

Adopted as Sons

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[0 : 0 0] In Genesis 47, 13-28, we saw Jacob's family prosper in the land of Goshen as they cared for! Pharaoh's expanding flocks and herds. Those flocks and herds had expanded because of the! severity of the famine. Unlike what we saw with Jacob's family, the Egyptians' quality of life declined as the famine raged on. Three weeks ago, when we were last here, we saw that in exchange for food and seed, the Egyptians first traded their money, then their livestock, and then their land and freedom, and finally a portion of their future income. Pharaoh received all of those things.

In tonight's text, and the text we'll cover next week, the focus shifts more to Jacob and how Jacob's earthly life ends. Joseph still figures prominently in these passages, but the main focus will be on Jacob. In Genesis 47-29 all the way through 48-22, we'll see Joseph's sons receive blessings because Jacob adopts Manasseh and Ephraim as his own. That's the main idea for tonight. We'll see Joseph's sons receive blessings because Jacob adopts Manasseh and Ephraim as his own. Before we read tonight's text, let's remind ourselves of what we know about Manasseh and Ephraim. We learned about their births in Genesis 41 verses 50 through 52. So Genesis 41 verses 50 through 52 say, Before the year of famine came, two sons were born to Joseph. Asenath, the daughter of Potipharah, a priest of On, bore them to him. Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh, for he said,

God has made me forget all my hardship and all my father's house. The name of the second he called Ephraim, for God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction. When we studied these verses several weeks ago, we talked about the significance of the names. Moses gave us the meaning of their names in the verses. On the surface, Joseph appeared to have everything going for him in Egypt by that time. However, the son's name show us that Joseph still identified with the Hebrew people. And when given the opportunity to name his own children, Joseph gave them Hebrew names. You notice that one of those names called Egypt, the land of Joseph's affliction. As we read through the verses we'll study tonight, keep in mind that Manasseh and Ephraim are half Egyptian. Their mother is the daughter of a pagan priest. So we are going to cover Genesis 47, 29 all the way through 48, 22 tonight.

And these verses will show us how Manasseh and Ephraim get adopted as sons of Jacob. To give us more context, let's back up one verse and start reading in Genesis 47, 28, and then we'll read all of tonight's text. Starting in Genesis 47, 28, it says, and Jacob lived in the land of Egypt 17 years. So the days of Jacob, the years of his life were 147 years. And when the time drew near that Israel must die, he called his son Joseph and said to him, if now I have found favor in your sight, put your hand under my thigh and promise to deal kindly and truly with me. Do not bury me in Egypt, but let me lie with my fathers. Carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burying place. He answered, I will do as you have said. And he said, swear to me. And he swore to him. Then Israel bowed himself upon the head of his bed. After this, Joseph was told, behold, your father is ill. So he took with him his two sons,

Manasseh and Ephraim. And it was told to Jacob, your son Joseph has come to you. Then Israel summoned his strength and set up in bed. And 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.

[4 : 2 5] And I will make you a company of peoples and will give this land to your offspring after you for an everlasting possession. And now your two sons who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt are mine. Ephraim and Manasseh shall be mine as Reuben and Simeon are. And the children that you fathered after them shall be yours. They shall be called by the name of their brothers in their inheritance. As for me, when I came from Paddan to my sorrow, Rachel died in the land of Canaan on the way when there was still some distance to go to Ephraim.

And I buried her there on the way to Ephraim, that is Bethlehem. When Israel saw Joseph's sons, he said, who are these?

Joseph said to his father, they are my sons whom God has given me here. And he said, bring them to me, please, that I may bless them. Now the eyes of Israel were dim with age so that he could not see. So Joseph brought them near him and he kissed them and embraced them.

And Israel said to Joseph, I never expected to see your face and behold, God has let me see your offspring also. Then Joseph removed them from his knees and he bowed himself with his face to the earth.

And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel's left hand and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel's right hand and brought them near him. And Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on the head of Ephraim, who was the younger, and his left hand on the head of Manasseh, crossing his hands, for Manasseh was the firstborn. And he blessed Joseph and said, the God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been my shepherd all my life long to this day, the angel who has redeemed me from all evil, bless the boys. And in them let my name be carried on and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac, and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.

When Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand on the head of Ephraim, it displeased him, and he took his father's hand to move it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. And Joseph said to his father, not this way, my father, since this one is the firstborn, put your right hand on his head.

[6 : 54] But his father refused and said, I know, my son, I know. He also shall become a people, and he also shall be great. Nevertheless, his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his offspring shall become a multitude of nations. So he blessed them that day, saying, By you Israel will pronounce blessings, saying, God make you as Ephraim and Manasseh.

Thus he put Ephraim before Manasseh. Then Israel said to Joseph, Behold, I am about to die, but God will be with you, and will bring you again to the land of your fathers.

Moreover, I have given to you rather than to your brothers one mountain slope that I took from the hand of the Amorites with my sword and with my bow. Many who teach these passages, and several artists who have painted the scenes of Jacob blessing Manasseh and Ephraim, portray Manasseh and Ephraim as little boys when these events happened. These people apparently failed to consider the timeline that the Bible gives us in Genesis. The people who correctly estimate the age of Manasseh and Ephraim know that the boys were in their late teens or early twenties when Jacob blessed them. Here's how we get to those ages. Earlier we read Genesis 41 50, which told us that before the famine, two sons were born to Joseph. And we know that Jacob moved to Egypt approximately two years into the famine. Genesis chapter 45 documents when Joseph told his brothers to hurry and bring their father to Egypt. Here's

Genesis 45 6. Joseph said, For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there are yet five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. So we know that the boys were more than two years years old when Jacob moved to Egypt. And then Genesis 47 28 says that Jacob lived in Egypt 17 years.

So if I can do the math without removing my shoes, 17 plus two puts us at more than 19 years after the boys were born. So we're going to break tonight's passage into three sections, starting with the final three verses of chapter 47. And in those verses, we see Jacob's request. Jacob's request is the first thing that we'll look at tonight. Here are the last three verses of chapter 47 again.

[9 : 36] And when the time drew near that Israel must die, he called his son Joseph and said to him, If now I have found favor in your sight, put your hand under my thigh and promise to deal kindly and truly with me. Do not bury me in Egypt, but let me lie with my fathers. Carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burying place. He answered, I will do as you have said. And he said, swear to me. And he swore to him. Then Israel bowed himself upon the head of his bed. Verse 29 starts one of the longest deathbed scenes in the Bible. That seems going to continue all the way through Genesis 49 verse 32.

Aware of his impending death, Jacob called Joseph to him and asked him to promise with an oath not to bury him in Egypt, but to bury him with Abraham and Isaac in their tomb in Canaan. Jacob's request tells us that he saw the future in the land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and himself. Even though Jacob had come to Egypt at the call of God, he knew that his stay would be only temporary. By insisting on being buried in Canaan, Jacob pointed all subsequent generations to where their future would be.

Jacob's phrasing of the request is interesting. It actually points to a further fulfillment of Joseph's dream that his father and mother would bow down to him one day. Jacob starts his request with the words, if now I have found favor in your sight. Jacob realizes that Joseph is the one with the power in this case. Rather than use his fatherly authority to order Joseph to do something, Jacob makes a request instead. In verse 30, Joseph assures his father that he will honor Jacob's request. In verse 31, the chapter closes by showing Jacob worshiping God. For full transparency, commentators disagree about whether Jacob was worshiping here. Some think he may have been bowing to Joseph to further demonstrate dependence on Joseph. Others think Jacob may have been bowing simply because he was old and frail, too feeble to stand up straight. But based upon the next chapter, worship seems to be the most likely reason. This brings us to the second section of tonight's text. In the largest block of scripture that we'll look at tonight, we see Jacob's rejoicing. So Jacob's rejoicing is what comes next.

This section goes all the way to the first 16 verses of chapter 48. And in those 16 verses, we'll see the reasons why Jacob rejoiced. Admittedly, some of Jacob's rejoicing is tempered with the remembrance of losing Rachel. However, the overall theme of the section is rejoicing. Jacob being thankful for what God has done and what God is doing and for what God will continue to do in his family. In the first four verses, we see Jacob rejoicing because of the past. So here are verses 1 through 4 of chapter 48 again. They say, After this, Joseph was told, Behold, your father is ill.

[13:08] So he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. And it was told to Jacob, Your son Joseph has come to you. Then Israel summoned his strength and set up in bed. And 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 company of peoples and will give this land to your offspring after you for an everlasting possession. The text is silent about how much time passed between the end of chapter 47 and the beginning of chapter 48. Regardless, Jacob's condition clearly has deteriorated in this time. Joseph wasted no time in returning to Goshen to visit his father, and he took Manasseh and Ephraim with him. When they arrived, Jacob begins to recount highlights of his life, starting with his encounter with God at Luz. And Luz is the ancient name of Bethel. God appeared to

Jacob twice at Bethel. And you can read about those in Genesis 28 and Genesis 35. Jacob is probably thinking about both of those appearances, but his language here seems to recall more specifically the second encounter at Bethel. So we'll go ahead and look at a few verses about it. So let's look at that second encounter by reading Genesis 35 verses 9 through 12. Genesis 35 verses 9 through 12 is where we're going here. Starting in verse 9, it says, God appeared to Jacob again when he came from Paddan Aram and blessed him. And God said to him, your name is Jacob. No longer shall your name be called Jacob, but Israel shall be your name. So he called his name Israel. And God said to him, I am God Almighty, be fruitful and multiply. A nation and a company of nations shall come from you, and kings shall come from your own body. The land that I gave to Abraham and Isaac I will give to you, and I will give the land to your offspring after you. Let's move back to our text tonight and see more of Jacob's rejoicing.

In Genesis 48 verses 5 through 11, we see Jacob rejoicing because of the present. Jacob rejoices in the present as he adopts Joseph's sons as his own. Here are verses 5 through 11 of chapter 48 again.

Again, this is Jacob speaking here, and he says, Now your two sons who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt are mine.

Ephraim and Manasseh shall be mine, as Reuben and Simeon are. And the children that you fathered after them shall be yours. They shall be called by the name of their brothers in their inheritance.

[16:14] As for me, when I came from Paddan, to my sorrow Rachel died in the land of Canaan on the way, when there was still some distance to go to Ephrath, and I buried her there on the way to Ephrath, that is Bethlehem. When Israel saw Joseph's sons, he said, Who are these? Joseph said to his father, They are my sons, whom God has given me here. And he said, Bring them to me, please, that I may bless them. Now the eyes of Israel were dim with age, so that he could not see. So Joseph brought them near him, and he kissed them and embraced them. And Israel said to Joseph, I never expected to see your face, and behold, God has let me see your offspring also.

We need to camp on verse 5 for just a little bit. Look at Jacob's words there one more time. He says, And now your two sons, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, are mine. Ephraim and Manasseh shall be mine, as Reuben and Simeon are. Put yourself in Joseph's place for a minute. We might think that Joseph would be annoyed by his father being so presumptuous about wanting to adopt Joseph's sons when the boys already were in their late teens or early 20s. However, rather than being offended by his father wanting to adopt his sons, Joseph would have been overjoyed at that thought. Remember that Ephraim and Manasseh are the sons of Joseph by an Egyptian woman, just as Ishmael was born of Abraham and an Egyptian woman. Unlike Ishmael, though, Manasseh and Ephraim are brought into the covenant here. Ishmael was indeed blessed, and he would become a great nation in his own right. However, Ephraim and Manasseh will carry on Israel's name. That's an important distinction, especially for us Gentiles. In the earlier lessons of this study, we looked at the prohibitions God placed upon the Hebrews marrying women from other cultures. Joseph would have known about these prohibitions, and we know that some of Joseph's brothers violated God's commandment willingly when they married pagan women. Joseph, as a slave, had no choice when Pharaoh provided a pagan wife for him. Even though Joseph had seen evidence of how God was with him, Joseph had to have been wondering whether his sons would be treated differently regarding the covenant because they were half

Egyptian. Those doubts would have ended when Jacob fully adopted Manasseh and Ephraim as his own. Jacob said that Manasseh and Ephraim now were as much his sons as Reuben and Simeon were.

Traditionally, when the patriarch of a clan died, the oldest son received a double portion of the inheritance. Instead of granting that double portion to his eldest son, Reuben, Jacob transferred that honor to Joseph. As Joseph's offspring, Ephraim and Manasseh would receive a share of the family inheritance equaled that of each of Joseph's or Jacob's other sons. And the description of the double portion will go through the line of Joseph. So the distribution of that double portion does go through Joseph, so in a sense he gets that double portion himself. Eventually, the sons of Jacob will form twelve tribes composed of their descendants, and those twelve tribes will grow into the nation of Israel.

Because their grandfather adopts them, Ephraim and Manasseh will each have tribes of their own. So think about that now. In the genealogy of the Hebrew people, Jacob's best-loved wife, Rachel, becomes the matriarch of three tribes, those of Ephraim, Manasseh, and of course Benjamin.

[20 : 14] Verse 6 also had reassuring words for Joseph. Jacob said, And the children that you fathered after them shall be yours. They shall be called by the name of their brothers in their inheritance.

Any future children that Joseph had would be considered part of either Manasseh's or Ephraim's tribe. Only Manasseh and Ephraim would have the elevated status, but future children still would be considered part of the covenant nation of Israel.

In verse 7, Jacob briefly interrupts his rejoicing to reflect on the loss of Rachel. Long after her death, we see in these verses how Jacob continues to honor the wife that he loved.

And beginning in verse 8, Jacob starts the formal adoption proceedings. Verses 8 and 9 have caused a lot of debate, but the meaning seems pretty straightforward.

Look at those verses again. They say, The controversy from verses 8 and 9 comes from Jacob asking who Manasseh and Ephraim were.

[21 : 32] Some speculate that Jacob had never seen them before now. That seems impossible because Jacob had lived in Egypt 17 years. Certainly he had seen his grandchildren during that 17-year period.

Others speculate that because Jacob could no longer see well, he was cautiously trying to avoid being tricked into blessing the wrong people, similar to how Jacob had tricked his father Isaac. Instead of having Isaac bless Esau, Jacob tricked his father into blessing Jacob himself instead.

The most likely explanation is that Jacob asking the question, Who are these?

actually signaled the beginning of the formal adoption process. In the adoption process of that day, somebody formally identified the children to be adopted by answering such a question.

The question is similar to what we still hear at the beginning of Christian weddings. Think about what the pastor says at the beginning of a wedding. He asks a question similar to who gives this woman to be married.

[22 : 39] And when Pastor Mike or Willard or any pastor asks such a question, we never think, I thought he would have known the answer by now. I mean, he's standing up there to marry him. He should know where she comes from.

Instead, we know that the official ceremony is about to start. And that's what we see here. After having Manasseh and Ephraim formally identified, Jacob requested that the young men be brought to him.

And verses 10 and 11 show Jacob continuing to rejoice because of the present. That's where it says, Now the eyes of Israel were dim with age, so he could not see.

So Joseph brought them near him, and he kissed them and embraced them. And Israel said to Joseph, I never expected to see your face, and behold, God has let me see your offspring also. Jacob, for more than 20 years, thought his favorite son was dead. Now Jacob is rejoicing because he can spend time with that son, and also the grandchildren from that son.

[23 : 44] So we've seen Jacob rejoicing because of the past and because of the present. In verses 12 through 16, we see Jacob rejoicing because of the future. Jacob knows that because of God's faithfulness, the grandsons that he has now adopted as sons have a promising future.

Look at verses 12 through 16 again. Then Joseph removed them from his knees, and he bowed himself with his face to the earth. And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand, toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand, toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near him.

And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it on the head of Ephraim, who was the younger, and his left hand on the head of Manasseh, crossing his hands, for Manasseh was the firstborn. And he blessed Joseph and said, The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been my shepherd all my life long to this day, the angel who has redeemed me from all evil, bless the boys.

And in them let my name be carried on, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac, and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth. So visualize the scene here in your mind.

[25 : 04] The person upon whom Jacob puts his right hand will receive the greater blessing. Joseph wanted to make things easy for his father, so he arranges the young man so that Manasseh, the oldest, will be directly in front of Jacob's right hand.

Then Jacob does something unexpected when he crosses his hands and puts his right hand on Ephraim's head instead. The text next says that Jacob blesses Joseph.

Although Manasseh and Ephraim receive the main blessing, Jacob recognizes the connection to Joseph. Before proceeding with that blessing of Manasseh and Ephraim, Jacob then recounts how God has blessed him consistently.

Think about the spiritual growth evident in Jacob in these verses. Just a few chapters ago, we saw how the older brothers had to convince Jacob to let Benjamin make the second trip to Egypt with them.

Look back at Genesis 42-36, and you'll get an idea of just how much Jacob has grown spiritually. Again, that's Genesis 42-36.

[26 : 13] And this is when the brothers are trying to convince Jacob to let Benjamin go with them. Verse 36 of chapter 42 says, You have bereaved me of my children.

Joseph is no more, and Simeon is no more. Remember, Simeon was in jail at that time. And now you would take Benjamin. All this has come against me. That sounds a lot different than the person that we see in tonight's chapters, doesn't it?

With the benefit of seeing more of God's plan unfolding, Jacob now says that God is the God who has been my shepherd all my life long to this day. Jacob also calls the Lord the angel who has redeemed me from all evil.

So those statements here in chapter 48 remind us just how much Jacob has grown spiritually. And then Jacob then states three desires for Manasseh and Ephraim.

Jacob's wishes for his grandson, who are now his sons, are that God will bless them, that they will be known as sons of Abraham, and that they will multiply, having children and grandchildren of their own.

[27 : 25] And we see that in verse 16. So let's back up to the middle of verse 15 and read it in verse 16 again. Jacob said, So we've seen Jacob's request and Jacob's rejoicing.

In the last section of the lesson, we see Jacob's resolve. So Jacob's resolve is your last section. And we see Jacob's resolve because he wants to leave no doubt about what will happen to his descendants after his death.

Jacob also leaves no doubt about who should receive the greater blessing. Listen to verses 17 and 18 first. Joseph dislikes that Jacob crossed his hand so that Jacob's right hand is on Ephraim. It says, You find it interesting that Joseph is making a fuss about Jacob crossing his hands here? Think about what's been going on with Joseph and what's happening now with his sons. Through Jacob's adoption of Manasseh and Ephraim, Joseph has just received a double blessing himself, even though Joseph was one of Jacob's younger sons.

[29 : 14] Yet Joseph is upset that his own oldest son could miss out on the greater blessing. Look what happens in verses 19 and 20 after Joseph grabbed Jacob's hand to move it.

Those verses say, But his father refused and said, I know, my son, I know. He also shall become a people, and he also shall be great.

Nevertheless, his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his offspring shall become a multitude of nations. So he blessed them that day, saying, By you Israel will pronounce blessings, saying, God make you as Ephraim and as Manasseh.

Thus he put Ephraim before Manasseh. Jacob resolutely makes sure that everyone, especially Joseph, knows that he's putting Ephraim first intentionally.

And of course, we see that Jacob also reasserts Joseph that Manasseh is going to be great himself. Jacob's words, I know, my son, I know, express the confidence of his faith.

[30 : 22] Jacob knew that he was blessing according to the divine plan, not according to the normal custom. He had learned that despite what man attempted to do, God had blessed him, the younger, and this he now carried forward to Joseph's sons.

Years later, Ephraim became a leading tribe in the northern kingdom, much superior to the tribe of Manasseh, just as Jacob had predicted. We've discussed in every lesson the main point of the book of Genesis, and the main point of the book of Genesis is to show the progression of redemptive history, how God will redeem his people from the curse of sin.

Throughout Genesis, God shows that he's faithful to preserve the line of the seed who will redeem God's people. And we now know how God worked his plan so that Ephraim and Manasseh would lead two of the twelve tribes instead of Joseph.

Look at the last two verses of chapter 48 now. Here Jacob resumes speaking to Joseph. Those verses say, Then Israel said to Joseph, Behold, I am about to die, but God will be with you and will bring you again to the land of your fathers.

Moreover, I have given to you, rather than to your brothers, one mountain slope that I took from the hand of the Amorites with my sword and with my bow. Jacob gives Joseph the best reassurance that a dying person can give a loved one.

[31 : 51] He says, Behold, I am about to die, but God will be with you. That statement does more than just comfort the people left behind. That statement demonstrates how the dying person's faith has remained strong until the end.

Jacob then gives Joseph a little extra inheritance, land he took when he conquered the Amorites.

That land likely is where Sychar is. Do you remember what happened centuries later at Sychar? Jesus had a famous encounter with the woman at the well. You can look at that in John chapter 4. So listen to John chapter 4, verses 1 through 5.

They say, Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John, although Jesus himself did not baptize but only his disciples, he left Judah and departed again for Galilee, and he had to pass through Samaria.

So he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Then skipping down several verses in John chapter 4, we see the result of Jesus' meeting with the woman at the well.

[33 : 11] Listen to verses 39 through 42 of John 4. They say, Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony. He told me all that I ever did.

So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days, and many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world.

We see evidence again here that God knows what he's doing. In both the Old and the New Testaments, God shows us over and over that Gentiles can become part of his covenant people too, and that's something for which we all should be thankful.

The main idea of this passage was that Joseph's sons received blessings because Jacob adopted Manasseh and Ephraim as his own. However, we can take some other things from the chapter 2, All of these things are things that we've seen before, and perhaps God wants us to get the point.

The first additional thing to note is something we discussed just a minute ago when we referenced the Sychar people. That is, Gentiles can become part of the kingdom through adoption.

[34 : 31] Gentiles can become part of the kingdom through adoption. Like Ephraim and Manasseh, believers of today and every age have been adopted as God's children.

Let's look at three cross-references for that. The first is in Galatians 3. In Galatians 3, the Apostle Paul groups believers with the line of Abraham.

And this is Galatians 3, verses 26 through 29. Galatians 3, 26 through 29. They say, Staying in Galatians, we see something similar in chapter 4, verses 4 through 7.

So here are Galatians 4, verses 4 through 7. Paul goes on to say, But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoptions as sons.

And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father. So you are no longer a slave, but a son.

[36 : 07] And if a son, then an heir through God. Then in Romans 8, verses 14 through 17, we'll look at our final cross-reference for this piece.

Romans 8, 14 through 17, are where Paul wrote, For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the Spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, Abba, Father.

The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. And if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

We should rejoice that Jesus' substitutionary death on the cross for our sins has made it possible for us to be adopted as children of God, just as Manasseh and Ephraim were adopted into the covenant by their grandfather.

Consider something else. Jacob, in his near-death state, could receive no benefit from adopting Joseph's sons. Jacob adopted them because he wanted to bring them into the line of God's people.

[37 : 27] Similarly, God receives no benefit from adopting us. Adopting us gives God a way to demonstrate his mercy and his grace, but we ourselves have nothing to offer God.

A second thing that we should take away from this passage also repeats something that we have seen before, and we saw that the last time we were in this study.

That is that we should be willing to give up anything to become part of the kingdom of God. We should be willing to give up anything to become part of the kingdom of God. Ephraim and Manasseh demonstrated that for us tonight.

Ephraim and Manasseh were willing to give up a life of comfort and privilege to be part of God's people. Think about their lives up to that point. They had enjoyed living in the prime minister's mansion.

They probably loved the attention that their father received. To them, Egypt would have felt like home. But now, thanks to Jacob and the Lord's leading, they are faced with a choice.

[38 : 27] By being adopted by Jacob, Ephraim and Manasseh must switch loyalties. Egypt no longer is their country. Israel becomes their country.

They might remain in the land of Egypt for the rest of their lives, but at the heart of it all, they've converted themselves to be Jews. The third thing we can take away from this passage is something that we've seen many times in the Joseph study.

That is that God often does things differently than we would expect. God often does things differently than we would expect. We would have expected God to give the greater blessing to Manasseh because Manasseh was older.

Throughout Genesis, though, we've repeatedly seen God bless the younger rather than the older. Going back to Abraham's sons, God blessed Isaac instead of Ishmael.

And with Isaac's sons, God blessed Jacob instead of Esau. With Jacob's sons, God blessed Judah and Joseph instead of Reuben and Simeon. Now we've seen God bless Ephraim more than Manasseh.

[39 : 37] Listen to what Vodibacham says about God reversing the expected order of blessings. He says, With Ishmael, the message to Abraham and to us is that God will accomplish his work without man's aid.

With Esau, we learn that even if children are born to the same woman by the same man, God's electing grace does not follow rules like birth order. With Judah, the message is that God will raise up the promised seed from a woman that the patriarch did not choose, love, or even want to marry. And of course, he's talking about Leah there. But when you also think about that, Judah had a seed raised from a woman that most people wouldn't pick either.

We saw that when we looked at Tamar and the encounter with her in Genesis chapter 38. Another recurring theme we can take away from this passage is that God is faithful to his promises.

God is faithful to his promises. We looked at that theme in detail the last time when we cross-referenced Psalm 34. And in tonight's passage, we see God remaining faithful to Jacob as Jacob nears death.

[40 : 53] And finally, we can take away from this chapter something that we also saw the last time we were here. That is that Jacob shows us how a follower of God continues to grow in faith even in the last days of his life.

Jacob shows us how a follower of God continues to grow in faith even in the last days of his life. We've seen many highlights of Jacob's life.

And if I were picking one thing to highlight, I likely would pick the time that Jacob wrestled with God. Just real quickly, flip back a few pages to Genesis chapter 32 and we'll look at verse 28.

Genesis 32, 28. The person speaking in this verse is the one with whom Jacob wrestled, the same one that Joseph called the angel of God in tonight's passage.

Almost certainly, that person was a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ. And here's what that person said in Genesis 32, 28. Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men and have prevailed.

[42 : 01] You would think that would be the highlight of a lifetime. How many people were said to have striven with God and prevailed? However, the writer of Hebrews picked a different highlight for Jacob's entry in Hebrews 11's Hall of Faith.

The author of Hebrews chose to highlight Joseph remaining faithful to the end of his life. The writer actually chose the passage that we studied tonight. Here is Hebrews 11, 21.

It says, By faith, Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, bowing in worship over the head of his staff. With that, let's pray.

Father, we thank you for the reminder of adoption that we see in these verses tonight. We thank you that even though we are not part of the nation of Israel by birth, you have adopted us into your covenant through what Jesus has done through his atonement on the cross.

Let us ever be rejoicing over that and let us be mindful of all that involves. Help us to be more willing to share that with others. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

[43 : 08] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Thank you.