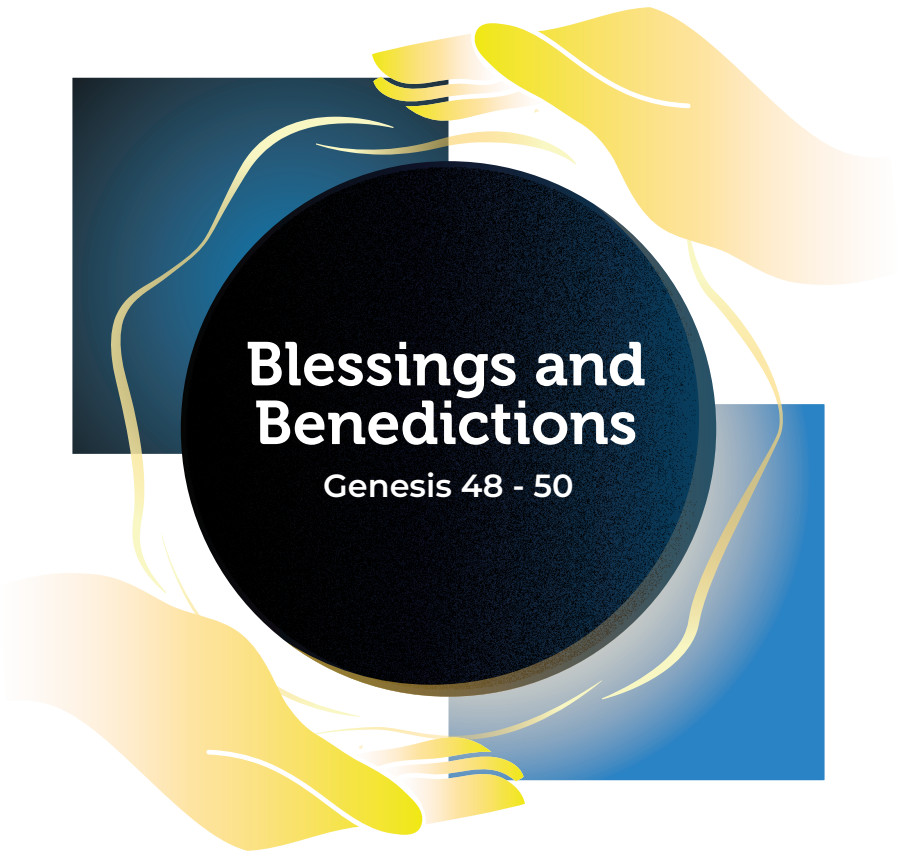




Blessings and Benedictions

Genesis 48 - 50

Blessings and Benedictions

Begin with prayer

Read: Genesis 48 - 50

Listen: THRU the BIBLE - [Genesis 48](#), [Genesis 49](#), [Genesis 50](#)

Dear Heavenly Father,

We don't deserve Your blessing, but You give it in grace. Write Your purposes into our hearts so we live and die in faith. Remind us that You overrule evil for good. Let Jesus, our Shiloh and rest, be the foundation of all we build and leave behind. Transform us so our legacy points only to You.

In Jesus' name, Amen.



Dying in Faith: Legacy, Providence, and the Finished Life

Genesis 48 - 50 brings the book of Genesis to its close. Jacob, nearing death and nearly blind, blesses Joseph's two sons, intentionally giving the greater blessing to the younger, Ephraim, over the older, Manasseh. He then gathers all twelve sons for his farewell message, a series of prophetic blessings that look toward the distant future of each tribe, with the most remarkable prophecy reserved for Judah: From the line of Judah will come the Lord Jesus: the scepter shall not depart from Judah until "Shiloh" comes (*Genesis 49:10*). Jacob dies, requesting burial in Canaan, an act of faith in the resurrection and the covenant. Joseph, after assuring his fearful brothers of his continued forgiveness with the unforgettable words of *Genesis 50:20*, dies at 110, giving instructions that his bones be carried out of Egypt when God brings Israel home. The book that opened with creation ends with a coffin, but with hope pointing forward.

STEP 1 Grasp the Story - What situation were Jacob and his sons facing?

- In the ancient Near East, a deathbed blessing from patriarch Jacob was legally and spiritually binding. Jacob's blessing of Ephraim and Manasseh, including his crossing of hands to give priority to the younger, had lasting tribal and territorial consequences. The original audience, familiar with Israel's tribal geography, would have immediately recognized the significance of this act.

- The Judah prophecy (*Genesis 49:8-12*) was the centerpiece of Jacob's farewell message.

Jacob/Israel's prophecy for Judah is the most important, so let's look closer at it. We've been told in Genesis 3:15, the very first prophecy in the Bible, that the "seed of the woman" will bruise the serpent's head. He'll be the one to get the victory. That seed was confirmed to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob-and now it's confirmed to Judah. Out of Judah's line, the Messiah will come. He's called Shiloh, meaning "rest/tranquility." He's the One who will bring rest. And the people who heard Jesus on that day when they rejected Him remembered He turned to the crowds and said, "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (*Matthew 11:28*).

That's Shiloh. Shiloh had come. Jesus is that Seed; He's Shiloh. And He's also the One who will hold the scepter. The scepter of this universe is in nail-pierced hands today. And not only do these pictures point to Christ, but we're told that, "there is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel" (*Genesis 49:24*).



- Jacob's insistence on being buried in Canaan (*Genesis 49:29-30*) was not mere sentiment. It was a confession of faith in the resurrection and in the covenant promise of the land. He expected to be raised from the dead in the Promised Land when God fulfilled His purposes for the nation.
- The brothers' fear after Jacob's death showed how strong their guilt remained. They believed Joseph's forgiveness depended on their father's life. Joseph's reply is tears instead of anger; reassurance instead of blame, and his statement in *Genesis 50:20* "But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive." served as the highlight of the entire Joseph story.
- Joseph's instruction about his bones (*Genesis 50:25*) was an act of prophetic faith: he believed in the coming Exodus before the Israelites had become slaves, before Moses was born, before a word of Exodus had been written. He staked his burial on God's future faithfulness.

Genesis chapters 48 to 50 teach that God's sovereign, covenant-keeping purposes cannot be frustrated by any human sin, family dysfunction, or personal failure, that a life well-finished in faith is the most powerful legacy a person can leave, and that the Messianic hope, the coming of the Shiloh from Judah, was the anchor for all their future.

STEP 2 Measure the Differences and Identify the Similarities

Differences Between Jacob's Family and Us

- **Deathbed Blessings:** The deathbed blessing was a legal and cultural institution specific to the ancient Near East. In our cultural context, dying wishes may carry emotional weight but we do not get specific revelation from God to tell our children, other than to accept the Lord Jesus as their Savior.

- **Prophetical Fulfillment:** The tribal prophecies (Zebulun by the sea, Issachar in the valley, Dan as judge, etc.) were geographically and historically specific. They were fulfilled in the distribution of the land under Joshua and the history of the judges and kings. These specifics do not directly map onto our situation.
- **Promised Messiah:** The Shiloh prophecy (*Genesis 49:10*) had yet to be fulfilled for the nation of Israel, and they awaited its fulfillment. For us, it has been fulfilled in Jesus Christ. We read it looking back at the cross and forward to a certain future.
- **Hope of Resurrection:** The Old Testament hope of resurrection was an earthly one in the Promised Land, as part of God's covenant with the nation of Israel. The New Testament adds the dimension of the church's heavenly hope, the Rapture, resurrection, and the New Jerusalem (*1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; 1 Corinthians 15:51-52*). Both hopes are genuine; they are distinct.



Similarities Between Jacob's Family and Us

- **Faith Beyond Death:** Every generation faces the realities of aging, death, and legacy. The way in which Jacob and Joseph died in faith, looking forward to God's promises, is the way a believer in Christ finishes their race of faith well.
- **God's Grace:** God consistently overturns human expectations of merit, birth order, and achievement to bless according to His sovereign grace. This pattern is present from Abel over Cain, Isaac over Ishmael, Jacob over Esau, Ephraim over Manasseh, and is culminated in the gospel, where the undeserving are made heirs through Christ.
- **God's Eternal Forgiveness in Christ:** The fear that Joseph's brothers have that Joseph's forgiveness might expire once their father Jacob dies is a fear some believers think about God's forgiveness. Joseph's assurance and *Genesis 50:20* speak to every Christian who wonders whether God's grace truly covers them. Every believer will acknowledge that what someone intended for evil, God has turned to good, so that His will may be done.
- **Facing Death Confidently:** The hope of resurrection and God's future faithfulness to His promises is the anchor that enables every generation to face death without despair.

STEP 3 God's Eternal Truths Relevant to us

Genesis chapters 48 and 50 reveal timeless truths relevant to us today.

Eternal Truth 1: God's grace is not determined by human custom, birth order, achievement, or merit. He chooses and blesses according to His sovereign, gracious will.

Jacob's crossing of his arms to bless Joseph's son was intentional, reflecting God's pattern in Genesis and fulfilled in the gospel. God chooses the younger and weaker to show blessing comes from Him alone. Our response should be humility and gratitude.

Eternal Truth 2: A life well-finished in faith is the most powerful legacy a believer can leave.

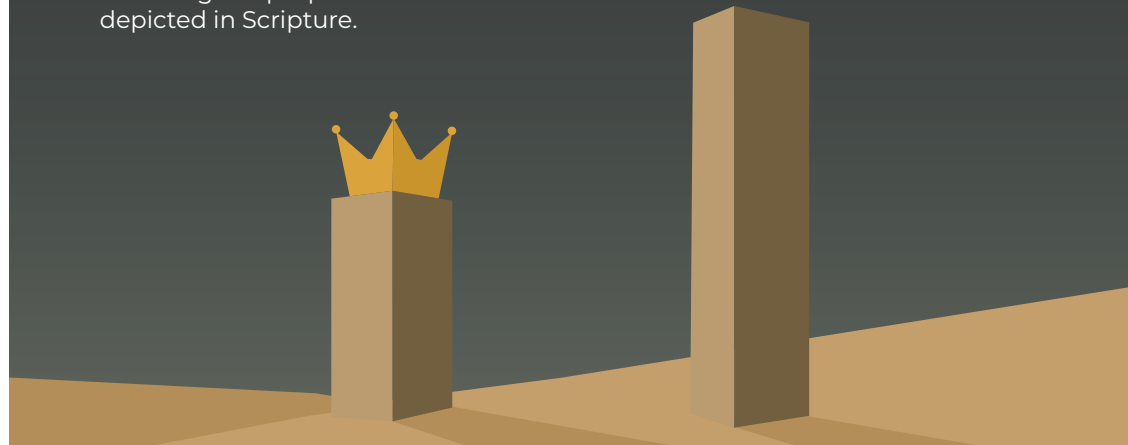
Hebrews 11 highlights the deaths of Jacob and Joseph as crowning acts of faith. Not their youthful exploits, but their dying moments, when they worshiped God and gave instructions about their bones. How we finish matters. Because God is patient and gracious, even those whose earlier chapters were marked by failure can finish in faith. Jacob's last chapter was his best.

Eternal Truth 3: Jesus Christ is the Shiloh, the fulfillment of Jacob's prophetic blessing over Judah: the Seed, the Scepter, the Shepherd, the Stone, the Star.

The Messianic thread running from *Genesis 3:15* (the Seed) through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and now through Judah, finds its fulfillment in Jesus Christ. He is the One to whom the scepter ultimately belongs. He is the rest-giver. He is the Shepherd who gave His life, the Stone the builders rejected, and the bright and morning Star. The entire book of Genesis has been moving toward Him.

Eternal Truth 4: God's ultimate purposes cannot be frustrated by human sin, God overrules evil for the good of His people and the salvation of many.

Genesis 50:20 offers a comforting truth about God's sovereignty over evil inflicted upon us. The verse affirms that God's sovereign rule extends above and through human choices, turning even evil done against us, our suffering, into His good purpose. This reflects the steadfast character of the God depicted in Scripture.



STEP 4 Consult the Biblical Map - How Do These Truths Fit with the Rest of Scripture?

God confirms and clarifies His eternal truths throughout the rest of the Bible.

Hebrews 11:21 “By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff.”

The New Testament’s “hall of faith” specifically honors Jacob’s dying act as the crowning demonstration of his faith. Not his wrestling match, not his vision at Bethel, but this: an old, blind, dying man worshiping God as he blesses the next generation. Faith is measured not at the starting line but at the finish.

Hebrews 11:22 “By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave instructions concerning his bones.”

Joseph’s crowning act of faith was not his resistance to Potiphar’s wife or his interpretation of Pharaoh’s dream, but his dying instruction regarding his bones. He believed in the Exodus before it happened. His faith rested on what God had said, not on what he could see.

Genesis 49:10 “The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh comes; and to Him shall be the obedience of the people.”

This prophecy is fulfilled in Jesus Christ: He is of the tribe of Judah (*Matthew 1:2–3; Revelation 5:5*). He is the Shiloh, the One who brings rest (*Matthew 11:28*). The scepter of the universe rests in nail-pierced hands.

Revelation 5:5 “Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals.”

Jacob’s dying prophecy about Judah reaches its ultimate fulfillment in the glorified Christ standing before the throne of heaven. The scepter has not departed. It never will.

Matthew 11:28–29 “Come to Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”

Jesus explicitly identifies Himself as the rest-giver - the Shiloh. The rest of Jacob’s prophecy, promised through the coming ruler of Judah, is offered freely to every generation by the One who has come.

Romans 8:28 “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”

Genesis 50:20 is the Old Testament seed from which Romans 8:28 is the full flower. The principle is the same: God’s sovereign purpose governs all things for the ultimate good of those He has called. Joseph lived this before Paul wrote it.

1 Corinthians 1:27–29 “But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty ... that no flesh should glory in His presence.”

The pattern of God choosing Ephraim over Manasseh, the younger over the older, the unexpected over the conventional, is the same pattern Paul identifies as the hallmark of God’s grace in the gospel. God’s choices systematically disrupt human assumptions about merit and worthiness, so that all glory belongs to Him alone.



2 Timothy 4:7-8 “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day.”

Paul's dying words echo Jacob's and Joseph's. The mark of a faithful life is not a perfect record but a faithful finish. All three men finished leaning on something greater than themselves: Jacob on his staff as he worshipped; Joseph on God's promise of the Exodus; Paul on the risen Christ. This is the model for every believer.

STEP 5 Apply God's Eternal Truths in Your Life

Embrace God's eternal truths from Genesis 45 to 47, allowing them to shape your thoughts, beliefs, and actions. Trust the Holy Spirit to guide you in applying these truths to your life.

For Personal Reflection and Application:

- How are you finishing? Jacob's story is a sobering yet encouraging reminder that it is possible to spend decades in spiritual immaturity and still finish well but finishing well requires the same faith Jacob eventually found. Ask God today: “Lord, what would it look like for my last chapter to be my best?”
- Do you find yourself wondering whether God's forgiveness truly covers you, especially when the mediating presence of a pastor, parent, or mentor is absent? *Genesis 50:20* and *Romans 8:28* declare the same eternal truth: God's sovereign grace is not contingent on any human circumstance. His forgiveness in Christ is neither conditional nor temporary. Rest in it.
- *Genesis 50:20* is God's response; it is a living framework for responding to injustice. Is there a situation in your life right now where you have been wronged and are waiting for the scales to balance? Entrust it to the God who overrules all evil for good, and take the next step of obedience, as Joseph did, without waiting for vindication first.

- What legacy are you building? Jacob's legacy was not primarily his wealth, his children's names, or his position. It was the faith he demonstrated as he died: worshiping God, blessing the next generation, and insisting on burial in the land of promise. Joseph's legacy was a set of bones carried for 400 years, a testimony to God's faithfulness. What are you leaving behind that will point people to Christ?
- Jesus is the Shiloh, the rest-giver. Have you come to Him? Are you living in the rest He offers, or are you still striving to earn your standing before God? *Matthew 11:28-29* is God's personal invitation to you, today

Personal Prayer Response:

Dear Heavenly Father,

I want to finish well. I do not want to reach the end of my life still carrying the weight of unresolved bitterness, unconfessed sin, or untrusting fear. Like Jacob, I want my last chapter to be one in which I lean on You and worship. Like Joseph, I want my faith to look beyond my own lifetime. And like both of them, I want the testimony of my life to declare: “God meant it for good.” Thank you for Jesus, He is my Shiloh, my rest.

And I come to You in Jesus' name. Amen.



These studies are based on the THRU the BIBLE Genesis Bible Companion by Dr. J. Vernon McGee and the TTB Study · Interpret · Apply method, following the five-step Interpretive Journey outlined in *Grasping God's Word* by J. Scott Duvall and J. Daniel Hays. All Scripture is from the New King James Version (NKJV).



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