch Television, the more I realize that I am an alien. I don't belong in this mess. I am a stranger and a pilgrim here, I am just passing on looking for that city whose maker and builder is God. I am going to dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

"And Pharaoh spake unto Joseph, saying, Thy father and thy brethren are come unto thee. The land of Egypt is before thee; in the best of the land make thy father and brethren to dwell; in the land of Goshen let them dwell; and if thou knowest any men of activity among them, then make them rulers over my cattle." (Gen.47:5-6). You can have any place you want and if they want Goshen, fine. If you know of any competent men among them then make them the chief herdsmen over my livestock. Give them a good job in the government.

"And Joseph brought in Jacob his father, and set him before Pharaoh; and Jacob blessed Pharaoh." (Gen.47:7). Here is a guy who is king of the greatest nation of the world and this old man, who is just a shepherd, blesses him. We are told that Melchizedek blessed Abraham and, surely, the lesser is blessed by the greater; but, this old shepherd, that God had chosen to be the father of the race that would bring the Messiah into the world, is greater in the eyes of God than the king of the greatest empire of the world in that day.

"And Pharaoh said unto Jacob, How old art thou? And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years; few and evil have the days of the years of my life

been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage." (Gen.47:8-9). Obviously an old man at that point, Jacob said to Pharaoh, "The days of the years of my pilgrimage..." notice, I am a stranger and pilgrim here, the days of my pilgrimage are few and evil. Jacob's years are few when you compare them with eternity.

I read a scientific explanation of the acceleration of time as you grow older. I don't know that I like it, but, it said when you are a child your body metabolism is going so fast that it seems time goes slow and this is true. When I was a little child it was an eternity from Christmas to Christmas.

That is the way I measured the years. It wasn't New Years to New Year's. It was Christmas to Christmas and birthday to birthday.

As we grow older and our body metabolism slows down, it appears that everything is going faster. Think of what it would be by the time you are Jacob's age. "Few have been my years and evil. I Haven't had a good life. I've had a lot of hardships and problems."

Jacob confessing few and evil have been the years of my life, but I have not attained to the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage. Seeing that life is just a pilgrimage; I don't belong here, I am just passing through. There is an eternity that I am living and looking for. The person who lives for today is a fool. The wise man lives for eternity.

Jesus said, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth or rust doth corrupt and where thieves do not break through nor steal; For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." (Matt.6:19-21).

Jacob's grandfather Abraham lived to be one hundred and seventy-five and his father lived to be one hundred and eighty.

Pharaoh was probably startled at his age, because one hundred thirty then was equivalent to one hundred thirty now. Jacob lived another seventeen years and died when he was one hundred forty-seven years old.

"And Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from before Pharaoh. And Joseph placed his father and his brethren, 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). It must have been quite a meeting. The old patriarch that God has chosen to bring forth the nation that will bring forth the Messiah into the world, is meeting with the chief potentate of the world, Pharaoh of Egypt.

"And Joseph nourished his father, and his brethren, and all his father's household, with bread, according to their families. 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." (Gen.47:12-13).

Now throughout the land of Egypt, we are into the third year of the famine, there was no bread, no grain for bread, the famine was very severe so that all of the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan languished because of the famine.

"And Joseph gathered up all 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.47:14). The people were spending all of their savings to purchase the grain.

"And when money failed in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came unto Joseph, and said, Give us bread; for why should we die in thy presence? for the money faileth. And Joseph said, Give your cattle; and I will give you for your cattle, if money fail." (Gen.47:15-16).

"And they brought their cattle unto Joseph; and Joseph gave them bread in exchange for horses, and for the flocks, and for the cattle of the herds, and for the asses; and he fed them with bread for all their cattle for that year." (Gen.47:17).

"When that year was ended, they came unto him the second year, and said unto him, We will not hide it from my lord, how that our money is spent; my lord also hath our herds of cattle; there is not ought left in the sight of my lord, but our bodies, and our lands." (Gen.47:18).

"Wherefore shall we die before thine eyes, both we and our land? buy us and our land for bread, and we and our land will be servants unto Pharaoh; and give us seed, that we may live, and not die, that the land be not desolate. And Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh; for the Egyptians sold every man his field, because the famine prevailed over them; so the land became Pharaoh's." (Gen.47:19-20).

"And as for the people, he removed them to cities from one end of the borders of Egypt even to the other end thereof. Only the land of the priests bought he not; 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." (Gen.47:21-22).

Now, it would appear that Joseph also wanted to charge these priests and religious leaders, but Pharaoh said that they didn't have to sell their lands. Later on in the history, when Moses stands before the Pharaoh we find these religious leaders opposing Moses.

"Then Joseph said unto the people, Behold, I have bought you this day and your land for Pharaoh; lo, here is seed for you, and ye shall sow the land. And it shall come to pass in the increase, that ye shall give the fifth part unto Pharaoh, and four parts shall be your own, for seed of the field, and for your food, and for them of your households, and for food for your little ones. And they said, Thou hast saved our lives; let us find grace in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants. And Joseph made it a law over the land of Egypt unto this day, that Pharaoh should have the fifth part; except the land of the priests only, which became not Pharaoh's." (Gen.47:23-26).

They levied a tax of 20%, but the government took care of you. It wasn't a bad deal. We have so many taxes: property taxes, sales taxes, and income tax. If you figure out all the money you are paying out in taxes, you will find that your tax rate is much higher than the 20% that they had to pay. They had a pretty good deal. They got four fifths of the food they planted and gave only one fifth to Pharaoh.

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

"And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years; so the whole age of Jacob was an hundred forty and seven years. And the time drew nigh that Israel must die; and he called his son Joseph, and said unto him, If now I have 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 thee, in Egypt; But I will lie with my fathers, and thou shalt carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their burying place. And he said, I will do as thou hast said. And he said, Swear unto me, And he sware unto him. And Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head." (Gen.47:28-31).

It is interesting the putting of the hand under the thigh was the most sacred kind of a vow, this was the kind Abraham sought from Eliezer, his servant, before he went to find a wife for Isaac. "Swear to me that you will not take a wife from this land, but you will go back to the land of my fathers to get a wife for my son." The servant put his hand under Abraham's thigh, and swore to this oath. Now Jacob is asking the same kind of an oath from Joseph. Swear to me that you won't bury me here in Egypt but carry me back to the land and bury me with my fathers.

"And it came to pass after these things, that one told Joseph, Behold, thy father is sick; and he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim." (Gen.48:1). Joseph at this point was fifty-six years old, which means that Manasseh and Ephraim were probably in their twenties.

"And one told Jacob, and said, Behold, thy son Joseph cometh unto thee; and Israel strengthened himself, and sat upon the bed." (Gen.48:2). He is a gutsy old man. He is one hundred and forty-seven years old, and is lying on his death bed. Upon hearing that Joseph was coming, he musters what strength is left, and sits up on the edge of the bed.

"And Jacob said unto Joseph, God Almighty appeared unto me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and blessed me. And 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." (Gen.48:3-4). That is the promise of God made to Jacob in Bethel (Luz).

"And now thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt before I came unto thee into Egypt, are mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine." (Gen.48:5). These two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, are going to be mine and they will be tribes of Israel. When the tribes of Israel are named these two will be named. This is how he gave to Joseph the double portion of the inheritance, taking the two sons and giving each of them an equal share of the inheritance, that meant that a double portion came to Joseph. These two sons will be mine; so, when the tribes of Israel developed, Ephraim and Manasseh became tribes of Israel.

You hear often of the twelve tribes of Israel as we have talked about symbolic numbers. The number twelve is the symbolic number of human governments.

There were actually thirteen tribes of Israel because of Ephraim and Manasseh becoming tribes out of Joseph. The other eleven sons plus Ephraim and Manasseh make thirteen tribes. Whenever the tribes are listed there is always one omitted, not always the same one. Sometimes the tribe of Levi was omitted as they name the tribes; i.e., when they divided the land each of the twelve tribes got land but the Levites. God said He was their inheritance. They became the Order of Priests and were given so many cities. There are examples with some of the other tribes; but, there were thirteen tribes including Ephraim and Manasseh. Ephraim became one of the greatest tribes and the most powerful tribe of the northern kingdom.

Jacob is saying, "Whatever sons you have from now on can be yours, but these two are mine and they will become sons of my heritage and they will be as Reuben and Simeon."

"And thy issue, which thou begetteth after them, shall be thine, and shall be called after the name of their brethren in their inheritance." (Gen.48:6).

"And as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan in the way, when yet there was but a little way to come unto Ephrath; and I buried her there in the way of Ephrath; the same is Bethlehem." (Gen.48:7). Now he was hoping to have other sons by Rachel, he didn't, so he is going to take and adopt these two grandsons who have come, actually, from Rachel through you.

"And Israel beheld Joseph's sons, and said, Who are these? And Joseph said unto his father, They are my sons, whom God hath given me in this place. And he said, Bring them, I pray thee, unto me, and I will bless them." (Gen.48:8-9).

Jacob was probably not able to see and so as he is talking to him about his sons, he looks up and sees these two men standing there and asks who they are.

"Now the eyes of Israel were dim for age, so that he could not see. And he brought them near unto him; and he kissed them, and embraced them. And Israel said unto Joseph, I had not thought to see thy face; and, lo, God hath shewed me also thy seed. And Joseph brought them out from between his knees, and he bowed himself with his face to the earth." (Gen.48:10-12).

Jacob said, "I never hoped to see your face again, but not only have I seen your face, I have even seen your children." So Joseph brought them from beside his knee, they, no doubt, had come up and knelt by their grandfather as he was sitting there on the edge of the bed. Joseph pulled them back and bowed with his face to the earth, to his father, in reverence for this old patriarch.

"And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel's left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near unto him. And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands wittingly; for Manasseh was the firstborn." (Gen.48:13-14). Of course Jacob was the younger son too and maybe has sort of a thing for younger sons.

"And he blessed Joseph, and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day. The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth." (Gen.48:15-16).

Here we have the Trinity. First God of my fathers Abraham and Isaac, is God the Father. God the Holy Spirit the one who has fed me all the days of my life. The word fed here is the Hebrew word "rahah", which in Hebrew is shepherd. This is the first mention of God as a shepherd. It became a common figure for God as he relates to his people, watching over them, caring for them, keeping them, sustaining them. "The Lord is my shepherd I shall not want..." (Ps.23).

Finally the angel who has redeemed me from all evil. This is the first mention of redemption in the Bible. There is in hermeneutics, the law of first mention, where you go back to the first mention of the word in the Bible and usually it is quite significant.

The angel, who was the redemption, the redeeming angel, Jesus. Throughout the Old Testament He was called the Angel of the Lord. The angel who redeemed me. The redemption of course through Jesus Christ. Here Jacob prophesying now and blessing Joseph speaks of the Father God of his father, the work of the Holy Spirit feeding me, shepherding me, tending over me and then the work of Jesus Christ redeeming me. Let my name be named on them and on the name of my father Abraham and Isaac and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth and they did. They became some of the largest tribes in Israel.

"And When Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it displeased him; and he held up his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's head unto Manasseh's head. And Joseph said unto his father, Not so, my father; for this is the firstborn; put thy right hand upon his head. And his father refused, and said, I know it, my son, I know it; he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great; but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations." (Gen.48:17-19). He was prophesying and it came to pass Ephraim became much greater than the tribe of Manasseh.

"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 unto Joseph, Behold, I die; but God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers. Moreover I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Ammorite with my sword and with my bow." (Gen.48:20-22).

There is one scripture in John (4:5) that refers to this, but doesn't give us much information. Speaking of Jesus, "Then cometh He to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph." This tells us only that Jacob had a parcel of ground near Sychar, no doubt took it with a sword and a bow, and gave a double portion to Joseph of that land. We have been laying a solid foundation with the reading of the Book of Genesis, for the rest of the Bible. It is important to lay a good foundation when you are building. As you read the rest of the Bible you will always be referring to the foundation that is laid in Genesis. The word Genesis means beginning. So this is the beginning of the universe, the beginning of sin, the beginning of redemption, the beginning of the race through which the Redeemer is to come. The foundation is all here in Genesis.