

Brandon Phillips

The Seed: Sovereignly Preserved / Faith / Genesis 48

In Genesis 48, Jacob demonstrates his faith in God's covenant promises and sovereignty by adopting and blessing Joseph's sons.

Pre-Sermon Comments

2 Corinthians 5:7 LSB

⁷ for we walk by faith, not by sight—

Review

Genesis 3:15 LSB

¹⁵ And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel.”

Genesis 50:20 LSB

²⁰ “As for you, you meant evil against me, *but* God meant it for good in order to do *what has happened on* this day, to keep many people alive.

Genesis 12:1–3 LSB

¹ And Yahweh said to Abram, “Go forth from your land, And from your kin And from your father’s house, To the land which I will show you; ² And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing; ³ And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.”

Proposition and Outline

In Genesis 48, Jacob demonstrates his faith in God's covenant promises and sovereignty by adopting and blessing Joseph's sons.

- Jacob Adopts Ephraim and Manasseh ([Genesis 48:1-7](#))
- Jacob Blesses Ephraim and Manasseh ([Genesis 48:8-20](#))
- Jacob Bequeathes an Inheritance to Joseph ([Genesis 48:21-22](#))

Jacob Adopts Ephraim and Manasseh ([Genesis 48:1-7](#))

Genesis 48:1 LSB

¹ Now it happened after these things that Joseph was told, “Behold, your father is sick.” So he took his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim with him.

Genesis 47:30–31 LSB

³⁰ “But I will lie down with my fathers, and you will carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burial place.” And he said, “I will do as you have said.” ³¹ Then he said, “Swear to me.” So he swore to him. Then Israel bowed *in worship* at the head of the bed.

Genesis 48:2 LSB

² Then it was told to Jacob, “Behold, your son Joseph has come to you,” so Israel strengthened himself and sat up in the bed.

Genesis 48:3 LSB

³ Then Jacob said to Joseph, “God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me,

Genesis 35:9–15 LSB

⁹ Then God appeared to Jacob again when he came from Paddan-aram, and He blessed him. ¹⁰ And God said to him, “Your name is Jacob; Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, But Israel shall be your name.” Thus He called his name Israel. ¹¹ God also said to him, “I am God Almighty; Be fruitful and multiply; A

nation and an assembly of nations shall come from you, And kings shall come forth from your loins. ¹² “And the land which I gave to Abraham and Isaac, I will give it to you, And I will give the land to your seed after you.” ¹³ Then God went up from him in the place where He had spoken with him. ¹⁴ And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where He had spoken with him, a pillar of stone, and he poured out a drink offering on it; he also poured oil on it. ¹⁵ So Jacob named the place where God had spoken with him, Bethel.

Genesis 48:4 LSB

⁴ and He said to me, ‘Behold, I will make you fruitful and multiply, and I will make you an assembly of peoples, and I will give this land to your seed after you for an everlasting possession.’

Genesis 1:28 LSB

²⁸ God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that creeps on the earth.”

Genesis 12:1–2 LSB

¹ And Yahweh said to Abram, “Go forth from your land, And from your kin And from your father’s house, To the land which I will show you; ² And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing;

Genesis 17:7–8 LSB

⁷ “And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your seed after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your seed after you. ⁸ “And I will give to you and to your seed after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.”

Genesis 48:5 LSB

⁵ “So 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.

Genesis 48:6 LSB

⁶ “But your kin that have been born after them shall be yours; they shall be called by the names of their brothers in their inheritance.

[God’s] promise [is] the only thing on which the heart of man can recline. ~ John Calvin

All that faith wants to build upon is what God has said. ~ Charles Spurgeon

Genesis 48:7 LSB

⁷ “Now as for me, when I came from Paddan, Rachel died, to my sorrow, in the land of Canaan on the journey, when there was still some distance to go to Ephrath; and I buried her there on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem).”

Jacob Blesses Ephraim and Manasseh ([Genesis 48:8-20](#))

Genesis 48:8 LSB

⁸ Then Israel saw Joseph’s sons and said, “Who are these?”

Genesis 48:9 LSB

⁹ And Joseph said to his father, “They are my sons, whom God has given me here.” So he said, “Bring them to me, please, that I may bless them.”

Genesis 48:10–11 LSB

¹⁰ Now the eyes of Israel were *so* dim from age *that* he could not see. Then Joseph brought them close to him, and he kissed them and embraced them. ¹¹ Then Israel said to Joseph, “I never expected to see your face, and behold, God has let me see your seed as well.”

Genesis 37:35 LSB

³⁵ Then all his sons and all his daughters arose to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. And he said, “Surely I will go down to Sheol in mourning for my son.” So his father wept for him.

Romans 8:28 LSB

²⁸ And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to *His* purpose.

Genesis 48:12 LSB

¹² Then Joseph took them from his knees and bowed with his face to the ground.

Genesis 48:13 LSB

¹³ And Joseph took them both, Ephraim with his right hand toward Israel's left, and Manasseh with his left hand toward Israel's right, and brought them close to him.

Genesis 48:14 LSB

¹⁴ But Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on the head of Ephraim, who was the younger, and his left hand on Manasseh's head, crossing his hands, although Manasseh was the firstborn.

Genesis 48:15 LSB

¹⁵ And he blessed Joseph and said, "May the God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, The God who has been my shepherd throughout my life to this day,

Genesis 48:16 LSB

¹⁶ The angel who has redeemed me from all evil, Bless *these* boys; And may my name live on in them, And the names of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; And may they grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth."

Ephesians 1:7 LSB

⁷ In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our transgressions, according to the riches of His grace

Hebrews 11:1 LSB

¹ Now faith is the assurance of *things* hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

Hebrews 11:21 LSB

²¹ By faith Jacob, as he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and WORSHIPED, *leaning* ON THE TOP OF HIS STAFF.

This is the faith to live with and to die with—the faith that sees and is persuaded—and salutes the promised blessings of a faithful God! ~ Charles H. Spurgeon

The Bible is a Book of precious promises! All the way we have to travel, they seem to be like a series of stepping stones across the stream of time, and we may march from one promise to another and never wet our feet all the way from earth to Heaven if we do but know how to keep our eyes open and to find the right promise to step upon. ~ Charles Spurgeon

Genesis 48:17–18 LSB

¹⁷ But Joseph saw that his father set his right hand on Ephraim's head, and it was displeasing in his sight; so he took hold of his father's hand to remove it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. ¹⁸ And Joseph said to his father, "Not so, my father, for this one is the firstborn. Place your right hand on his head."

Genesis 48:19 LSB

¹⁹ But his father refused and said, "I know, my son, I know; he also will become a people, and he also will be great. However, his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become the fullness of nations."

Hosea 5:3 LSB

³ I know Ephraim, and Israel is not hidden from Me; For now, O Ephraim, you have played the harlot; Israel has defiled itself.

Genesis 48:20 LSB

²⁰ And he blessed them that day, saying, "By you Israel will pronounce blessing, saying, 'May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh!'" Thus he put Ephraim before Manasseh.

Jacob Bequeaths an Inheritance to Joseph ([Genesis 48:21-22](#))

Genesis 48:21 LSB

²¹ Then Israel said to Joseph, “Behold, I am about to die, but God will be with you and will bring you back to the land of your fathers.

Genesis 50:25–26 LSB

²⁵ Then Joseph made the sons of Israel swear, saying, “God will surely take care of you, and you shall carry my bones up from here.” ²⁶ So Joseph died at the age of 110 years; and they embalmed him, and he was placed in a coffin in Egypt.

Joshua 24:32 LSB

³² Now they buried the bones of Joseph, which the sons of Israel brought up from Egypt, at Shechem, in the portion of the field which Jacob had bought from the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for one hundred qesitah; and they became the inheritance of Joseph’s sons.

Hebrews 11:22 LSB

²² By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the exodus of the sons of Israel, and gave commands concerning his bones.

Joseph believed that God would be as good as His word. Although there was not the shadow of a natural appearance that that word would be fulfilled, yet he stayed his mind upon God - he took God at His word. ~ George Muller

Genesis 48:22 LSB

²² “And I give you one portion more than your brothers, which I took from the hand of the Amorite with my sword and my bow.”

Conclusion

Hebrews 11:21–22 LSB

²¹ By faith Jacob, as he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and WORSHIPED, *leaning ON THE TOP OF HIS STAFF.* ²² By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the exodus of the sons of Israel, and gave commands concerning his bones.

[The future] is as bright as the promises of God. ~ Adoniram Judson

2 Corinthians 1:20 LSB

²⁰ For as many as are the promises of God, in Him they are yes. Therefore also through Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us.

Romans 10:13 LSB

¹³ for “WHOEVER CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.”

Discussion Questions

What stood out to you most from [Genesis 48](#) or from the sermon? Why?

Jacob was dying in Egypt without seeing many of God's promises fulfilled. What circumstances could have tempted Jacob to doubt God's promises?

Read [Genesis 48:3–7](#). How does Jacob's adoption of Ephraim and Manasseh demonstrate that he genuinely believed God's promises concerning his descendants and the land?

The sermon stated, “Faith hears the promises of God and then orders life according to them.” What does that mean? What is the difference between merely believing that something is true and actually ordering your life around it?

In [Genesis 48:10–11](#), Jacob reflects on how God allowed him not only to see Joseph again but also Joseph's children. What had God been doing during all those years when Jacob could not see what He was doing? How can that encourage us when God's providence is difficult to understand?

Jacob describes God as “the God who has been my shepherd throughout my life to this day” ([Genesis 48:15](#)). Looking back over your own life, where can you recognize God's shepherding care more clearly now than you could at the time?

[Genesis 48:17–20](#) records Joseph's attempt to correct Jacob's blessing of Ephraim and Manasseh. What does this teach us about God's sovereignty and the difference between God's purposes and our expectations?

The sermon observed, “Joseph can see the hands clearly, but Jacob sees the purposes of God more clearly.” In what ways can circumstances that appear obvious to us actually tempt us to trust our own perception rather than God's Word?

[Hebrews 11:21](#) specifically identifies Jacob's blessing of Joseph's sons as an act of faith. According to [Hebrews 11:1](#) and 11:21, what does biblical faith look like when we cannot yet see what God has promised?

Both Jacob and Joseph died without seeing Israel return to Canaan. Why is faithfulness still worthwhile when we may never personally see the results of our obedience?

What are you currently investing in that may bear its greatest fruit after you are gone? Consider your children, grandchildren, marriage, church, discipleship relationships, evangelism, or other areas of Christian service.

The sermon says, “We may not see what God is doing through this church.” How should confidence in God's faithfulness affect the way we serve, give, disciple, evangelize, and invest in the next generation at Grace Bible Church?

What is the difference between trusting God's actual promises and simply assuming that God will give us the particular outcome we want? Why is that distinction important?

Read [2 Corinthians 1:20](#). What does it mean that God's promises find their “yes” in Christ? How does Christ give Christians confidence about the future?

Where are you presently being tempted to “walk by sight” rather than by faith? What specific truth or promise from God's Word should shape the way you respond?

Discussion Questions For Parents

Ages 2–4

Ages 5–8

Ages 9–12