

Faith in Action

Part 4

“By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of Joseph's sons, and worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff.” (Hebrews 11:21)

Faith is obedience to God and abiding with His will and purpose. Jacob abided with the will of God when he blessed Joseph's sons Ephraim and Manasseh. Reuben is Jacob first son, but he did something disgraceful that excluded him from taking the double share, the privilege of the first born son. **“While Israel was living in that region, Reuben went in and slept with his father's concubine Bilhah, and Israel heard of it.” (Genesis 35:22)** Therefore Reuben was excluded from taking the privilege of the first born son, **“3 Reuben, you are my firstborn, my might, the first sign of my strength, excelling in honor, excelling in power. 4 Turbulent as the waters, you will no longer excel, for you went up onto your father's bed, onto my couch and defiled it.” (Genesis 49:3-4)** So Reuben was excluded and marked as turbulent waters.

Joseph was chosen to have the double share of blessing in obedience to what God had revealed in the past and fulfilled later on in Joseph life: **“5 Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him all the more. 6 He said to them, "Listen to this dream I had: 7 We were binding sheaves of grain out in the field when suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered around mine and bowed down to it." 8 His brothers said to him, "Do you intend to reign over us? Will you actually rule us?" And they hated him all the more because of his dream and what he had said. 9 Then he had another dream, and he told it to his brothers. "Listen," he said, "I had another dream, and this time the sun and moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me." 10 When he told his father as well as his brothers, his father rebuked him and said, "What is this dream you had? Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow down to the ground before you?" 11 His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind.” (Genesis 37:5-11)** So Jacob put these dreams of Joseph in mind. And when it come finally true that Joseph was in Egypt and was made second to Pharaoh and finally that he became truly over the rest of his brothers, then Jacob realized the dreams of Joseph were from God, therefore he consented and abide with God's will.

Therefore for this reason Jacob needed to adopt the two sons of Joseph as his sons and to bless both of them as Jacob's own sons in order to pass the double share for Joseph as you can read here: **“1 Some time later Joseph was told, "Your father is ill." So he took his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim along with him. 2 When Jacob was told, "Your son Joseph has come to you," Israel rallied his strength and sat up on the bed. 3 Jacob said to Joseph, "God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and there he blessed me 4 and said to me, 'I am going to make you fruitful and will increase your numbers. I will make you a community of peoples, and I will give this land as an everlasting possession to your descendants after you.' 5 "Now then, your two sons born to you in Egypt before I came to you here will be reckoned as mine; Ephraim and Manasseh will be mine, just as Reuben and Simeon are mine. 6 Any children born to you after them will be yours; in the territory they inherit they will be reckoned under the names of their brothers. 7 As I was returning from Paddan, to my sorrow Rachel died in the land of Canaan while we were still on the way, a little distance from Ephrath. So I buried her there beside the road to Ephrath" (that is, Bethlehem). 8 When Israel saw the sons of Joseph, he asked, "Who are these?" 9 "They are the sons God has given me here," Joseph said to his father. Then Israel said, "Bring them to me so I may bless them." 10 Now Israel's eyes were failing because of old age, and he could**

hardly see. So Joseph brought his sons close to him, and his father kissed them and embraced them. 11 Israel said to Joseph, "I never expected to see your face again, and now God has allowed me to see your children too." 12 Then Joseph removed them from Israel's knees and bowed down with his face to the ground. 13 And Joseph took both of them, Ephraim on his right toward Israel's left hand and Manasseh on his left toward Israel's right hand, and brought them close to him. 14 But Israel reached out his right hand and put it on Ephraim's head, though he was the younger, and crossing his arms, he put his left hand on Manasseh's head, even though Manasseh was the firstborn. 15 Then he blessed Joseph and said, "May the God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day, 16 the Angel who has delivered me from all harm --may he bless these boys. May they be called by my name and the names of my fathers Abraham and Isaac, and may they increase greatly upon the earth." 17 When Joseph saw his father placing his right hand on Ephraim's head he was displeased; so he took hold of his father's hand to move it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. 18 Joseph said to him, "No, my father, this one is the firstborn; put your right hand on his head." 19 But his father refused and said, "I know, my son, I know. He too will become a people, and he too will become great. Nevertheless, his younger brother will be greater than he, and his descendants will become a group of nations." 20 He blessed them that day and said, "In your name will Israel pronounce this blessing: 'May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh.' " So he put Ephraim ahead of Manasseh. 21 Then Israel said to Joseph, "I am about to die, but God will be with you and take you back to the land of your fathers. 22 And to you, as one who is over your brothers, I give the ridge of land I took from the Amorites with my sword and my bow.” (Genesis 48:1-22)

Jacob blessed Joseph as he said, **“22 Joseph is a fruitful vine, a fruitful vine near a spring, whose branches climb over a wall. 23 With bitterness archers attacked him; they shot at him with hostility. 24 But his bow remained steady, his strong arms stayed limber, because of the hand of the Mighty One of Jacob, because of the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel, 25 because of your father's God, who helps you, because of the Almighty, who blesses you with blessings of the heavens above, blessings of the deep that lies below, blessings of the breast and womb. 26 Your father's blessings are greater than the blessings of the ancient mountains, than the bounty of the age-old hills. Let all these rest on the head of Joseph, on the brow of the prince among his brothers.” (Genesis 49:22-26)**

My Dear and Beloved: Jacob lived a life of faith in obedience to God and His commands and that is the way to worship God till the time we will be taken to heaven: **“28 Jacob lived in Egypt seventeen years, and the years of his life were a hundred and forty-seven. 29 When the time drew near for Israel to die, he called for his son Joseph and said to him, "If I have found favor in your eyes, put your hand under my thigh and promise that you will show me kindness and faithfulness. Do not bury me in Egypt, 30 but when I rest with my fathers, carry me out of Egypt and bury me where they are buried." "I will do as you say," he said. 31 "Swear to me," he said. Then Joseph swore to him, and Israel worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff.” (Genesis 47:28-31)** Jacob was looking forward to be buried in the promise land that God had promised to give him and his descendents. He refused to be buried in Egypt and he wanted to be sure to be there, therefore he lived all his life in worship doing his best to be in obedience to God and that is the way to worship. The same thing for us, we live and labour in our lives working out our salvation in doing and living all what God wants us to live and do and that is how we worship the Living God.

My Prayer: Father God I come before you in the name of Jesus who died on the Cross for my sins and rose from the dead to give me eternal life. Lord I commit myself to live a life for you, to be inspired by your word and led by the Holy Spirit to achieve the things that you want me to do in this life. Lord until you come and takes me gives me strength and provide for me and protect me to continue to serve you and do your will, this is my prayer in Jesus name, Amen.