

GENESIS Lesson 51 – 11/03/19

Jacob blesses Joseph's children cont'd

Last week we looked at the blessing of Jacob upon Joseph's sons and how the right hand of blessing was upon Ephraim and not Manasseh who was the firstborn. We will finish off chapter 48 and then I want to spend some time on the significance of Ephraim's blessing.

48:15: And he blessed Joseph, and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day,

48:16: The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.

48:17: And when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it displeased him: and he held up his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's head unto Manasseh's head.

48:18: And Joseph said unto his father, Not so, my father: for this is the firstborn; put thy right hand upon his head.

48:19: And his father refused, and said, I know it, my son, I know it: he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great: but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations.

48:20: And he blessed them that day, saying, In thee shall Israel bless, saying, God make thee as Ephraim and as Manasseh: and he set Ephraim before Manasseh.

48:21: And Israel said unto Joseph, Behold, I die: but God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers.

48:22: Moreover I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow.

Jacob acknowledged that God has kept the bargain he had made with him back when he fled from the face of his brother Esau.

Gen. 28:20: And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on,

Gen. 28:21: So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God:

Oftentimes God does fulfill the vows individuals make if made in complete sincerity. This is no guarantee. I recall a story a preacher told about a Christian woman whose young son was going to die of his illness and in desperation she cried out to God asking Him to heal her son otherwise she would take her own life. God healed the child and when he grew up he became a notorious criminal—little did she know what the bargain with God would cost her.

Jacob, now possessor of the Abrahamic blessing takes Joseph's two sons and incorporates them into the nation of Israel as full-fledged

tribes. Not only that but he places the right hand of blessing upon Ephraim's head.

Lev. 9:22: And Aaron lifted up his hand toward the people, and blessed them, and came down from offering of the sin offering, and the burnt offering, and peace offerings.

But when Jacob placed his right hand upon Ephraim, it displeased Joseph because Manasseh was the firstborn. Joseph wanted Jacob to place his right hand upon Manasseh, but Jacob refused.

Remember the meaning behind the names of Joseph's sons: Manasseh (the firstborn) means forgetfulness—Joseph said that God made him forget his toil and his father's house; Ephraim (the younger) means fruitfulness—Joseph said that God caused him to be fruitful in the land of his affliction. These boys meant something to Joseph.

And as Jacob is blessing Ephraim he says something very strange, he says of Ephraim that he would become a multitude of nations!? What does this mean?

Some take this verse (verse 19) to support a belief system called British Israelism. The claim is that Ephraim became the multitude of nations comprising the British Commonwealth.

British Israelism (also called Anglo-Israelism) is a pseudo-archaeological belief that the people of the British Isles are “genetically, racially, and linguistically the direct descendants” of the Ten Lost Tribes of the ancient northern kingdom of Israel. The ten tribes of Israel went into captivity under the Assyrian invasion but there is no record that they ever returned and thus it assumed that they became lost. Those that

ascribe to this belief system claim that they migrated northwest and eventually ended up in the UK.

Both the tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim were blessed, but Ephraim was greater as a tribe, to the point where the name Ephraim was used by God to refer to the whole northern kingdom of Israel.

Isa. 7:8: For the head of Syria is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is Rezin; and within threescore and five years shall Ephraim be broken, that it be not a people.

Isa. 7:17: The LORD shall bring upon thee, and upon thy people, and upon thy father's house, days that have not come, from the day that Ephraim departed from Judah; even the king of Assyria.

We will visit this verse again—keep this statement in mind: “the day that Ephraim departed from Judah...”

Let’s look at a couple of more verses.

Isa. 11:12: And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.

Isa. 11:13: The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim.

An ensign is a flag or standard that symbolizes nationality. Who is the ensign of the nations?

To find out who this ensign is we have to read Isa. 11:10.

Isa. 11:10: And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.

The ensign is Christ and in that day He will be set as the ensign, Ephraim and Judah will be united again and the Gentiles will seek for this ensign. This will occur during the millennial kingdom. Again Ephraim is representing the northern kingdom of Israel.

As to what Jacob meant when he said Ephraim would become a multitude of nations—I don't know. Perhaps this may happen after the New Heaven and New Earth have been created.

Ephraim

I want to spend some time and look into the significance of Ephraim.

Of the 12 tribes of Israel, Ephraim is the tribe that symbolizes the struggle between the flesh and the spirit. Ephraim was blessed by Jacob yet reprimanded by God. When God wanted to speak about the wickedness of Israel he called them by the name "Ephraim." (See Hosea.)

Shiloh was a significant city in Israel; it was the center of worship up until Solomon's temple was built. Shiloh was located within the boundaries of Ephraim.

The tabernacle was set up in Shiloh; that is where the Ark of Covenant was located.

1 Sam. 1:3: And this man went up out of his city yearly to worship and to sacrifice unto the LORD of hosts in Shiloh. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, the priests of the LORD, were there.

Shiloh was also the place where the inheritance of the land was distributed among the tribes of Israel.

Jos. 18:10: And Joshua cast lots for them in Shiloh before the LORD: and there Joshua divided the land unto the children of Israel according to their divisions.

Shiloh means peace. Shiloh was also another name of the Messiah.

Gen. 49:10: The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.

Joshua was from the tribe of Ephraim (Num. 13:8). And so was the first king of the northern kingdom of Israel, we'll get to that in a while.

Ephraim became a prominent tribe in days of Joshua and just increased in prominence as the years went by. They became more numerous than the tribe of Mannaseh.

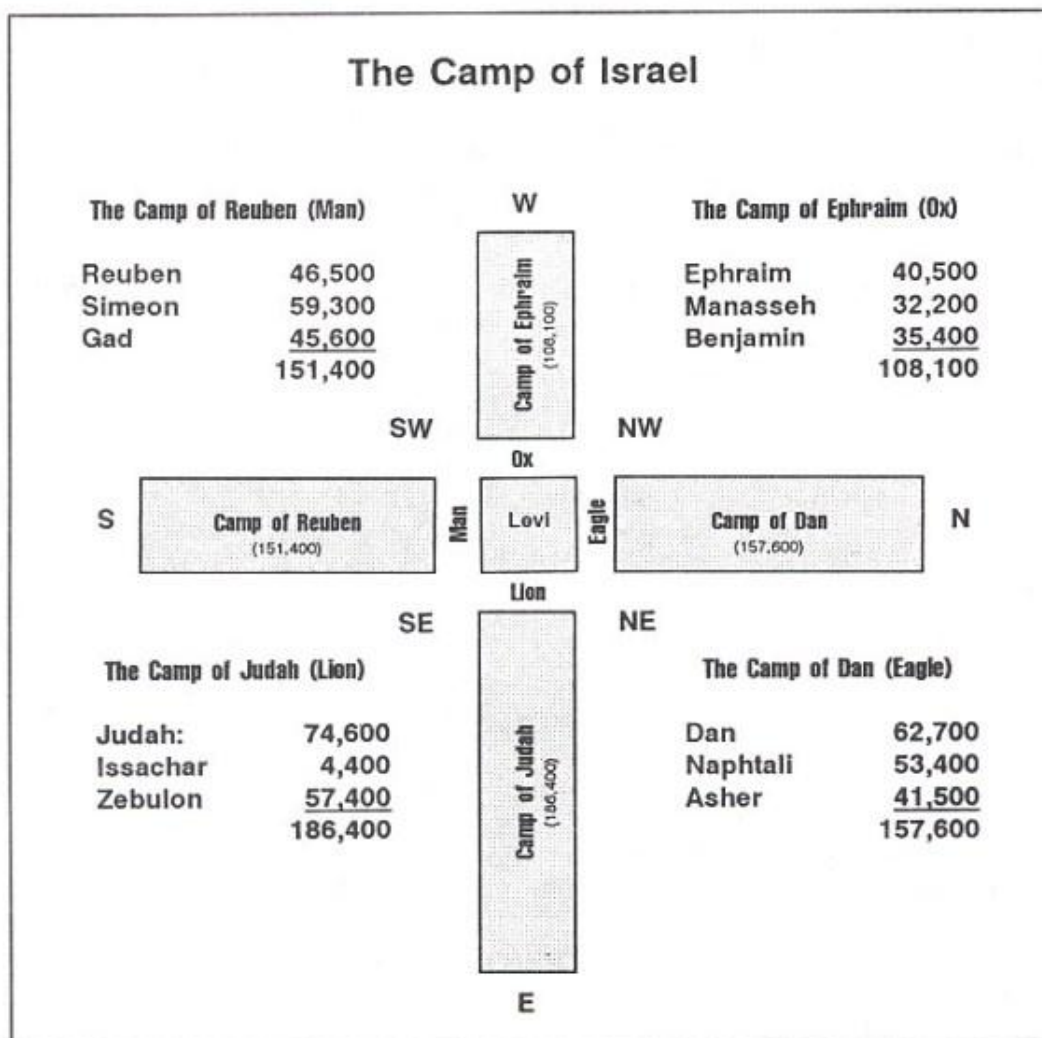
Num. 1:33: Those that were numbered of them, even of the tribe of Ephraim, were forty thousand and five hundred. (40,500)

Num. 1:35: Those that were numbered of them, even of the tribe of Manasseh, were thirty and two thousand and two hundred. (32,200)

During the exodus there were four camps the encamped around the tabernacle. The Camp of Reuben, the Camp of Ephraim, the Camp of Dan, and the Camp of Judah. These were the prominent tribes.

Num. 2:18: On the west side shall be the standard of the camp of Ephraim according to their armies: and the captain of the sons of Ephraim shall be Elishama the son of Ammihud.

You will notice that the way the Israelites encamped around the tabernacle formed the shape of a cross.



Eventually in the OT the name Ephraim came to identify the ten tribes comprising Israel's Northern Kingdom, not just the single tribe named after Joseph's son.

Eze. 37:16: Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions:

Hosea 5:3: I know Ephraim, and Israel is not hid from me: for now, O Ephraim, thou committest whoredom, and Israel is defiled.

Jer. 31:9: They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble: for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn.

Compare Jeremiah 31:9 with Exodus 4:22.

Ex. 4:22: And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD, Israel is my son, even my firstborn:

Ephraim and Israel are used synonymously. I believe this is because Jacob blessed Ephraim with the right hand of blessing. The blessing went from Abraham to Isaac to Jacob and now to Ephraim, therefore from that point on Ephraim represented Israel. We will prove this a little later.

When the Northern Kingdom, also referred to as "Israel," was taken into captivity by the Assyrians in 722 BC (2 Kings 17:6; Jeremiah 7) God said it was Ephraim to whom He sent the Assyrian. The Southern

Kingdom, also known as Judah, was conquered by the Babylonians nearly 140 years later (606 BC).

Isa:7:17: The LORD shall bring upon thee, and upon thy people, and upon thy father's house, days that have not come, from the day that Ephraim departed from Judah; even the king of Assyria.

We have mentioned that Ephraim represented the battle between the flesh and the spirit. God had gifted this tribe with warriors and valiant fighters.

1 Chr. 12:30: And of the children of Ephraim twenty thousand and eight hundred, mighty men of valour, famous throughout the house of their fathers.

In one example, during the time of the judges, the Ephraimites (AKA Ephrathites) became angry with Gideon because he had not called them to join him in battle against the Midianites (Jdg. 8:1). But Gideon wisely diffused the situation by extolling the tribe's commitment and willingness to serve the Lord (Jdg. 8:2-3).

Yet they failed in many areas. Ephraim failed to follow God's order to remove the Canaanites from the Promised Land (Ex. 23:23–25; Jdg. 1:29; Jos. 16:10). Ephraim also fell into idolatry as did the tribe of Dan.

Hos. 4:17: Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone.

In Revelation chapter 7 only two tribes are not mentioned having servants of God: Dan and Ephraim. (For more on Dan see Lesson 33.) This is because Ephraim under the leadership of Jeroboam was responsible for bringing idolatry into the northern kingdom of Israel.

Jeroboam

Jacob stole the birthright from Esau with the help of his mother Rebekah and then he gave it to his son Joseph.

Gen. 37:3: Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colours.

This coat of many colors represented the fact that Jacob gave the birthright to Joseph.

1 Chr. 5:1: Now the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel, (for he was the firstborn; but, forasmuch as he defiled his father's bed, his birthright was given unto the sons of Joseph the son of Israel: and the genealogy is not to be reckoned after the birthright.

1 Chr. 5:2: For Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him came the chief ruler; but the birthright was Joseph's:)

If the birthright belonged to Joseph then why did the king (David) come out of Judah? And later the Messiah.

Remember the verse we read from Isaiah, which said Ephraim departed from Judah?

Isa. 7:17: The LORD shall bring upon thee, and upon thy people, and upon thy father's house, days that have not come, from the day that Ephraim departed from Judah; even the king of Assyria.

This day occurred when Rehoboam became king over Judah. God knew this would happen, so in His foreknowledge He decreed that the

Messiah would come from Judah and not the tribe whose was the birthright.

1 Kings 12:16: So when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David. So Israel departed unto their tents.

Remember the synonymous use of Ephraim and Israel.

Because of Solomon's idolatry God rent the kingdom from him and raised up three adversaries against him: Hadad, Rezon and Jeroboam (see 1 Kings 11).

1 Kings 11:11: Wherefore the LORD said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant.

One of these three adversaries was Jeroboam, an Ephrathite; he happened to be one of Solomon's servants. (History repeats itself.) An Ephrathite was a descendant of Ephraim and also someone who was from Ephrath AKA Bethlehem.

Gen. 35:19: And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem.

1 Sam. 17:12: Now David was the son of that Ephrathite of Bethlehemjudah, whose name was Jesse; and he had eight sons: and the man went among men for an old man in the days of Saul.

Jesse was also an Ephrathite but we know he was descended from the tribe of Judah. So in Hebrew the word “Ephrathite” had two meanings.

Now comes the time when God gives the kingdom of Israel to the tribe which was given the birthright—the tribe of Joseph.

1 King 11:26: And Jeroboam the son of Nebat, an Ephrathite of Zereda, Solomon's servant, whose mother's name was Zeruah, a widow woman, even he lifted up his hand against the king.

1 Kings 11:28: And the man Jeroboam was a mighty man of valour: and Solomon seeing the young man that he was industrious, he made him ruler over all the charge of the house of Joseph.

Jeroboam was told he would be king during the reign of Solomon, but did not rule over Israel until after Solomon was dead.

1 Kings 11:30: And Ahijah caught the new garment that was on him, and rent it in twelve pieces:

1 Kings 11:31: And he said to Jeroboam, Take thee ten pieces: for thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee:

Jeroboam was later anointed king over Israel—the birthright that was Joseph's was fulfilled through Jeroboam the Ephrathite.

1 Kings 12:20: And it came to pass, when all Israel heard that Jeroboam was come again, that they sent and called him unto the congregation, and made him king over all Israel: there was none that followed the house of David, but the tribe of Judah only.

But Jeroboam did not take heed to word of the Lord and led Israel into idolatry.

1 Kings 11:38: And it shall be, if thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee, and wilt walk in my ways, and do that is right in my sight, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did; that I will be with thee, and build thee a sure house, as I built for David, and will give Israel unto thee.

David was told his seed would rule forever, therefore if Jeroboam would have hearkened unto the Lord, he too would have ruled forever over the northern kingdom of Israel.

Through Jeroboam God would have fulfilled the blessing of the birthright.

But the blessing Ephraim didn't last. One moment he was blessed, and the next rebuked. He lost what could have been an eternal blessing; he lost the right to rule over that which was his.

The same is offered to us today.

2 Tim. 2:12: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us:

2 Tim. 2:13: If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.

What will he deny us? The opportunity to reign with Him in all eternity.

Next week we are going to get into chapter 49; Jacob blesses his sons.