



A MINISTRY INITIATED IN MAY 1993, AND DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST, BY BUILDING THEIR FAITH, ENHANCING THEIR JOY, AND STABILIZING THEIR HOPE, ENABLING THEM TO WORK OUT THEIR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

The Book of Genesis 03/21/2014

Lesson Number 78



TRANSLATION LEGEND: ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot m(1992); ALT=Analytical-Literal Translation (2005), AMPLIFIED=Amplified Bible (1965), ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot with Greek Interlinear (2003); ASV=American Standard Version (1901), BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949), BRENT=Brenton's English Septuagint; CEB=Common English Bible (2011); CEV=Contemporary English Version (1995); DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899), EMTV=English Majority Text (2002); ERV=English Revised Version (1885), ETRV=Easy to Read (1999), ESV=English Stand Version (2001), GENEVA=Geneva Bible (1599), GNB=Good News (1966), GSNT=Goodspeed (1923), GWN=God's Word (1995), IE=International English (1973), ISV=International Standard Version (1967), JPS=Jewish Publication Society (1917), JUB=Jubilee Bible (2003); KJV=King James Version (1611), LITV=Literary Translation of the Bible (1976), LIVING=Living Bible (1971), MESSAGE=The Message (1993), MKJV=Modern KJV (1962), MONTGOMERY=Montgomery's New Testament (2001), MRD=Peshitta-James Murdock Translation (1852), NAB=New American Bible (2002), NASB=New American Standard Bible (1977), NAU=New American Standard Bible (1995), NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version (1984), NJB=New Jerusalem Bible (1985), NKJV=New King James Version (1979), NLT=New Living Translation (1996), NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989), PHILLIPS=J B Phillips New Testament (1962), PNT=Bishop's New Testament (1595), RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952), TNK=JPS Tanakh (1985), WEB=Webster Bible (1833), WEYMOUTH=Weymouth's New Testament (1903), WILLIAMS=William's New Testament (1937), TYNDALE=Tyndale's Bible (1526), WYCLIFFE=Wycliffe New Testament (1382), YLT=Young's Literal Translation (1862)

GREEK LEXICON LEGEND

LEXICON LEGEND: FRIEBERG = Friberg Lexicon, UBS = Barclay-Newman, LOUW-NIDA = Louw-Nida Lexicon, LIDDELL SCOTT

THE INSPIRED RECORD OF THE BEGINNING OF ALL THINGS: THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH, MANKIND, SIN, THE FIRST CHOSEN AND BLESSED NATION, THE FIRST CURSE, THE FIRST PROMISE, AND THE FIRST FAITH.

DISCLAIMER: The quoting of other translations is not to be taken as a condoning of them. My purpose is rather to show the remarkable diversity, and sometimes outright contradictions that exist among these various versions of Scripture. Our understanding of the Word of God ultimately depends upon our comprehension of the Lord Himself and His eternal purpose. Where this understanding is not present, we are shut up to scholasticism and conjecture, both of which are of the world, not of God.

JACOB BLESSES JOSEPH

“Gen 48:8” And Israel beheld Joseph's sons, and said, Who are these? ⁹ And Joseph said unto his father, They are my sons, whom God hath given me in this place. And he said, Bring them, I pray thee, unto me, and I will bless them. ¹⁰ Now the eyes of Israel were dim for age, so that he could not see. And he brought them near unto him; and he kissed them, and embraced them. ¹¹ And Israel said unto Joseph, I had not thought to see thy face: and, lo, God hath showed me also thy seed. ¹² And Joseph brought them out from between his knees, and he bowed himself with his face to the earth. ¹³ 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 unto him. ¹⁴ And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands wittingly; for Manasseh was the firstborn. 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, 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. 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. ¹⁸ And Joseph said unto his father, Not so, my father: for this is the firstborn; put thy right hand upon his head. 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. 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. 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. 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.” Gen 48:8-22

INTRODUCTION

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE TEXT

Jacob inquires about the young men with Joseph and finds they are his sons. He asks them to come to him so he can bless them. After kissing and embracing them, he lays his hands on

the boys, doing so “wittingly” – crossing his hands. His right hand, intended to be placed upon the firstborn, is placed on Ephraim, the youngest, and not the firstborn son. When Joseph saw this, it displeased

him, and he attempted to move Jacob's hand from Ephraim to Manasseh, the firstborn, telling Jacob he had his right hand on the wrong son. Jacob “refused” to move his hand, responding that he knew what he was doing. He

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said that the truth was that the younger would be the greater. He blessed them that day, declaring that God would “*set Ephraim before Manasseh*.” He then told Joseph that he was dying, but that God would bring him into the land of his fathers. He also told Joseph that he had given him one portion above the other brothers—i.e. a double portion, referring to himself taking the land out of the hands of the Amorite with his sword and bow.

THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD

Throughout the record of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, we see the providence of God again and again. I am using the word “providence” in the English meaning of the word: “DIVINE GUIDANCE OR CARE: GOD CONCEIVED AS THE POWER SUSTAINING AND GUIDING HUMAN DESTINY.”

MERRIAM-WEBSTER

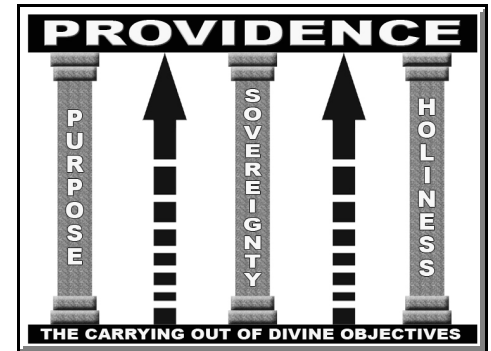
- ▶ **McClintok & Strong’s Bible Cyclopedia** defines the word as: “A TERM IMPORTING THE WISDOM AND POWER WHICH

GOD CONTINUALLY EXERCISES IN THE PRESERVATION AND GOVERNMENT OF THE WORLD, FOR THE ENDS WHICH HE PROPOSES TO ACCOMPLISH.

- ▶ **The International Bible Encyclopedia** says of this word: “IT IS ONLY WHEN THE WORD IS USED WITH REFERENCE TO THE DIVINE BEING WHO IS POSSESSED OF INFINITE KNOWLEDGE AND POWER THAT IT TAKES ON ITS REAL AND TRUE SIGNIFICANCE. THE DOCTRINE OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE, THEREFORE, HAS REFERENCE TO THAT PRESERVATION CARE AND GOVERNMENT WHICH GOD EXERCISES OVER ALL THINGS THAT HE HAS CREATED IN ORDER THEY MAY ACCOMPLISH THE ENDS FOR WHICH THEY WERE CREATED.”

- ▶ **Easton Bible Dictionary:** LITERALLY MEANS FORESIGHT, BUT IS GENERALLY USED TO DENOTE GOD’S PRESERVING AND GOVERNING ALL THINGS BY MEANS OF SECOND CAUSES (PSALM 18:35; 63:8; <441728>ACTS 17:28; COLOSSIANS 1:17; HEBREWS 1:3). GOD’S PROVIDENCE EXTENDS TO THE NATURAL WORLD (PSALM 104:14; 135:5-7; ACTS 14:17), THE BRUTE CREATION (PSALM 104:21-29; MATTHEW 6:26; 10:29), AND THE AFFAIRS OF MEN (1 CHRONICLES 16:31; PSALM 47:7; PROVERBS 21:1; JOB 12:23; DANIEL 2:21; 4:25), AND OF INDIVIDUALS (1 SAMUEL 2:6; PSALM 18:30; LUKE 1:53; JAMES 4:13-15). IT EXTENDS ALSO TO THE FREE ACTIONS OF MEN (EXODUS 12:36; 1 SAMUEL 24:9-15; PSALM 33:14, 15; PROVERBS 16:1; 19:21; 20:24; 21:1), AND THINGS SINFUL (2 SAMUEL 16:10; 24:1; ROMANS 11:32; ACTS 4:27, 28), AS WELL AS TO THEIR GOOD ACTIONS (PHIL. 2:13; 4:13; 2 CORINTHIANS 12:9, 10; EPHESIANS 2:10; GALATIANS 5:22-25). AS REGARDS SINFUL ACTIONS OF MEN, THEY ARE REPRESENTED AS OCCURRING BY GOD’S PERMISSION GENESIS 45:5; 50:20. COMP. 1 SAMUEL 6:6; EXODUS 7:13; 14:17; ACTS 2:3; 3:18; 4:27, 28), AND AS CONTROLLED (PSALM 76:10) AND OVERRULED FOR GOOD (GENESIS 50:20; ACTS 3:13). GOD DOES NOT CAUSE OR APPROVE OF SIN, BUT ONLY LIMITS, RESTRAINS, OVERRULES IT FOR GOOD. THE MODE OF GOD’S PROVIDENTIAL GOVERNMENT IS ALTOGETHER UNEXPLAINED. WE ONLY KNOW THAT IT IS A FACT THAT GOD DOES GOVERN ALL HIS CREATURES AND ALL THEIR ACTIONS; THAT THIS GOVERNMENT IS UNIVERSAL (PSALM 103:17-19), PARTICULAR (MATTHEW 10:29-31), EFFICACIOUS (PSALM 33:11; JOB 23:13), EMBRACES EVENTS APPARENTLY CONTINGENT (PROVERBS 16:9, 33; 19:21; 21:1), IS CONSISTENT WITH HIS OWN PERFECTION (2 TIMOTHY 2:13), AND TO HIS OWN GLORY (ROMANS 9:17; 11:36).

Boiled down to its essence, the providence of God is God carrying out His purposes. His primary interest is not pleasing men, but fulfilling His determined will. There is no effective way of causing the purpose of God to be aborted. The only variable is whether



or not the individual is benefitted by Othat will. **None of these workings are initiated, driven, or managed by either the will or the work of man.**

Thus far in Genesis we have seen the providence of God revealed in:

- ▶ The calling, deliverance, and preservation of Noah.
- ▶ The calling, choosing of, direction, safety, and increase of Abraham.
- ▶ The birth, preference for, choosing of, guidance, protection, and increase of Isaac.
- ▶ The birth, preference, choosing of, direction, protection, provision for, and increase of Jacob.
- ▶ The birth, preference for, choosing, protection, direction, and exaltation of Joseph.

The will and hand of the Lord were in all of these things. In them He was carrying out His purpose. Not one of His purposes failed. Not one of His chosen ones fell away, or failed to fulfill their calling. Everything God did was done thoroughly and effectively.

God’s providence is closely related with His foreknowledge, predestination, and election. There is no need for anyone to argue about this matter, because it is Divinely stamped into history. None of the things that happened to Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, could possibly have taken place if there was no such thing as providence, foreknowledge, predestination, or election. Later, Moses will confirm that all of these things were true of Moses, Aaron, the Levitical priesthood, and the nation of Israel as well.

WHO ARE THESE?

Gen 48:8 ***"And Israel beheld Joseph's sons, and said, Who are these?"***

ISRAEL BEHELD JOSEPH'S SONS

"And Israel beheld Joseph's sons . . ." Other versions read, *"Then Israel saw Joseph's sons,"* ^{NKJV} *"Then Israel looked over at the two boys,"* ^{LIVING} *"Then Israel, looking at Joseph's sons,"* ^{BBE} *"Noticing Joseph's sons,"* ^{TNK} and *"When Israel [almost blind] saw Joseph's sons."* ^{AMPLIFIED}

When the text says he *"beheld"*

Joseph had two sons, and he knew their names: *"And now thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt before I came unto thee into Egypt, are mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine"* (Gen 48:5). At this point, however, he apparently did not know they were there.

WHO ARE THESE?

" . . . and said, Who are these?" Other versions read, *"Who are these to thee?"* ^{SEPTUAGINT} *"Are these your*

though Jacob's eyes were weak, he was not willing to yield to that weakness at this time. He wanted to know the identity of those before him.

An Application

In spiritual life, when we are faced with truth that it is difficult to comprehend, we should ask someone who has better vision than ourselves. This was apparently the manner of the youthful Jesus. When He was in Jerusalem for the Passover with His parents, He went to the Temple and sought out the *"doctors"* of the Law – those who had a working acquaintance with the Scriptures. Three days later when Joseph and Mary sought Him, *"they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions"* (Luke 2:46). Apparently, the event had captured the attention of others, for *"all that heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers"* (Luke 2:47). Jesus had an inquiring mind at a young age, and Jacob possessed one when he was an old man. This is a comely trait. I wish it was more common in our day.

In spiritual life, when we are faced with truth that it is difficult to comprehend, we should ask someone who has better vision than ourselves.

Joseph's sons, it is to be understood that he did not see them clearly, for his vision was failing. We know from an earlier verse that Jacob was aware that

sons?" ^{NLT} *"Are these the ones?"* ^{LIVING}

Seeing the form of two additional people, Jacob asks who they are. Even

THEY ARE MY SONS

^{9a} ***"And Joseph said unto his father, They are my sons, whom God hath given me in this place."***

This was a momentous occasion, and Joseph did not fail to bring his sons with him. Already, Ephraim and Manasseh had heard Jacob testify of God's appearance to him (Gen 48:3-4). They had no doubt heard Jacob say that they would be his sons, and would inherit an equal inheritance with Joseph's brothers (Gen 48:5-6). They also heard the testimony of Rachel's death, before Jacob and his household had arrived at their destination.

Now, the fact that Jacob inquires

who they are indicates they had heard what had been said thus far. It all had to do with the will of God, His calling, His blessing, and His purpose.

No thinking person will, underestimate the value of being exposed to God's will and blessing. Such an exposure brings the Lord into the conscience of the hearers.

THEY ARE MY SONS

"And Joseph said unto his father, They are my sons . . ." These were not only Joseph's sons, they were born in the appropriate time – before the famine. Remember the words of Joseph when they were born: *"For God, said*

he, hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house;" and *"For God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction"* (Gen 41:51-52). They already knew what it was like to have provisions during a famine. They knew the value of being in a family that did not have to buy their food. They had seen their father, Joseph, survive and keep his faith while away from his homeland. They had experienced both plentifulness and famine.

Something To Be Learned

As He did for Joseph, God will give you a blessing during difficult times that will offset the effect of difficulty. This is the sort of thing Ezra confessed

following the Babylonian captivity: *"And now for a little space **grace hath been showed from the LORD our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a nail in his holy place, that our God may lighten our eyes, and give us a little reviving in our bondage"*** (Ezra 9:8). Think of those marvelous benefits, and how they parallel our experience in Christ.

➔ **SHOW GRACE.** There is nothing quite like the spiritual rejuvenation that is realized by the experience of grace. For us, grace is *"exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus"* (! Tim 1:14). This mitigates the sorrow that results from being in this present evil, world.

➔ **LEAVE US A REMNANT TO ESCAPE.** Whether we are speaking of the church as a whole, or as individual believers, the fiercest of trials and the chastening of the Lord does not utterly remove the objects of Divine attention. The remnant always remains to be rebuilt refurbished.

➔ **GIVE US A NAIL IN HIS HOLY PLACE.** For us, this *"Nail"* is the Lord Jesus in heaven. Isaiah spoke of Him in this way: *"And I will fasten Him as a nail in a sure place; and He shall be for a glorious throne to His Father's house. And they shall hang upon Him all the glory of His Father's house, the offspring and the issue, all vessels of small quantity, from the vessels of cups, even to all the vessels of flagons"* (Isa 22:23-24). This affirms the absolute centrality of Christ in the display of His grace. He was for a *"glorious throne to His Father's house."* All the glory of His Father's house would be placed on Him – everything would hinge on Him. He goes on to say, *"In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, shall the nail that is fastened in the sure place be removed, and be cut down, and fall; and the burden that was upon it shall be cut off: for the LORD hath spoken it"* (Isa 22:25). This depicts all of the sins of the world being placed upon Christ, then His life being cut off, removing *"the sins of the world."*

➔ **LIGHTEN OUR EYES.** Other versions read *"enlighten our eyes,"* ^{NKJV} *"gives light to our eyes,"* ^{NIV} *"brighten our eyes,"* ^{NRSV} and *"brighten our eyes."* ^{AMPLIFIED}

In the flesh, this is what happened to Jonathan when he dipped his rod in some honey: *"But Jonathan heard not when his father charged the people with the oath: wherefore he put forth the end of the rod that was in his hand, and dipped it in an honeycomb, and put his hand to his mouth; **and his eyes were enlightened**"* (1 Sam 14:27). This depicts encouragement, refurbishment, and the strength to carry on. This is what a good dose of strength does for the soul of the saints.

➔ **GIVE US A LITTLE REVIVING.** Other versions read, *"a measure of revival in our bondage,"* ^{NKJV} *"a little relief,"* ^{NIV} *"a little sustenance in our slavery."* ^{NRSV} **That is, the strength and renewal to make it safely through another day.** This is a picture of the rubble not being taken away, yet it does not get the best of us. This is making it through difficulty a step at a time.

we must learn – like how to navigate through treacherous waters, what to do during the storm, and how to conduct ourselves during an assault. **Character is formed in the crucible of difficulty.**

WHOM GOD HAS GIVEN ME IN THIS PLACE

"... whom God hath given me in this place." Other versions read, *"whom God has given me here in Egypt,"* ^{GWN} *"whom God has given me in this land,"* ^{BBE} *"These are the boys God gave me."* ^{ERV}

These sons were born during the years of plenty, prior to the commencement of the famine. That would have made Joseph in his mid-thirties, for he was thirty-seven when the years of famine began. He had been, therefore, in Egypt for approximately the same amount of time he was in Canaan, having commenced his reign when he was thirty (Gen 1:46).

Yet, during those years, he had not lost his faith, or ceased to associate his life with the Lord. He survived without being in an environment that

All of this is what Joseph realized in Egypt when his sons were born. It is also what we realize as we run the race and fight the fight of faith.

All of this is what Joseph realized in Egypt when his sons were born. It is also what we realize as we run the race and fight the fight of faith.

I will say that these things are not easy to learn, nor, indeed, are they intended to be. There is a kind of trouble and difficulty that lasts for a long time – like Joseph's imprisonment, and Israel's bondage in Egypt. By Divine intention, such disquietude does not come to an end quickly, even though we are driven to seek such an abrupt termination. But there are things that

was conducive to godliness. He did not choose this environment – **God chose it for him.** When he was tempted by Potiphar's seductress wife, he did not forget God. He remembered God when he was told of the dreams of the baker, the butler, and Pharaoh himself. He maintained a practical awareness of God that kept the channel of blessing open.

In that domain, Joseph knew his sons had been given to him by God. He came to realize why he was in Egypt in the first place (Gen 45:7-8).

A Powerful Witness

This provided a witness to succeeding generations that **those who were raised in the faith can, in fact, and if need be, survive in environment that contains no kindred spirits, or any semblance of revealed religion.** As with Joseph, such an environment must not be a chosen one. Also, in it the

individual must exercise himself not to be carried by a heathen or godless culture.

Notwithstanding, such an environment will not overcome stable souls! Keep in mind that Joseph's stability is to be interpreted in view of the times of limited revelation, no

writing from God, and no revealed moral law. **When it comes to an acquaintance with the staggering benefits vouchsafed to those in Christ, there simply is no comparison.** There is no valid excuse for professing "Christians" to lose their faith in schools of higher learning, in the job, or in a decadent culture.

I WILL BLESS THEM

^{9b} ***And he said, Bring them, I pray thee, unto me, and I will bless them.***

What will Jacob do, now that he is aware that Joseph's sons are standing before him? How will he think of them? We will find out a lot about Jacob as we consider his response.

BRING THEM UNTO ME

"And he said, Bring them, I pray thee, unto me . . ." These are the sons Jacob has said were now his own (Gen 48:5). He now wants to personally see them, and be close, to them.

As we will find, Jacob is not thinking as a grandfather, but as a patriarch and prophet. His family is no ordinary family, but one that has been singled out by God to participate in Abrahamic promise.

I WILL BLESS THEM

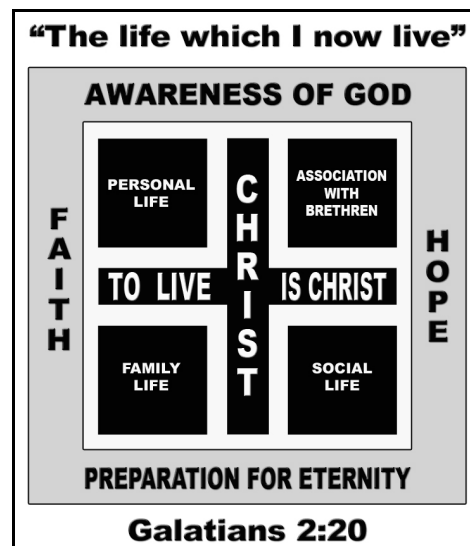
". . . and I will bless them." Other versions read, ***"that I may bless them,"*** ^{NIV} ***"I will give them a blessing,"*** ^{BBE} and ***"so that I can bless them."*** ^{CJB}

There are at least two things to be noted in these words – things that clarify matters concerning salvation.

- ➔ That for the sons to be blessed they must be near to the one doing the blessing. Jacob will not bless them from afar.
- ➔ This is no ordinary blessing – for safety, prosperity, etc. This will be a covenantal blessing such as is given to sons, for Jacob has claimed them

as his "sons."

If you trace the Scriptural records



of the patriarchs and other key persons associated with the purpose of God, **you will not find an emphasis on the mundane.** Ordinary family life with its various challenges and pleasures—i.e. everyday life – are **never** the focus. This should instruct us not to give priority to that aspect of life. It does not mean we are to neglect or disdain our lives in this world. **However, all of life is to be lived within a lively consciousness of the Lord and His great salvation.** When this is done, our lives will be more productive and satisfying. Since we will give an account to God for how we have lived, it also makes good sense to approach life in this manner.

It goes without saying that all of

life is to be centered in Jesus Christ, and lived for the glory of God. Jesus has ***"died for us"*** (Rom 5:8), purchased us with His own blood (Acts 20:28), is interceding for us (Rom 8:34), is teaching us (Eph 4:20-21), and shepherding us (Heb 13:20). Why would we live for anyone else?

An Application

Like Joseph brought his sons to Jacob, so Jesus has brought us to God. This is, in fact, what God has said to Jesus Christ, His Dear Son – ***"Bring them to Me."*** That is what the Son is going, bringing us ***"to God"*** (1 Pet 3:18). And, for what purpose is Jesus bringing us to God? **It is in order that He might bless us!** Is it not written of God the Father, ***"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ"*** (Eph 1:3).

While the blessing of the Lord often has residual benefits in domestic and social life, that is not its focus. In His dealings with the saved, God never allows eternal issues to be placed on the back-burner of life. A facet of life that does not have Christ as its center point is never an emphasis with God – even though it is often the preferred choice of men – even religious men.

The records of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph reveal that they lived their lives wholly for the Lord – always responding appropriately to His directives, and always mindful of His promises. This is unquestionably the manner in which we also are to live.

THE EYES IF ISRAEL WERE DIM

"¹⁰ Now the eyes of Israel were dim for age, so that he could not see. And he brought them near unto him; and he kissed them, and embraced them."

HE COULD NOT SEE

"Now the eyes of Israel were dim for age, so that he could not see. . . " Other versions read, *"were failing because of old age, and he could hardly see,"* ^{NIV} *"his eyes were no longer clear,"* ^{BBE} *"his eyesight was poor because of old age,"* ^{CSB} *"the eyes of Israel have been heavy from age,"* ^{YLT} *"was half blind with age,"* ^{LIVING} *"weighed down because of old age,"* ^{ABP} *"his eyes were not good."* ^{ERV}

Not Being Able to See Clearly Spiritually

Fleshly blindness, or the inability to see, parallels spiritual blindness. Under Law, a blind man, even though a Levite, was disqualified from offering bread to God, or going within the veil: *"Speak unto Aaron, saying, Whosoever he be of thy seed in their generations that hath any blemish, let him not approach to offer the bread of his God . . . he shall not go in unto the veil, nor come nigh unto the altar, because he hath a blemish; that he profane not My sanctuaries: for I the LORD do sanctify them"* (Lev 21:23). Also, the blind and lame could not be offered as a sacrifice to God (Lev 22:22; Deut 15:21).

Men in Scripture who are said to

his sight" (Psa 10:5). Isaiah spoke of the religious leaders of Israel as being *"blind"* (Isa 56:10). Jesus said the Pharisees were *"blind leaders of the blind,"* and that both of them would *"fall into the ditch"* (Matt 15:14). He also called them *"blind guides"* (Matt 23:16). Peter said that the professing believer that lacked the things to be *"added"* to his faith *"is blind and cannot see afar off"* (2 Pet 1:5-9).

This is a very real condition, and, if it occurs in one who once could understand, it suggests Divine abandonment. Rather than developing a cold and calculating doctrine about this, our efforts should be expended in a conscientious effort to avoid a state of spiritual blindness, where the things of God are not seen, or understood.

I suggest that the contemporary state of Christendom favors the development of spiritual blindness rather than spiritual understanding. That is precisely why it is so prevalent. It is the result of a religious system that is eager to maintain *"a form of godliness that denies the power thereof"* (2 Tim 3:5).

HE BROUGHT THEM NEAR UNTO HIM

" . . . And he brought them near unto him . . . " Other versions read, *"brought them close,"* ^{NASB} *"made them come near,"* ^{BBE} *"brought them nearer"* ^{DARBY} *"they approached to him,"* ^{ABP} and *"nigh unto him."* ^{YLT}

Knowing that Jacob was unable to see clearly, Joseph brings his sons within range of what vision he did have. Jacob wanted to see the young men, and Joseph also desired that he see the sons God had given him in Egypt.

HE KISSED THEM AND EMBRACED THEM

" . . . and he kissed them, and embraced them." Other versions read, *"he gave them a kiss, folding them in his arms,"* ^{BBE} *"hugged them and kissed them,"* ^{GWN} *"kisseth them, and cleaveth to them,"* ^{YLT} and *"kissed them both and*

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John Gill says of this text, *"THAT HE COULD NOT LIFT THEM UP EASILY AND SEE CLEARLY; HIS EYEBROWS HUNG OVER, HIS EYES WERE SUNK IN HIS HEAD, AND THE HUMORS PRESSED THEM THROUGH OLD AGE, THAT IT WAS WITH DIFFICULTY HE COULD PERCEIVE AN OBJECT, AT LEAST NOT DISTINCTLY."* Whether this was a deterioration in the seeing capacity of the eye, or in the parts surrounding of the eye, I do not know. The language can be used to describe both situations. The point is that Jacob was not able to see clearly. He was not blind like Bartimaeus. **However, when it comes to discerning fine details, whether facial or writing, there is little difference between not seeing clearly and being totally blind.** Before blessing the sons of Joseph, Jacob wanted to see them as best as possible.

have great difficulty seeing include Isaac, Jacob, Eli and Ahijah (Gen 27:1; Gen 48:10; 1 Sam 4:15; 1 Kgs 14:4).

There is also such a thing as spiritual blindness – blindness in the heart that makes one incapable of discerning the things of God.

Moses traced this to the fact that God did not give the people eyes to see: *"Yet the LORD hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day"* (Deut 29:4). This condition equated to being *"void of counsel,"* and not having *"understanding"* (Deut 32:28-29). The Psalmist said of *"the wicked,"* that God's judgments were *"far above out of*

embraced them.” ^{ISV} Most of the versions read “kissed and embraced.”

Jacob did not ask Joseph to bring his sons to him just so he could see them. He kissed and embraced them as a father would his own sons, for, in

regard to the Abrahamic covenant, he had adopted them for his own. I do not doubt that Jacob recalled how Isaac had kissed him before he blessed him (Gen 27:27).

While there was natural affection being displayed, more than this was

involved. **Jacob is preparing to bestow a covenantal blessing on Joseph’s sons.** He is thinking of the promise given to Abraham, and his father Isaac – patriarchal blessing, not of a mere parental blessing.

I HAD NOT THOUGHT TO SEE THY FACE

“¹¹ **And Israel said unto Joseph, I had not thought to see thy face: and, lo, God hath showed me also thy seed.**”

This is a tender scene, and it will be especially edifying to read how Jacob responds to this moment.

I HAD NOT THOUGHT TO SEE THY FACE

“And Israel said unto Joseph, I had not thought to see thy face . . .” Other versions read, “I never expected to see your face,” ^{NASB} “I had no hope of seeing your face again,” ^{BBE} “I did not think I should ever see you again,” ^{NJB} and “For many years I thought you were dead and that I would never see you again.” ^{CEV}

It is written, “Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life” (Prov 13:12). But Jacob had no hope of ever seeing Joseph again. **He had acclimated to the thought that Joseph was dead.** It was not pleasant for him, but he could not think of the possibility of ever seeing Joseph again. His experience was **not** one of hope being “deferred,” but of having **no** hope at all of ever seeing Joseph in this world again.

However, Jacob had been wrong for over twenty-two years. He had grown accustomed to thinking of a lie as being the truth for that period of time. Further, his brothers, who knew the truth of the matter, never held out one spark of hope to their father. They were content to have him consider Joseph to have been killed. In fact, that delusion served their purposes well.

GOD HATH SHOWED ME ALSO

“ . . . and, lo, God hath showed me also thy seed.” Other versions read, “In fact, God has,” ^{NKJV} “behold God has let me,” ^{NASB} “now God has allowed.” ^{NIV}

Notice how Jacob traces things back to God – “God hath showed me.” This was a consistent trait in those with whom God had extensive dealings. They became acutely conscious of the working of the Lord, and made Him the axis of their thinking.

Other people who did this include:

- ➔ Eve (Gen 4:25)
- ➔ Abraham (Gen 15:3)

there are seven appearances of God recorded (Gen 12:7; 17:1; 18:1; 26:2,24; 35:7,9). During that time the words “the Lord said” and “God said” occur thirty-six times.

My point is that there was comparatively little direct contact with God, and no Scripture. **Yet, the people with whom, God worked were acutely conscious of His presence and influence in their lives.** What can be said of a people living during the reign of Jesus Christ not recognizing the working of the Lord in their lives – whether in hardship, as with Joseph, or in times of

A failure to detect the presence and influence of God Almighty betrays the lack of involvement with Him.

- ➔ Noah (Gen 9:27)
- ➔ Melchizedek (Gen 14:20)
- ➔ Sarah (Gen 16:2; 21:6)
- ➔ Abraham’s servant (Gen 24:35, 44,56)
- ➔ Rachel (Gen 30:6)
- ➔ Leah (Gen 29:32-33; 30:18,20,23)
- ➔ Isaac (Gen 26:22; 27:27)
- ➔ Jacob (Gen 30:30; 31:9,42; 33:5,11)
- ➔ Laban (Gen 30:27)
- ➔ Laban’s daughters (Gen 31:16)
- ➔ Joseph (Gen 41:25,52)
- ➔ Joseph’s brothers (Gen 42:28; 44:16; 45:5,9; 48:9; 50:20).

This was all before Scripture, or any form of inspired writing. Until the time of our text (around 2,000 years),

great and unusual benefit? **A failure to detect the presence and influence of God Almighty betrays the lack of involvement with Him.**

Receiving More Than Expected

There is something else to be noted here. **Jacob confesses that he has received infinitely more than was expected** – or even desired. He had a longing for Joseph, but had apparently given no thought to the possibility of even seeing his sons. Now, in a grand display of the tender mercy of God, he has not only seen Joseph, but has been given to see His sons as well.

Something to be Learned

Even when we have an

expectancy produced by faith and hope, when the blessing is actually received, **it consistently transcends the expectation.** This is one of the great benefits of being in Christ Jesus. Such an circumstance produces joy,

satisfaction, thanksgiving, and praise to God. Further, the experience does not diminish with time. Rather, it continues to expand in both size and frequency. This is involved in the words, *"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear*

heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (1 Cor 2:9). **Only the Holy Spirit can address and resolve the limitation of our understanding.**

JOSEPH BOWED HIMSELF TO THE EARTH

"¹² And Joseph brought them out from between his knees, and he bowed himself with his face to the earth."

JOSEPH BROUGHT THEM OUT

"And Joseph brought them out from between his knees . . ." Other versions read, *"from beside his knees,"* NKJV *"took them from his knees,"* NASB *"removed them from Israel's,"* *knees,"* NIV *"taken them from his father's lap,"* DOUAY *"Joseph moved the boys, who were at their grandfather's knees" ^{NLT}* *"led the boys to their grandfather's knees,"* LIVING *"made his sons move away from Jacob's knees,"* CEV and *"took [the boys] from [his father's embrace]."* AMPLIFIED

The text reads as though the

Ephraim and Manasseh were young boys, standing between the knees of a seated Joseph. However, this is not at all the picture. The *"knees"* were those of Jacob, not Joseph. Joseph had brought his sons to Jacob as he had requested. Jacob had embraced them, having them close to him, and expressed the blessing of actually seeing Joseph's offspring. Jacob is sitting on the bed, having raised up to meet Joseph. He has drawn the boys close to himself to kiss and embrace them. They probably were kneeling before him.

Now Joseph moves them away from Jacob, and prepares to present them for the blessing.

HE BOWED HIMSELF

" . . . and he bowed himself with his face to the earth." First, in reverence for his father, and the patriarch of this developing band of people, he bows himself with his face to the earth.

This was more than the reverence of a son for his father. While that is involved, it is subservient to the greater role of Jacob as the patriarch and a prophet. Remember, the whole reason for this body of people was in order to the fulfilling of the promise made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that all the earth would be blessed by the ultimate *"Seed"* that was promised in Eden (Gen 3:15), and to each of the patriarchs (Gen 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14; Acts 3:25-26; Gal 3:8,16). This was an insightful bowing.

JOSEPH TOOK THEM BOTH

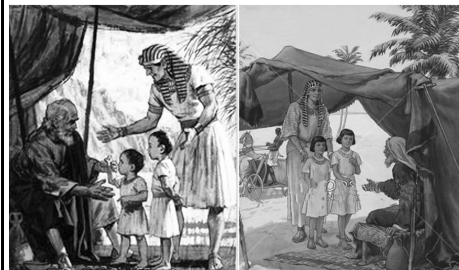
"¹³ And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near unto him."

A Word About Historical Biblical Art

Great and talented artists of yesteryear were renown for their Biblical paintings. There is something very noticeable, however, in many of their renditions: they are often Scripturally inaccurate. This is largely owing to a lack of Scriptural knowledge – a condition caused by the institutionalization of the church.

A case in point are the following paintings of Joseph presenting his sons to Jacob.

JOSEPH PRESENTS HIS SONS TO JACOB



Even though Joseph's sons were in their twenties, they are presented as very young boys. Such misrepresentations are not at all uncommon in historical Biblical paintings. Why is this so. It is because of the universal ignorance of the Word

of God that existed during the times those paintings were made.

When the Scriptures are taken from the people – either by edict or by a lack of proclamation –the effects ripple throughout the entirety of society. In this case, even into the field of art.

As in the matter of art, much of the religious customs and comments of our day are swathed in Scriptural ignorance. People have formed religious opinions that are distorted just as surely as religious art was during times of imposed Scriptural ignorance. The noticeable trend of excluding Scripture from the majority of sermonic presentations has produced absolutely intolerable results. As long as

IMPOSED SCRIPTURAL IGNORANCE

The Synod of Toulouse in 1229 forbade the laity to have in their possession any copy of the books of the Old and the New Testament except the Psalter and such other portions as are contained in the Breviary or the Hours of the Blessed Mary. "We most strictly forbid these works in the vulgar tongue" (Harduin, Concilia, xii, 178; Mansi, Concilia, xxiii, 194). The Synod of Tarragona (1234) ordered all vernacular versions to be brought to the bishop to be burned. James I renewed the decision of the Tarragona synod in 1276. The synod held there in 1317 under Archbishop Ximenes prohibited to Beghards, Beguines, and tertiaries of the Franciscans the possession of theological books in the vernacular (Mansi, Concilia, xxv, 627). The order of James I was renewed by later kings and confirmed by Paul II (1464-71). Ferdinand and Isabella (1474-1516) prohibited the translation of the Bible into the vernacular or the possession of such translations (F. H. Reusch, Index der verbotenen B_ cher, i, Bonn, 1883, 44).

In England Wyclif's Bible-translation caused the resolution passed by the third Synod of Oxford (1408): "No one shall henceforth of his own authority translate any text of Scripture into English; and no part of any such book or treatise composed in the time of John Wycliffe or later shall be read in public or private, under pain of excommunication" (Hefele, Conciliengeschichte, vi, 984). But Sir Thomas More states that he had himself seen old Bibles which were examined by the bishop and left in the hands of good Catholic laymen (Blunt, Reformation of the Church of England, 4th ed., London, 1878, I, 505). In Germany, Charles IV issued in 1369 an edict to four inquisitors against the translating and the reading of Scripture in the German language. This edict was caused by the operations of Beghards and Beguines. In 1485 and 1486, Berthold, archbishop of Mainz, issued an edict against the printing of religious books in German, giving among other reasons the singular one that the German language was unadapted to convey correctly religious ideas, and therefore they would be profaned. Berthold's edict had some influence, but could not prevent the dissemination and publication of new editions of the Bible. Leaders in the Church sometimes recommended to the laity the reading of the Bible, and the Church kept silence officially as long as these efforts were not abused. CHRISTIAN CLASSICS ETHEREAL LIBRARY

philosophy reigns in the pulpits of the land, ignorance will reign among the hearers.

JOSEPH BRINGS HIS SONS TO JACOB

"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 unto him."

Joseph now prepares to present his sons to Jacob for the covenantal blessing. He deliberately positions them so that Ephraim (the younger) was in his right hand, and toward Jacob's left hand. Manasseh (the firstborn) was in

his left hand, and toward Jacob's right hand. Thus the sons were arranged so that Jacob's right hand would rest on the firstborn, Manasseh. This was in accord with everything that was custom, even though the Lord had not adhered to this custom as made known in the ferment of the covenantal blessing upon Jacob. The Lord clearly departed from that norm when He revealed to Jacob's mother, Rebekah, *"Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger"* (Gen 25:23). Paul; also refers to this,

accounting for it by pointing out the blessing was **according to election**: *"(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;), It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated"* (Rom 9:11-13).

We will now see how this whole event played out. Will the purpose of God be carried out? Will the understanding of Jacob be vindicated? Or, will Jacob's move prove to be out of order?

GUIDING HIS HANDS WITTINGLY

"¹⁴ And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands wittingly; for Manasseh was the firstborn."

Here is a physical setting that contradicts the revealed purpose of God. The patriarch is about to bestow the covenantal blessing, and Joseph has unknowingly arranged his sons in contradiction of the will of the Lord. How will it all turn out?

Remember, this does not have to do with mere earthly circumstances or arrangements. This is something God has determined and revealed. This has

to do with the Divine ranking of His chosen people. We are now in the arena of Divine determination.

ISRAEL PLACES HIS HANDS ON THE SON'S HEADS

"And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head . . ."

Although Joseph had arranged the sons so that Manasseh was standing at Jacob's right hand, and Ephraim at his left, Jacob stretches out his right hand and places it on Ephraim's head, in contradiction of the custom, but in harmony with the Divine determination. He also placed his left hand on

Manasseh, who, Joseph thought, possessed the rights of the firstborn. Was this a deliberate action on the part of Jacob? Or was he made to move his hands in this manner without personal thought?

GUIDING HIS HANDS WITTINGLY

" . . . guiding his hands wittingly; for Manasseh was the firstborn." Other versions read, *"guiding his hands knowingly,"* ^{NKJV} *"crossing his hands,"* ^{NASB} *"crossing his arms,"* ^{NIV} *"crossing his hands on purpose"* ^{BBE} *"intentionally crossed his hands"* ^{CJB} *"guiding his hands intelligently,"* ^{DARBY} *"directing his hands of purpose"* ^{GENEVA} *"guiding his hands crosswise"* ^{SEPTUAGINT} *and "He did this purposely."* ^{LIVING}

Jacob, then, knew what he was doing. His cognitive powers entered into this matter, and he moved in

accordance with his understanding of the will of the Lord. To be sure, this did involve revelation, but revelation does

not exclude the willful use of the mind. Knowing is an essential aspect of faith and hope.

AND HE BLESSED JOSEPH

"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, 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."

In Genesis we are introduced to a blessing God. He "blessed" the sea creatures and fowls of the air (Gen 1:22). He blessed Adam and Eve (Gen 1:28; 5:2). He also blessed "the seventh day" (Gen 2:3). "God blessed Noah" (Gen 9:1). Until Abraham, God is said to have "blessed" five times (Gen 1:22,28; 2:3; 5:2; 9:1).

However, commencing with Abraham blessing became more frequent. In His first appearance to Abraham (then Abram), God said He would bless him, make him a blessing, bless those who blessed him, and through him bless "all the families of the earth" (Gen 12:2-3). He was also blessed after that (Gen 22:17; 24:1).

Through Abraham, God promised the universal blessing of mankind: "all families of the earth" (Gen 12:3; 28:14) "all nations of the earth" (Gen 18:18; 22:18; 26:4).

Others said to have been blessed by God include **Sarah** (Gen 17:16), **Ishmael** (Gen 17:20), **Isaac** (Gen 25:11; 26:3,12,24), **Laban**, for Jacob's sake (Gen 30:27), **Jacob** (Gen 30:30; 35:9; 48:3), and **Potiphar's house**, for Joseph's sake (Gen 39:5).

Those who were themselves blessed of God were soon known for conferring blessings in the name of the Lord. These include **Melchizedek** (Gen

14:19), **Isaac** (Gen 27:23; 28:1,6), and **Jacob** (Gen 47:7,10; 48:15,20; 49:28).

From all of these references we find that the purpose of God is being worked out in an environment of blessing, advantage, and sanctity.

HE BLESSED JOSEPH

"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 . . ."

Therefore, "the angel of the Lord" cannot be a revelation of Jesus in His pre-incarnate state – a position that many take.

In blessing Joseph Jacob spoke clearly about God. He was not merely his personal God. Rather, it was the God before whom his fathers Abraham and Isaac walked – fulfilling the same objective, and working within the same covenant. Experientially, it was the God who fed, or sustained him, through the entirety of his life.

It is only when what the Scriptures affirm of God is actually experienced, and recognized, that a person can give a personal testimony.

THE ANGEL WHICH REDEEMED ME

" . . . The Angel . . ." Other versions read, "the messenger," ^{GW} "The redeeming Angel [that is, the Angel the Redeemer—not a created being but the Lord Himself]." ^{AMPLIFIED}

Most commentators take the position that this is a reference to God Himself – the same view represented by the Amplified Bible above. While this is

the studied opinion of many notable Bible scholars, I cannot accept it. The Hebrew word translated "angel" is "MALAK," WHICH MEANS "MESSENGER, OR REPRESENTATIVE." ^{STRONG'S} Even lexical documents follow the opinions of some theologians by adding as a use, "THE THEOPHANY [A VISIBLE MANIFESTATION OF A DEITY] ANGEL." ^{STRONG'S}

Sixty-eight times the Scriptures do mention an apparently special angel called, "the angel of the Lord"—ex: Gen 16:7; 22:11; Ex 3:2; Num 22:22;

Judges 2:10. This angel is depicted as being active on earth **after** the birth of Jesus (Matt 2:13,19; 28:2; Lk 2:9; Acts 5:19; 8:26; 12:7,23). **Therefore, "the angel of the Lord" cannot be a revelation of Jesus in His pre-incarnate state – a position that many take.**

Two examples of the manner of God to speak and work through holy angels will suffice.

➡ **THE CALL OF MOSES.** *"And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed."* (Ex 3:2) Stephen said of this appearance: *"And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of mount Sinai an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush . . ."* *"This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God*

send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush." (Acts 7:30,35).

- ➔ **LEADING ISRAEL TO CANAAN.** *"Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him. But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries. For Mine Angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites: and I will cut them off."* (Ex 23:20-23)
- "And I will send an angel before thee; and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite: unto a land flowing with milk and honey: FOR I WILL NOT GO UP IN THE MIDST OF THEE; for thou art a stiffnecked people: lest I consume thee in the way"* (Ex 33:2-3).

Notice how God equated His

brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." (Ex 20:1-2). Stephen said of this event: *"Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it."* (Acts 7:53). Paul said of it, *"Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator."* (Gal 3:19). And again, *"For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward"* (Heb 2:2).

Because of the holiness of God, and His nature, He is unable to directly approach any person or group of persons without them being consumed. Therefore it is written, *"A fire goeth before him, and burneth up His enemies round about"* (Psa 97:3). For this reason God said of Moses, who had requested to see His glory, *"And he said, Thou canst not see My face: for there shall no man see Me, and live."* (Ex 33:20). John wrote, *"No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him."* (John 1:18). It is said of Deity, *"Who only*

spiritual chasm between God and mankind that holy angels are employed in any ordained contact. What the angels say is no different than God Himself speaking. He speaks through **them** in order that those who hear be not consumed.

WHICH REDEEMED ME

" . . . which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads . . ." Other versions read, *"delivered me from all harm,"* ^{NIV} *"redeemed me from all harm,"* ^{NRSV} *"has been my Savior from all evil"* ^{BBE} *"protected me from all harm"* ^{CEB} *"delivered me from all evil"* ^{GENEVA} *"rescued me from all evil"* ^{GWN} *"saved me from all harm"* ^{NJB} *"kept me from all harm,"* ^{LIVING} *"kept me safe,"* ^{CEV} *"frees me from all evil,"* ^{JUB} *"who is redeeming me from all evil,"* ^{YLT} and *"has redeemed me continually from every evil."* ^{AMPLIFIED}

The word *"redeem,"* together with all of its derivatives, is never used in the New Covenant writings as it is used in this text. The redemption mentioned after Jesus' return to heaven could never be accomplished by an angel.

- ➔ *"Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus"* (Rom 3:24)
- ➔ *"But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."* (1 Cor 1:30)
- ➔ *"To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."* (Gal 4:5)
- ➔ *"In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace."* (Eph 1:7)
- ➔ *"Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."* (Eph 1:14)
- ➔ *"And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."* (Eph 4:30)

The word "redeem," together with all of its derivatives, is never used in the New Covenant writings as it is used in this text. The redemption mentioned after Jesus' return to heaven could never be accomplished by an angel.

presence with that of the angel. Yet, He clearly said He Himself would not go up in the midst of them, lest He consume them in he way.

- ➔ **THE GIVING OF HE LAW.** *"And God spake all these words, saying, I am the LORD thy God, which have*

hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honor and power everlasting. Amen" (1 Tim 6:16).

These are not mere technical statements. There is such a moral and

➔ *"In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins." (Col 1:14)*

➔ *"Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." (Titus 2:14)*

➔ *"Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." (Heb 9:12)*

➔ *"And for this cause He is the Mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance."*

(Heb 9:15)

Considering all of these factors, I conclude that the **"angel of the Lord"** was not the Lord Himself, but a lofty representative of His Person. Neither, indeed, was it the pre-incarnate Christ, for that would require that He be humbled more than once. John says from the beginning the Word **"was God"** – not a representative of God (John 1:1).

LET MY NAME BE ON THEM

" . . . and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac . . ." In other words, the two sons of Joseph were to be numbered with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob. They are the only grandchildren of Jacob that were so identified. Further, the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were not

directly spoken to anyone after Jacob.

LET THEM GROW INTO A MULTITUDE

" . . . and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth." Other versions read, *"may they increase greatly in the earth,"* ^{NIV} *"let them become a great nation in the earth,"* ^{BBE} *"grow into teeming multitudes on the earth."* ^{CJB}

Aside from this incident, this blessing was only pronounced upon a very few individuals: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Gen 22:17; 26:4; 28:3; 32:12; 48:4).

This was a covenantal blessing – and that had to do with the occupation of the land of promise, Canaan. There had to be enough Israelites to displace the heathen to be driven out.

JOSEPH SAW, AND IT DISPLEASED HIM

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

WHEN JOSEPH SAW IT

"And when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it displeased him . . ."

Joseph is perceptive of what is happening. He is not distracted by some lesser consideration. He had deliberately positioned the boys so that the firstborn, Manasseh, was close to Jacob's right hand. Now he sees his father cross his hands, and place his right hand on Ephraim. He sees this as a mistake, and is *"displeased."* Other versions read, *"did not seem right to him,"* ^{BBE} *"he was upset,"* ^{CEB} *"he thought it was a mistake"* ^{CSB} *"it was evil in his eyes,"* ^{DARBY} *"was much displeased,"* ^{DOUAY} *"he didn't like it,"* ^{GWN}

"it seemed grievous to him," ^{SEPTUAGINT} *"this seemed wrong to him,"* ^{NAB} *"upset and displeased,"* ^{LIVING} and *"didn't make Joseph happy."* ^{ERV}

Seeing how Jacob had placed his hands, Joseph was greatly displeased. At the best, he thought this was a serious blunder. **For over two decades Joseph had thought of Ephraim as his**

HE HELD UP HIS FATHER'S HAND

" . . . and he held up his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's head unto Manasseh's head. . ."

Joseph *"took hold of his father's hand"* ^{NIV} in an effort to remove it from Ephraim's head and place it on Manasseh's head. He would correct this matter, he thought.

For over two decades Joseph had thought of Ephraim as his firstborn, and, consequently, the primary inheritor anything Joseph left.

firstborn, and, consequently, the primary inheritor anything Joseph left. Now, when the great blessing was going to be bestowed, Jacob crosses his hands and prepares to bless Ephraim. This was disruptive to Joseph's thinking, and caused him, grief of mind. He had to do something about it.

NOT SO, MY FATHER

" . . . And Joseph said unto his father, Not so, my father: for this is the firstborn; put thy right hand upon his head." Other versions read, *"No, my father,"* ^{NIV} *"Don't do it that way,"* ^{CJB} *"It should not be so,"* ^{DRA} and *"That's not right."* ^{GWN}

Surely this will correct the whole matter, and the blessing can be correctly conferred! Of course, this was how Joseph thought it should be, because that is how it had generally been done.

THERE ARE TIMES

There are times when the saints experience things that do not seem to be right. When compared with what generally takes place, such things do not seem to be correct. However, as it

often turns out, we were experiencing the will of God, and did not know it. Our definition of right was too narrow. It was defined more by experience and theory than by the Word of God. This is a human infirmity.

I KNOW IT, MY SON, I KNOW IT

“ 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.”

HIS FATHER REFUSED

“And his father refused, and said, I know it, my son, I know it . . .”

Jacob refuses to yield to the pressure of Joseph, even though Joseph had been known for his wisdom for over two decades. In this matter, owing to the inspiration of the Almighty (Job 32:8), Jacob has understanding that Joseph did not yet have.

This was not something Jacob did out of a sudden and undiscerning impulse. With a hint of impatience

Jacob says, *“I know it, my son, I know it.”* He was not confused about the matter.

HE SHALL BECOME A PEOPLE

“ . . . he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great . . .” Manasseh would not be unblessed. He would also become a people, and he also would be great.

The same kind of thing happened to Ishmael. He did not receive the blessing of the firstborn. Yet God said of him, *“Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. But my covenant will I establish with Isaac”* (Gen 17:20-21).

It also happened to Esau. The promise was given to him, *“And by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother; and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck”* (Gen 27:40).

TRULY, HIS YOUNGER BROTHER SHALL BE GREATER

“ . . . but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations.”

This was the blessing of the Lord, not merely of Jacob. The patriarch was close enough to, and sensitive enough of, the Living God to know what he should do. He knew who was to have the greater blessing. He knew where custom ended and the will of the Lord took the preeminence.

HE BLESSED THEM THAT DAY

“ 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.”

The will of the Lord was precisely done that day, even though there were objections to it at first.

GOD MAKE THEE AS EPHRAIM AND MANASSEH

Jacob pronounced a blessing that reflected Divine priorities. Articulating the proper order he said, *“God make thee as Ephraim and as Manasseh.”*

Until that time, they were always referred to as “Manasseh and Ephraim” (Gn 46:20; 48:1). However, when Jacob first referred to them, he said *“thy two sons Manasseh and Ephraim”* (Gen 48:5). Now, to confirm that this was not a mere fleshly preference, he brings God into the picture and *“set Ephraim before Manasseh.”*

When Abraham was buried Esau and Isaac buried him, and the record puts them in the Divinely defined order: *“And his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the*

Hittite, which is before Mamre” (Gen 25:9). The Chronicles also list them in that order: *“The sons of Abraham; Isaac, and Ishmael”* (1 Chron 1:28).

When referring to the sons of Isaac, Esau and Jacob, the letter to the Hebrew believers reverses the birth order, giving precedence to the Divine order, saying, *“By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come”* (Heb 11:20).

The Ultimate Progenitors

In the ultimate progenitors of men, the same approach is taken. The latter

progenitor is the prominent one. *"And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven."* (1 Cor 15:45-47).

The same order is reflected in the Covenants. *"In that he saith, A new covenant, He hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away"* (Heb 8:13). The latter covenant is the better one (Heb 8:6).

In Salvation

In the salvation of the believer, the latter man – "the new man" – is the greater one, being "created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph 4:24). There is a remarkable consistency in this kind of approach.

I DIE, BUT GOD BE WITH YOU

"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. 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."

BEHOLD I DIE

"And Israel said unto Joseph, Behold, I die . . ." Other versions read, *"I am dying,"* ^{NKJV} *"I am about to die,"* ^{NASB} *"Now my death is near,"* ^{BBE} *"You see that I am dying,"* ^{CJB} *"Look, I am about to die,"* ^{NLT} *"you can see that I won't live much longer,"* ^{CEV} *"Look, my time to die is almost here,"* ^{ERV} and *"Pay attention! I'm about to die."* ^{ISV}

One of the marvelous effects of faith is how a person approaches death. That is an experience that is inevitable, for *"it is appointed unto men once to die"* (Heb 9:27). That is, everyone must exit the body, either in the ordinary sense of death, or, if they remain alive until Jesus comes, being *"changed"* (1 Cor 15:51-52; 1 Thess 4:15,17).

For those who are not living by faith, the *"fear of death"* subjects them to a lifetime of bondage (Heb 2:15). However, notice how Jacob approaches death. He is fully aware of his decline, maintains a lucid mind, will make provisions for after his death, and will bear testimony to the presence of the Lord with him during his life. He does not ask for sympathy, but for close attention to what he is about to say.

GOD SHALL BE WITH YOU

" . . . but God shall be with you,

and bring you again unto the land of your fathers. . ."

Abraham had faithfully passed along what God had revealed to him about the future – just as God said he would (Gen 18:19).

Even though it would be over four hundred years before God brought his progeny back into Canaan, Jacob speaks of it as though was to take place in the very soon – within the lifetime of Joseph. He must have known of the four hundred stint in a strange land that was revealed to Abraham (Gen 15:13). **However, faith does not think in terms of time, but in**

There is an inordinate amount of simplicity among present believers concerning the coming of the Lord. Often I will hear professing Christians say, "Early believers fully expected the Lord to return in their lifetime." **I am not sure that is a proper assessment of the situation – anymore than Jacob expected Joseph and the rest of his offspring to enter into the promised land at any moment.** There is a vast difference between, by faith, looking for the coming of the Lord, and expecting it to occur at any moment. Faith enables us to live as though the coming of the Lord would take place at any moment, being able to do so because it reaches beyond the boundaries of time.

Even though it would be over four hundred years before God brought his progeny back into Canaan, Jacob speaks of it as though was to take place in the very soon – within the lifetime of Joseph.

concert with God's promises.

Jacob assures Joseph that the seed of Abraham would not always be in Egypt – even though several generations of them would live out their complete lives there. Faith reaches beyond the present and takes hold of the promises of God.

The Application to Those in Christ

God intended every generation of Abraham's seed to live in the prospect of entering the promised land – even though, reckoning from Abraham, about six hundred years passed before they would do so.

Those who are living by faith will recognize what I am saying. For others, the situation simply cannot be satisfactorily explained in the flesh.

ONE PORTION ABOVE THY BRETHREN

" . . . Moreover I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren . . . " Other versions read, *"one portion more,"* ^{NASB} *"I give the ridge of land,"* ^{NIV} *"given you more, even Shechem as your heritage,"* ^{BBE} *"Over and above what I am giving your brothers,"* ^{CSB} *"one tract of land above thy brethren,"* ^{DARBY} *"one more mountain ridge than your brothers,"* ^{GWN} *"beyond what I have given your brothers,"* ^{NLT} *"I have given the choice land of Shekem to you instead of to your brothers,"* ^{LIVING} and *"one spur of land beyond your brothers."* ^{LITV}

This land belonged to Joseph as the one to whom the birthright was passed, him taking the place of Reuben the firstborn. As it is written, *"For Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him came the chief ruler; but the birthright was Joseph's"* (1 Chron 5:2).

What Jacob additionally allotted to Joseph is spelled out in the next clause. This would be apportioned to his two sons, who would take his place in the dispersing of the land.

Ezekiel also refers to Joseph's larger inheritance: *"Thus saith the Lord GOD; This shall be the border, whereby ye shall inherit the land according to the twelve tribes of Israel: Joseph shall have two portions"* (Ezek 47:13).

Even the Gospels refer to this

parcel of land: *"Then cometh He to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph"* (John 4:5).

When Joshua administered the land to the various tribes, he referred to Joseph in this manner: *"And Joshua spake unto the house of Joseph, even to Ephraim and to Manasseh, saying, Thou art a great people, and hast great power: thou shalt not have one lot only"* (Josh 17:17).

I TOOK IT OUT OF THE HAND OF THE AMORITE

" . . . which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow."

This plot of land is mentioned in the book of Joshua as the place where Joseph's bones were buried. That land became the property of Joseph's sons. *"And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, buried they in Shechem, in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for an hundred pieces of silver: and it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph"* (Josh 24:32).

Jacob testifies that he took this ground with his "sword" and with his "bow." The Scriptures provide no record of this exploit – yet there is no question about the truth of what Jacob said. This is not made known in some writing left behind by Jacob. This was

revealed to Moses by the Spirit hundreds of years later. Let no one doubt that the report of Jacob's saying is absolutely true, for it passed through the scrutiny and revelation of the Spirit of God, who inspired *"all Scripture"* (2 Tim 3:16).

THE DANGER OF A RELIGION OF GENERALITIES

Surely you have been impressed with the specifics of this account. It certainly has not been characterized by generalities that required further interpretation.

While I do not desire to dwell on this subject, the landscape of Christianity is today characterized by too many generalities. Even though salvation is very specific and detailed, people have been led to think of it in very general terms. The consequence is that, for such people, life itself has become generalized, with little focus. Because faith and hope are very specific, they cannot be maintained in a "general" environment. The word "general," by definition is *"NOT CONFINED BY SPECIALIZATION OR CAREFUL LIMITATION."* ^{MERRIAM-WEBSTER}

However, the working of the Lord, as revealed thus far in Genesis, is characterized by specialization, Divine choice, and certain limitations. There are special people, special places, and special times. Divine choice is made known, as well as Divine exclusion. This is a representation of the manner in which God works among men.

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 4/4/14. We will continue our series of lessons in the book of Genesis. The seventy-ninth lesson will cover verses 49:1 thru 15: "JACOB BLESSES HIS SONS, #1." Jacob gathers his sons to tell them what will "befall" them "in the last days." Beginning with Reuben, he defines the character of his sons, and pronounces specific prophecies concerning them, also speaking certain promises pertinent to the coming Messiah. Our meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.