

GENESIS

47:13-48:22

Genesis 47:13-48:22

Taught by Simeon Forder on Sunday morning, 4th August 2024 @ Deal Christian Fellowship

Reading: Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Introduction

We are in the closing chapters of Genesis that predominately focus on Joseph, but also, as we'll see this morning, record the final season of Jacob's life. Last week we studied chapter 46 and the start of chapter 47, where we saw Jacob — also known as Israel — leave the land of Canaan for Egypt under God's guidance, and with God's *promise* that He would be with him. We also *read* of all those who went with him (66 of which are recorded) — who were foundations of the *nation* of Israel, with all Jews descending from them and Joseph who was already in Egypt.

Once Jacob had arrived in Egypt, he and Joseph had wept on each others shoulders as they were reunited (after more than 20 years apart), and then Joseph guided his brothers on what to say in front of Pharaoh, before taking 5 of them (plus his father) *before* Pharaoh. Crucially, and as instructed, they emphasised how they were shepherds (and always had been), which was sufficient for the Egyptians to keep their distance from them — and thus keep the nation of Israel a distinct group of people, even though living in Egypt.

Overview

Overview of chapter forty seven

- **v1-12** — Joseph, his brothers, and Jacob before Pharaoh
- **v13-26** — The severity of the famine in Egypt
- **v27-31** — Israel grows and multiplies exceedingly

As we pick up chapter 47 in verse 13 this morning, we'll see how severe the famine became in the following years in Egypt, and how that resulted in the wealth of Egypt being accumulated by Pharaoh through Joseph. The final 4 verses of the chapter then note how Israel, now as a nation, prospered in the land — but also, Jacob's request to Joseph to make sure he was buried back in Canaan (to which Joseph agrees).

Overview of chapter forty eight

- **v1-7** — Joseph visits Jacob, Jacob shares his intent to bless his sons
- **v8-22** — Jacob blesses Joseph's sons, and reassures Joseph

As we get to chapter 48, we find that Jacob has become sick, and so Joseph goes to visit him, along with his sons. And as soon as they are there, Jacob starts telling Joseph about how God had blessed him, and then Jacob explains how he will bless his sons. From verses 8-22, we see that Jacob indeed does bless them, though not in the order Joseph thought he should, and finally Jacob reassures Joseph that God would be with him too. So that's where we're headed, but let's dig into the detail.

Chapter forty seven

Prior to this chapter, then, we *read* how Joseph warned his family that they were only 2 years into a 7 year famine, and told them to move to the land of Egypt. And as we read verse 13, it becomes very clear that had they stayed in Canaan, they would have died, for verse 13 says:

Genesis 47:13

Now there was no bread in all the land; for the famine was very severe, so that the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan languished because of the famine.

This was not a good situation. But God would use it *for good* as He built up the nation of Egypt, leveraging it as an incubator for the nation of Israel, who would one day leave with the wealth of Egypt in their pockets, so to speak. And He did that through Joseph being diligent in his service to Pharaoh, as he had been in his service to Potiphar before. We read:

Genesis 47:14

And Joseph gathered up all the money that was found in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, for the grain which they bought; and Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's house.

So, Joseph collected the money that everyone from Egypt and the nations round about had paid for the grain, and brought it to Pharaoh. And we should take note of Joseph's attitude — that wherever he worked, he was diligent and faithful to the one he was working for. So, are we? Do we work well wherever we are, and whomever we are working for? Remember Joseph didn't choose either of these employers — especially Potiphar — but he was of good character regardless.

Now, some (I think bizarrely) have criticised Joseph for doing this, as if he took advantage of people, but in reality he had provided food without extorting those in need of it, and he did so without lining his own pockets. Indeed, the one who benefitted financially was *Pharaoh*. However, with the famine continuing, and money running out in the pockets of those who lived in Egypt, those people became desperate. Verse 15 notes:

Genesis 47:15

So when the money failed in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came to Joseph and said, "Give us bread, for why should we die in your presence? For the money has failed."

Now, Joseph's family were well taken care of, with no need to plead. But the Egyptians, now both hungry and moneyless, present their plight to Joseph, who offers a simple solution:

Genesis 47:16

Then Joseph said, "Give your livestock, and I will give you bread for your livestock, if the money is gone."

Joseph is very astute here, for certainly this would have weeded out any who weren't telling the truth! But we see that indeed they *were* hungry *and* moneyless, so they willingly conceded:

Genesis 47:17

So they brought their livestock to Joseph, and Joseph gave them bread in exchange for the horses, the flocks, the cattle of the herds, and for the donkeys. Thus he fed them with bread in exchange for all their livestock that year.

Once again, Joseph is the picture of the one giving the bread of life. And this arrangement continued for the whole year.

Genesis 47:18-19

When that year had ended, they came to him the next year and said to him, "We will not hide from my lord that our money is gone; my lord also has our herds of livestock. There is nothing left in the sight of my lord but our bodies and our lands. Why should we die before your eyes, both we and our land? Buy us and our land for bread, and we and our land will be servants of Pharaoh; give us seed, that we may live and not die, that the land may not be desolate."

A year later, and still acutely aware of their need for food, they Egyptian people now start offering up everything — having already offered their money and their possessions, they now offer up their land, and even their own selves.

Genesis 47:20

Then Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh; for every man of the Egyptians sold his field, because the famine was severe upon them. So the land became Pharaoh's.

Pharaoh must have been very happy with how this was playing out! But was there anything wrong in what Joseph did on his behalf? I don't think so. Pharaoh had been wise to put Joseph in charge of storing up the grain, and Joseph had been diligent to do so during the years of plenty. And now that the years of famine had arrived, I don't believe that it was unfair that Joseph asked something in return for that grain.

Genesis 47:21

And as for the people, he moved them into the cities, from one end of the borders of Egypt to the other end.

And so Joseph moved the people near to the grain stores that he had put in each city back in chapter 41, making it far easier to distribute the grain to the people. But there was an exception, for we read in the next verse:

Genesis 47:22

Only the land of the priests he did not buy; for the priests had rations allotted to them by Pharaoh, and they ate their rations which Pharaoh gave them; therefore they did not sell their lands.

Now, it's not that Joseph had any special place in his heart for the Egyptian priests who worshipped false gods, but rather Pharaoh did. And as such they were provided for by Pharaoh, in similar way to how the Levites were later, under God's instruction, provided for by the nation of Israel when they were set aside for the worship of the one true God, also similar to how God's Word says that those in the church who devote themselves to the teaching of God's Word should be provided for by those who receive the teaching of God's Word.

Genesis 47:23

Then Joseph said to the people, "Indeed I have bought you and your land this day for Pharaoh. Look, here is seed for you, and you shall sow the land.

And so then, along with their land, the people had offered their own selves in exchange for grain (as we *read* back in verse 19) — and whether permanently or temporarily is up for debate — so Joseph now calls upon them to work just as they had committed to doing, giving them grain to sow in the land, and further saying:

Genesis 47:24

And it shall come to pass in the harvest that you shall give one-fifth to Pharaoh. Four-fifths shall be your own, as seed for the field and for your food, for those of your households and as food for your little ones."

And so there would be a 20% tax on what they grew — not a bad deal for staying alive! And Joseph once again demonstrated his ability to act wisely on Pharaoh's behalf, not giving away that which was Pharaoh's for free. And lest we have any worry that the people were being taken advantage of, Moses records in the next verse:

Genesis 47:25-26

So they said, "You have saved our lives; let us find favour in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants." And Joseph made it a law over the land of Egypt to this day, that Pharaoh should have one-fifth, except for the land of the priests only, which did not become Pharaoh's.

What thankfulness we see there for their lives being saved! That is, they not only gave their money, their possessions, and their land — but they willingly gave *themselves*... offering themselves as Pharaoh's servants. And that should speak volumes to us. For what are we prepared to part with in *response* to our salvation?

Are we prepared to part with our money? The Egyptians gladly gave 20% of the fruit of the land to Joseph. Zacchaeus voluntarily gave up half that he had to the poor after he had met with Jesus. And the widow with two mites gave 100% to the temple, for the work of the Lord. Do we even give 10% of what we earn? Let us not forget that Christ died in agony for us. And let us not forget that all we have comes from Him in the first place.

And that being the case, are we willing to part with our possessions? Are we willing to see this *church*, or others in *need*, and say "why don't *you* have this from me?". There are lots of examples in this fellowship, with many using their possessions to serve the Lord and serve others — from BBQs and cooking apparatus, to musical instruments, computers, and more. Even folks buying such things specifically so they can serve with them here.

Likewise, are we willing to part with our land for the Lord? That is, are we willing to offer up our homes in hospitality of others? Are we willing to invite people round for coffee, or dinner, or most fundamentally; for fellowship?

And finally, are we willing to offer up ourselves? That is, are we willing to offer up our time to God — to spend time with His people, to witness to unbelievers, to do our individual share as part of the body of Christ? And are we willing to surrender our opinions and decisions to God's will and His purposes? As Charles Spurgeon put it, *How can you serve the Lord with your lips if you do not serve Him with your lives?*

Now, let me be clear, for the most part the Egyptians were required to give up these things that they might be saved. That is, without giving up their money, they never would have received grain in the first place. For us as Christians, not *one* thing was required of us for our salvation. So then, how much more willing should we be to give *all* we have to the cause of Christ, in response to what He has *already* done for us?! Are we willing to surrender all, or only some?

Now, continuing on in Genesis we read:

Genesis 47:27

So Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen; and they had possessions there and grew and multiplied exceedingly.

Contrast that compared to the Egyptians who had given up everything! And also note that this is the start of the fulfilment of what God had promised Jacob before he moved to Egypt, saying "*do not fear to go down to Egypt, for I will make of you a great nation there.*" And so now, Moses is talking of Israel the nation, not Israel the man — one of 2540 times in the Bible that this word is used of Jacob and his descendants.

Genesis 47:28

And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years. So the length of Jacob's life was one hundred and forty-seven years.

But it wasn't over *just* yet. For we read on:

Genesis 47:29-31

When the time drew near that Israel must die, he called his son Joseph and said to him, "Now if I have found favour in your sight, please put your hand under my thigh, and deal kindly and truly with me. Please do not bury me in Egypt, but let me lie with my fathers; you shall carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burial place." And he said, "I will do as you have said." Then he said, "Swear to me." And he swore to him. So Israel bowed himself on the head of the bed.

And so, like Abraham had asked his servant, Eleazar, to put his hand under his thigh when instructing him to find a wife for Isaac — now, Jacob asks Joseph to put his hand under *his* thigh because this was an important instruction he believed he was giving him. And while this seems like a strange request to us, the idea was that the one giving the instruction might have the full attention of the one receiving it. So I guess the equivalent today would be asking someone to put their phone down while you talk to them, right?!

And what Jacob asks Joseph is relatively simple — to bury him back home in Canaan where Abraham and Isaac were also buried, rather than let him be buried in Egypt — perhaps to underline that the land of *Canaan* was where the nation of Israel should eventually settle, rather than be absorbed into Egypt, for God had promised *that* land to them. And Joseph agreed to do this, and as we'll see they parted company.

Chapter forty eight

Then, as we start chapter 48, Moses records:

Genesis 48:1

Now it came to pass after these things that Joseph was told, "Indeed your father is sick"; and he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim.

And that, friends, is the right response. You see, Joseph didn't say "well, it's upsetting seeing people when they're sick" and then fail to visit his father. No, he realised it wasn't about him, but about his father at this moment. And we need to do the same. Yes, I understand that hospitals and hospices are not the most cheerful of places, and can even bring back tough memories to deal with. And I appreciate that not all of us have the fortitude of a medic, but to fail to visit friends and family in their moment of need — whether at home or in hospital — is to show a lack of love. And I can tell you from personal experience that I have no regrets about anyone I've ever visited when they were sick — but I do have regrets about those I didn't visit enough.

Here, Joseph not only goes to visit his father, but sets an example in taking his boys along with him too. And I can tell you, that does leave an impression — for there is much I learnt from my parents example when they took me with them in such situations.

Genesis 48:2

And Jacob was told, "Look, your son Joseph is coming to you"; and Israel strengthened himself and sat up on the bed.

Perhaps trying to make himself a bit more presentable, like we all do when someone is coming to visit, but perhaps strengthened by the knowledge that his son was indeed coming to visit.

Genesis 48:3-4

Then Jacob said to Joseph: "God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me, and said to me, 'Behold, I will make you fruitful and multiply you, and I will make of you a multitude of people, and give this land to your descendants after you as an everlasting possession.'

What a man of faith Jacob has become. There is no doubt in his voice here, as he relays God's promises to his son, in the presence of his grandsons. He talks of *El Shaddai*, which as indeed translated here means *God all-mighty*. And there is no pride in his own actions shown here, only acknowledgement that God had blessed him. And that's different from how he started out back when he stole his brother's birthright. Now, he was a changed man. He was a man full of faith, trusting in God, changed through the years as God worked in his life. It hadn't been instantaneous, but God had been patient with Jacob, as he'll be patient with you. Just don't make the mistake of thinking He doesn't want you to change. He loves you too much to leave you as you are.

And Jacob, having spoken of God's blessing, and God's promise to him and his descendants, now turns to Joseph and his descendants, saying:

Genesis 48:5-6

And now your two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, are mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine. Your offspring whom you beget after them shall be yours; they will be called by the name of their brothers in their inheritance.

So Jacob is saying that he will treat Ephraim and Manasseh as if they were his own sons, and they will inherit the blessing and promise of God just the same as Joseph's brothers. This is lasting gesture to his favourite son, Joseph. And throughout the Bible we actually find that that the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh are listed as two of the twelve tribes of Israel on many occasions, instead of Joseph. But, you might wonder, doesn't 11 + 2 equals 13? Well, yes it does. But we find that the tribe of Levi is often not counted among the other tribes because of their priestly calling and inheritance, and significantly that they didn't inherit any land, but rather were dispersed among the other tribes.

In fact, of the 24 times that the tribes are listed – most have Levi missing for this purpose, though sometimes Levi *is* included and another excluded. Finnis Dake helpfully notes that *the twenty-four lists vary to suit the purpose of each writer, whether making a record according to birth, blessing, encampment, numeration, or division*. We also see variation in the order of the tribes, with Reuben often listed first because of the order of birth, but Judah heads others because they were the kingly tribe (and of course, the one through whom Christ would come).

Now, this was a kind gesture to Joseph in one regard, but consider for a moment the message it sent to Ephraim and Manasseh as they overheard this. For they had spent their lives until now growing up as Joseph's sons, acutely aware that their dad wasn't like other dads — he was in fact the second most powerful man in the world at that time. And there would have been no shortage of any thing. They would have been set up for a large inheritance from Joseph when the time came.

Yet, here their grandfather and speaks of a better inheritance than Pharaoh or Egypt or Joseph could offer — for this inheritance was from God, it was an everlasting covenant. And first, may we realise the inheritance we have in Christ far surpasses anything this world has to offer. But second, grandparents, remember that the promises of God are far more precious for your grandchildren than anything this world has to offer.

Now, as we continue Jacob — a sick and dying man — starts to speak of Rachel, his favourite wife, but it seems his thoughts are cut short as he notices Ephraim and Manasseh by Joseph's side. We read from verse 7:

Genesis 48:7-8

But as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died beside me in the land of Canaan on the way, when there was but a little distance to go to Ephrath; and I buried her there on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem)." Then Israel saw Joseph's sons, and said, "Who are these?"

He had met them before, but we'll find out in 2 verses that Jacob's eyesight was failing him, as Isaac's had failed him before.

Genesis 48:9-11

Joseph said to his father, "They are my sons, whom God has given me in this place." And he said, "Please bring them to me, and I will bless them." Now the eyes of Israel were dim with age, so that he could not see. Then Joseph brought them near him, and he kissed them and embraced them. And Israel said to Joseph, "I had not thought to see your face; but in fact, God has also shown me your offspring!"

Once again, Jacob gives the credit to God for how this had all worked out. And it was beyond anything he could have imagined. That's the kind of God we have!

Genesis 48:12-13

So Joseph brought them from beside his knees, and he bowed down with his face to the earth. And Joseph took them both, Ephraim with his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh with his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near him.

Joseph, then, leads the boys to Jacob in a particular way, leading Jacob's right hand to Manasseh that he would give him a greater blessing as the firstborn. But Jacob had other plans:

Genesis 48:14

Then Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand on Manasseh's head, guiding his hands knowingly, for Manasseh was the firstborn.

So Jacob did this intentionally, for he would speak prophetically of how these tribes would fare, with Ephraim being the more prominent tribe. And as an aside, it would also be the tribe that Joshua would come from.

Genesis 48:15-16

And he blessed Joseph, and said: "God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, The God who has fed me all my life long to this day, The Angel who has redeemed me from all evil, Bless the lads; Let my name be named upon them, And the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; And let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth."

And so Jacob gives this incredible blessing, in which he speaks of *Elohiym* (meaning the *supreme God*) as the One who Abraham and Isaac worshipped, and the One whom had provided for him his whole life. What glory he is giving to God here as his provider, as the sovereign ruler of his life.

And furthermore he speaks of *The Angel who has redeemed me from all evil*. Who is Jacob talking about? Well, note that these words are capitalised, for this refers to none other than Jesus, who we also see referred to in this way at various points in the Old Testament, as He presented Himself before men and women such as Abraham, Hagar, and Jacob. And he equates them as one and the same, calling on the Lord to bless the lads, that the promise made to Abraham — that his descendants would be known as Israel (meaning governed by God) and as difficult to count as the stars of heaven and the sand of the seashore — would apply to Joseph, Ephraim, and Manasseh's descendants too.

So far, so good. But we then read:

Genesis 48:17

Now when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand on the head of Ephraim, it displeased him; so he took hold of his father's hand to remove it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head.

In other words, he thought Jacob had gotten it wrong, perhaps because of his eyesight.

Genesis 48:18-20

And Joseph said to his father, "Not so, my father, for this one is the firstborn; put your right hand on his head." But his father refused and said, "I know, my son, I know. He also shall become a people, and he also shall be great; but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations." So he blessed them that day, saying, "By you Israel will bless, saying, 'May God make you as Ephraim and as Manasseh!' " And thus he set Ephraim before Manasseh.

Following Jacob's explanation, then, Joseph gave way to him. And true to Jacob's blessing, the tribe of Ephraim would indeed take precedence over the tribe of Manasseh, in particular later taking the place of honour among all the northern tribes collectively known as Israel, as the kingdom later split vs the southern tribes under Judah. But also Jacob asks God to bless both of them to the extent that people would say "*May God bless you like He's blessed Ephraim and Manasseh!*".

Genesis 48:21

Then Israel said to Joseph, "Behold, I am dying, but God will be with you and bring you back to the land of your fathers.

And so, very much aware that he is entering the final days (if not hours) of his life, Jacob reiterates God's promises to Joseph, as any loving father should do to their children — again speaking here of *Elohiym*, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and of course, Jacob.

And, no surprise to *us*, this was the God whom Joseph had spoken of when fleeing from Potiphar's wife saying "*How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?*", and to the butler and baker saying "*Do not interpretations belong to God?*", and to Pharaoh saying "*It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace.*". And it was one and the same true God, and the same term for God, that he used at when naming both his children, and when talking to his brothers about the God of their father, and when saying to Benjamin "*God be gracious to you, my son.*". And it was the same God he spoke of when saying to his brothers "*do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life.*".

Why do I mention these things? Well, where had Joseph learned about *Elohiym*? Where had he learned about the One true God? It wasn't in Egypt, for they worshipped many *false* gods. So then, it was in his formative years in his father's house, where, for those first 17 years of his life, he had a close relationship with his father as Jacob's favourite son, and learned from him who God was. And this cannot have been merely a one-off chat, or simply small, passing comments over the years, but it must have been intentional, faithful teaching of who God was.

For Joseph was sufficiently convinced of God's holiness that he would not sin against Him in that moment of opportunity with Potiphar's wife. He was sufficiently convinced that God was his provider, that he credited God with making him fruitful in the land of his affliction. And he was sufficiently convinced of God's sovereignty and goodness, that he didn't blame his brothers for selling him, but rather credited God with sending him to Egypt.

So, now, as Jacob sits on his death bed, he speaks to Joseph once more about God and his promises. But the point I really, really want to underline this morning, is that it didn't start there on his death bed. And it can't start there for us. We need to start talking to our children early and often. So if you are a parent, or desire to be a parent in the future, or are part of a church family where there are parents you can encourage in this, then listen up. And yes, that means each one of you! We all need to take note of this.

We need to talk to our children about the Lord early in their life, and regularly so. How early is too early? Well, I am certain that there is no such thing as too early. The first conversation with both my children about the Lord was in theatre as I held them for the first time. And even before Judah was getting words out, I would pray with him each night, and we continue to do that along with reading him a Bible story as part of his bedtime routine. We don't skip it.

But what if your children are older? How late is too late to start talking with them about the things of the Lord? Well, it's never so late that you shouldn't start. If your children are still at home, establish a pattern of talking with them about what they learned at Sunday School, or what the sermon was about. Talk with them about what the Bible says about the events going on in the world around us. Talk with them about how the Bible relates to their life at school, or how to live outside of school, how to choose friends, how to choose a spouse, a job or university. We must use every opportunity we can, just as Moses later instructed the children of Israel, saying:

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. “And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Jacob had evidently done this so effectively with Joseph that even when he was sold into slavery at 17 years old, into a land that knew nothing of God, Joseph knew who God was, what God required of Him, and how good God was. Our responsibility is the same. By the time our children leave our homes — for whatever reason — they should be spiritually equipped. We should have done all we can in praying with them, and for them. In reading God’s Word to them, with them, and living it out before them (that they may see no hypocrisy in us either).

Parents, let me be clear — it is your responsibility to train your child in the ways of the Lord. You can’t outsource it to Sunday School, Livewires or Youth Club. And while myself and the elders will do all we can as part of our responsibility to love and teach them, and I pray as a congregation we each do the same, that will never remove the responsibility parents have to raise their children right.

William Still, a faithful pastor of a church in Aberdeen for over 50 years, wrote this stark warning about the responsibility of Christian parents toward their children:

Every autumn I have a spate of letters from fond parents, teachers, guardians and monitors, appealing to me to follow up such-and-such a youngster who is away from home at college for the first time, and who has to be hunted, followed, shadowed, intercepted and driven to Christian meetings. I have scarcely known this technique to work. I understand the panic of parents and guardians, but it is too late then to try high-pressure tactics. Prayer, example and precept, in that order, are the means of bringing up children and young folk in the faith.

William Still

He’s not wrong. Precept being that explanation of God’s Word to them. And that must follow prayer and our own personal example of being obedient to God.

You may think I’m spending an inordinate amount of time making this point from a single verse, but as parents what else is could be more important than the salvation of your children? If you have no desire for your children to come to know Jesus as their Lord and Saviour then there is something utterly broken in your own relationship with God.

Now, what do you do if your children are older, and they are unbelievers? Perhaps you yourself didn’t come to know the Lord until after they grown up. Well, you still have work to do. They might not be receptive to you praying *with* them, but you can pray *for* them. They might not be receptive to you *talking* about the Word of God, but you can *live* it. And slowly but surely, as you do both those things faithfully, and pray not only for yourself but other Christians to have opportunity to talk to them about the Lord, you may well see a softening in their hearts. You may well find you can reason together with them about the truth. That should *still* be your aim.

Now, let us return to this moment in Egypt, where Jacob has just told Joseph that God will be with him and will bring him back up to the land of Abraham and Isaac — that is, the land of Canaan. This was a promise that God had made to Jacob and his descendants, and Jacob was fully confident that God would keep His promise, and we know from history that He did.

But Jacob also adds how he himself would bless Joseph, saying:

Genesis 48:22

Moreover I have given to you one portion above your brothers, which I took from the hand of the Amorite with my sword and my bow."

That is, Joseph, through his two sons, would have a greater inheritance than the other brothers would have. And specifically they would inherit a piece of land not far from where Joseph would later be buried.

Application questions

There's several things to ponder as we go our separate ways this afternoon, and here are some questions that, if we answer them honestly, may help us apply what we've learned:

- Are we diligent and faithful in our work?
- What are we willing to give to God or our money, possession, lands and time?
- Are we prepared to visit those who are sick, and in need?
- Parents, what are you actively and regularly doing to lead your children to Christ?

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