

Genesis 184
Our Adoption
Genesis 48:1-7
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Let us take our Bibles this morning and open them to Genesis 48:1. The title of our message this morning is "Our Adoption." Do y'all realize you have been adopted into the family of God? I think we see that prefigured here with what Jacob does with two of Joseph's sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, who were born in Egypt.

God, as we have talked about, has raised up this man, Joseph, to preserve the Nation of Israel. The Nation of Israel, in our verse-by-verse study, now finds itself in Goshen, where they are going to be incubated from Canaanite influence and even Egyptian influence, for 400 years. This was the plan of God all along.

Jacob Blesses Joseph's Sons (Genesis 48:1-22)

- I. Occasion (48:1-7)
- II. Blessing of Manasseh & Ephraim (48:8-20)
- III. Exodus prophecy (48:21-22)

As we have been looking at the life of Joseph, this is where we are: Genesis 48, where Jacob is going to bless two of Joseph's sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. You have the occasion—we might call it the adoption itself (48:17); then Jacob blesses Manasseh and Ephraim (Genesis 48:8-20); then the chapter concludes with an amazing prophecy about the fact that the Nation of Israel is not going to stay in Egypt forever (Genesis 48:21-22).

They are going to come out of Egypt with many possessions in an event that is the greatest redemptive event in history, other than the cross of Christ—something called the Exodus. There is a broad overview of this very interesting and very special chapter. Today, we are only going to be able to get into Genesis 48:1-7, the occasion of all of these things, which is Jacob adopting two of Joseph's sons born to him in Egypt.

Here is an outline of Genesis 48:1-7. We have some timing; we have a report to Jacob; and then Jacob gives a testimony. Notice, first of all, the timing—a couple of things are happening here.

- I. Occasion (48:1-7)
 - A. Timing (1)
 - B. Report to Jacob (2)
 - C. Jacob's testimony (3-7)

Genesis 48:1 says,

"Now it came about after these things that Joseph was told, 'Behold, your father is sick.'"

Jacob, as we saw last week, is at this time 147 years old (Genesis 47:28). He is now sick to the point of death, and people becoming sick to the point of death, very tragically, is part of the world that we are living in. We are living in a world of constant death.

It is just hard to be talking to someone one month, and then the next month they are dead. Yet, such is the reality of the world that we are living in. We knew that this would happen when our forebears sinned against God in Eden. Death was never part of God's plan. Man brought death into the world because of his rebellion against God. The good news in the whole thing is that when God brings us the new heavens and the new earth, death will be absent forever (Revelation 21:4). In the meantime we are in a creation that is groaning.

Paul writes in Romans 8:19-22:

"For the anxious longing of creation awaits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now."

The world is in a state of bondage, Satanic bondage, the bondage of death. Bad things in our world happen to good people, not because God intended it this way, but these are the repercussions and the consequences of sin. Even the body that you are in now is groaning.

Paul, in 2 Corinthians 4:16 says,

"Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day."

Such is the reality of living in a fallen world. It is very sad to see people experience these things without the hope of the new world or the resurrection body. I think life would be very difficult, if not impossible, without that hope; but that is our state. Jacob is sick to the point of death.

Then we have a description of his sons—these would be Joseph's sons. Genesis 48:1 says,

"...So [Joseph] took his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim with him."

Those two sons were born of Joseph in Egypt. You remember that Pharaoh gave to Joseph an Egyptian wife; and from that Egyptian wife came these two sons Manasseh the older and Ephraim the younger.

We have a record of this in Genesis 41:50-52. It says,

"Now before the year of the famine came, two sons were born to Joseph, whom Asenath, the daughter of Potipherah, priest of On, bore to him. Joseph named the firstborn Manasseh. 'For,' he said, 'God has made me

forget all my trouble and all my father's household.' He named the second one Ephraim, 'For,' he said, 'God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction.'"

Manasseh means "God has made me forget my troubles." Ephraim means "fruitful." We believe that Pharaoh is the one that gave Joseph these circumstances. Joseph married an Egyptian whose father happened to be an Egyptian priest, and from this union Joseph has two sons. Number one—the older Manasseh; number two—Ephraim the younger.

As Jacob is sick, Joseph brings these two to Jacob. These two kids probably are not even kids anymore. They are probably about 18 to 20 years of age since apparently Joseph had these children before the seven years of famine started. Jacob by this time is 147. He has been sojourning in Egypt for about 17 years, so probably about 18 to 20 years of age would be a pretty reasonable guess as to how old Manasseh and Ephraim are at this time. Why would Joseph, as Jacob is ready to die, bring these two to Jacob? He probably wants them to receive something that we have studied in the Book of Genesis—the patriarchal blessing. There is a report given to Jacob.

It says in Genesis 48:2:

"When it was told to Jacob, 'Behold, your son Joseph has come to you,' Israel collected his strength and sat up in the bed."

Notice the switch in names there between Jacob—beginning of the verse; and Israel—second part of the verse. This is something that is going to happen all the way through the Bible from this point on. Jacob and Israel, the names are synonyms for one another because Jacob was given a new name by God—Israel. Even in the events of the coming Great Tribulation period, which primarily concerned the Nation of Israel, that time period is called a time of trouble for Jacob.

Jeremiah 30:7, talking about that terrible time period says,

*""Alas! for that day is great,
There is none like it;
And it is a time of Jacob's distress,
But [Jacob] will be saved from it.""*

This becomes one of the reasons why, as a Christian, you will not be in this time period, because you are not Jacob. We are the Church. God has the Church and Israel as two different trains running on separate railroad tracks. God has a program for the Church and He has a program for Israel. When the prophets outline God's program for Israel, the circumstances through which Israel will be converted, you will notice that it is called a time of Jacob's trouble, because Jacob and Israel are synonyms—different words, same meaning.

Of course, the Bible is not going to explain itself. That is why studying the Book of Genesis is such a big deal. The Book of Genesis records the beginning of everything: universe, life, man, marriage, evil, clothing, religion, salvation, language, government, and nations.

Beginning Themes

Universe	Religion
Life	Salvation
Man	Language
Marriage	Government
Evil	Nations
Clothing	Israel

Morris, *Genesis Record*, 18-20.

Where did Israel come from? We would have no knowledge of those things, if it were not for the Book of Beginnings—the Book of Genesis. This is why, as a Christian, you cannot bypass the Book of Genesis. You cannot marginalize the Book of Genesis, because if you do not understand the Book of Genesis, you do not understand everything that the Bible is built upon, even the reality of death.

Why is it that we are living in a world with death in it and evil in it? The Book of Genesis is the only source we have that gives us any real explanation of that. The rest of the Bible is going to come along and build on a foundation or a structure laid by the Book of Genesis.

It is at this point that Jacob pulls himself up in his bed, gets a little energy there, as you know, sometimes happens to people when they are ready to die. This happened to my dad when he passed away recently, very weakened on the bed. There are moments where you think, "He is coming out of it. There is a little energy here." The same thing is happening to Jacob at the age of 147, just prior to his death.

Jacob, seeing these two, gives a testimony (Genesis 48:3-7). Here are the things that he speaks of in his testimony:

- C. Jacob's testimony (3-7)
 - 1. God's appearance (3)
 - 2. Abrahamic Covenant reaffirmed (4)
 - 3. Jacob's adoptions (5)
 - 4. Joseph's status (6)
 - 5. Rachel's death (7)

The first thing he talks about is how God appeared to him. Look at Genesis 48:3. It says,

"Then Jacob said to Joseph, 'God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me.'"

"God appeared to me." He is probably referring to Genesis 28, where you will remember that Jacob saw the vision of Jacob's Ladder. The Abrahamic Covenant, which had been given to Abraham, was now reaffirmed to Abraham's grandson Jacob. Jacob had a very special and unique calling, in the sense that several times he had a direct encounter or an appearance from God Himself.

We look at that and say, "That would be wonderful, wouldn't it? Wouldn't it be wonderful if God would just appear and speak to us?" In fact, we have that. It is called the completed canon of Scripture—something that Jacob did not have. He had piecemeal revelation; but you, through the completed canon of Scripture, have the whole enchilada—you have the whole shawarma. People say, "I wish God would speak to me." God is saying, "Read My book that I have given to you."

Peter writes about this in 2 Peter 1:3-4. He says,

"Seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust."

In other words, everything you have, everything you need to develop into the full stature of Christ is given to you in the Bible. If God gives you some extra vision or something like that, and it is really from God, then that is above and beyond, because everything you need is in this book. That is why we call ourselves Sugar Land Bible Church. Bible is our middle name. We are all about the Word of God and the God of the Word. You should come to a church like this and receive biblical teaching, because everything that we need to develop into Christ's likeness has already been given to us.

Paul, writing to Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:16-17, says,

"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."

There is no piece of data, there is no piece of information that God has held out. You have everything you need to become everything that God wants you to become in these last days. It is just a matter of giving ourselves to this Book.

You will notice that Jacob had this encounter with God that he is reflecting back on at a very special place—Luz in the land of Canaan. It is probably located near Bethel. This is most likely a reference to Genesis 28:19. He says,

"He called the name of the place Bethel; however, previously the name of the city had been Luz."

What Jacob received there (and remember he was fleeing from his brother—he was a refugee, a fugitive) was a vision. It was at a very special time in his life, when he had a very special need; and God opened up the heavens and disclosed Himself to Jacob. That vision was so overwhelming that he actually renamed the place where he had it as Bethel—compound word "El" God, "beit" House, "House of God." Formerly the name of it was a place called Luz.

Once again, you notice that this is real geography—real places, real people—where these things happened. The Bible, as much as it is a spiritual book, is actually a spiritual book given to us in a real historical context, a real setting that can be evaluated archaeologically.

The Mormons, for example, talk about the appearance of Jesus in North America. It is very interesting that Brigham Young University has one of the most well-known archeology departments academically, and they cannot find a trace of Jesus in North America. Yet, if you travel to the Nation of Israel, as you know, there are perpetual discoveries that are made all of the time that do not contradict the biblical account but validate it. This is why God set up His Word the way He did. It is actually set up to show even the greatest skeptic that these things really happened, because they took place in a real archeological, geographical, historical setting that can be confirmed.

It is very important to communicate this to your children and your grandchildren, because what they are taught in their secular education is that the real history is done in the classroom with the guy that has the PhD behind his name. What you guys are doing in church is just a religion thing. It is just the faith thing. That is not true. God intentionally designed His Word so that it could be confirmed historically as to what actually transpired and happened.

You notice what God did when He gave this vision to Jacob, He blessed him. He says, at the end of Genesis 48:3, "When I saw this vision, God blessed me," and we say, "Wouldn't it be nice to be blessed by God?" Well, the truth of the matter is, as a Christian, you already are blessed by God. You just may not know it.

Paul says in Ephesians 1:3:

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us"—not with 99% of spiritual blessings—"with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ."

In other words, you are spiritually rich and you do not realize it.

To the struggling church at Smyrna, Jesus said this in Revelation 2:9:

""I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich), and the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.""

In other words, He is acknowledging their tribulation. He is acknowledging their physical poverty. He is acknowledging the fact that they are under persecution. You might feel like that this morning. This might be an "all of the above" statement applied to your life. You might be in tribulation; you might be having financial difficulties; you might be under persecution. God says that you are rich because you have been blessed "with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places."

Do not look back at the Jacob story and say, "You know, he was blessed, but I am not." Nonsense. We act the way we do because we have been blessed. I do not go to God

saying, "Okay, Lord, I have behaved the right way this week, so bless me." If I were to ask the Lord to bless me, He would be saying, "What else do you want? Your bank account is maxed out. You have been blessed 'with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.'" I do not go to God and say, "Okay, bless me, Lord, because I behaved the right way this week." I say to the Lord, "Lord, thank you for giving me the ability to behave myself this week, and I wanted to act that way because I am blessed."

A lot of people out there are giving money to get blessed. That is a completely lopsided motivation. We do not give money to be blessed—we give because we are blessed. Jacob was blessed. You are blessed. In fact, if you are a member of the human race, you are blessed. That is Genesis 5:2, God blessed our forebears—humanity, Adam and Eve. God is in the blessing business, and when we study our Bible carefully, we learn that we already are blessed. We just need to let our behavior catch up with our position in Christ Jesus.

This testimony by Jacob goes on, and in Genesis 48:4, he reaffirms the Abrahamic Covenant. He says,

"And He said to me, 'Behold, I will make you fruitful and numerous, and I will make you a company of peoples, and will give you this land to your descendants after you for an everlasting possession.'"

What land? The land that Jacob was on when he saw this vision of Jacob's Ladder, the Land of Canaan. What Jacob is reminding Joseph of is the Abrahamic Covenant. He mentions four things about the Abrahamic Covenant. Number one—God said, in the Abrahamic Covenant to the Nation of Israel, "You are going to be fruitful as a nation." In other words, "You are going to be productive. Your life is not an accident. Your life is not spent in trivial pursuit. Your life is going to achieve eternal results." I would say that is God's design for your life as well—and for mine. God does not save us so that we would live unfruitful lives. He saves us so that He could produce eternal fruit through us.

In 2 Peter 1:8, Peter writes:

"For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

God has a purpose for your life. God has a vision for your life. God has a direction for your life. There are all kinds of people that God wants to touch eternally through your life—He is going to do that through you. When you look back, and all is said and done, you say to the Lord, "Wow, how did You accomplish so much through so little?" God says, "That was My intention all along." We need to develop a vision for the Christian life of fruitfulness and productivity.

Jesus, in the Upper Room, told the disciples this constantly.

"I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5).

Just like a branch cannot bear fruit without being connected to the vine, a Christian cannot bear fruit unless they are in fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ. How can eternal things come about in our lives when we are out of fellowship with the eternal God?

I used to think my responsibility as a Christian was to produce fruit. In hindsight, nothing could be further from the truth. I do not produce fruit. In fact, there is no Bible verse that says, "Go out and produce fruit." What it says is, "Bear fruit." There is a world of difference between bearing fruit and producing fruit. Producing fruit means the branch is trying to crank it up on their own, when they do not have the power to do it. Bearing fruit means I am abiding in Jesus Christ by way of fellowship, and the fruit comes naturally. The fruit comes, shall we say, organically.

A branch does not sit there as an orange branch and say, "Oranges, oranges, oranges. I have to create some oranges." That branch just abides in an orange tree, and these oranges just come forth naturally. As we allow Jesus to produce these kinds of things in us, we are bearing fruit that will last; that stands the test of time; that has an eternal impact. My job is not to get out there and bear fruit. My job is just to be with Jesus.

I am going to try to stay in fellowship with Jesus. I think I know the things that please Him and displease Him. I will try to pursue those things and stay away from things that displease Him. When I do displease Him, I will confess my sins, not to get saved again, but to restore our fellowship. If I have a lifestyle that way, then all the fruit that is going to come forth in your life is just going to come organically. It is a beautiful thing, this agrarian concept of fruitfulness.

God's design for the Nation of Israel from day one was to be fruitful. Even in rebellion, look at what they produced. They gave us a Book, they gave us a Messiah. Yet, when they are back in faith, they are going to give us a Kingdom. Amazing!

The second thing that Jacob rehearses as he is reflecting back on the Abrahamic Covenant, reaffirmed to him in Genesis 28, is the promise that the Nation of Israel would be numerous.

"And He said to me, 'Behold, I will make you fruitful and numerous...'"
(Genesis 48:4).

There are a number of prophecies given by God that Israel's number would grow. They are compared to the stars in the heavens. In Genesis 15:5, this is what God said to Abraham:

"And He took him outside and said, 'Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them.'"

I think God knew that he could not count the stars, because everything that we have discovered with the modern Hubble telescope and all of these things, there are so many stars in this galaxy that they are innumerable. "Go ahead and count them if you want."

"And He said to him, 'So shall your descendants be'" (Genesis 15:5).

Your descendants are going to be as numerous as the stars themselves. They are going to be as numerous as the sand on the seashore. The third metaphor that is given is that they are going to be as numerous as the dust of the earth. By the way, it is not just about numbers nationally. It is about a special Seed (Galatians 3:16), who is going to come to the world through this innumerable seed, the Nation of Israel. That special Seed is none other than Jesus Christ. It is what the Christmas season, the Christmas time of the year, is all about. It is about the entry of that special Seed coming from Abraham's innumerable seed, who would fix a problem that we could not fix, which is our sin debt and our alienation from God.

Exodus 1:7 is going to talk about how God is going to make good on this promise of enumerability.

"But the sons of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly, and multiplied, and became exceedingly mighty, so that the land was filled with them."

There are not a lot of them in this chapter, but a delay is not a denial. Give history enough time and it always will catch up to what God said. The promise of enumerability is on the horizon.

"And He said..."and I will make you a company of peoples..." (Genesis 48:4).

In fact, all the way back in Genesis 17:16 it is predicted that nations and kings are going to come forth from the Nation of Israel, this little group of 66 to 70 people. Genesis 17:16 says,

"I will bless her, and indeed I will give you a son by her. Then I will bless her, and she will be a mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her."

That is exactly what happened—kings came through the Nation of Israel. In fact, the Nation of Israel, because of disobedience, was divided between the North and the South in later Old Testament Scripture after the days of Solomon. The North had 19 kings; the South had 20 kings. Up north all the kings were bad. At least in the south, of 20 Kings eight ended up being good. God seemed to give more grace to the South, because in the South was a very special tribe named Judah, and the Messiah would come from that tribe (Genesis 49:10). You can see how literally the promise is fulfilled, that "from you would come many kings."

Not just kings, but tribes. Twelve Tribes are going to come to the Nation of Israel according to what God said. The tribes are going to be very dominant even in the Millennial Kingdom. Ezekiel 47 talks about the different land portions each tribe will have. In fact, Jesus said this to the disciples in Matthew 19:28:

"...Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

Surely companies did, and would continue to, come forth from the Nation of Israel.

Then there is something else God gave to Jacob in the Abrahamic Covenant. You see that at the end of Genesis 48:4. He says,

""...and will give this land to your descendants after you for an everlasting possession.""

He gave to the Nation of Israel a chunk of real estate. That real estate is essentially from modern-day Egypt to modern-day Iraq—from the Nile to the Euphrates. It is a plot of real estate that starts from the great river of Egypt. I think it is hard to interpret that unless you understand it as the Nile. It will go all the way to the edge of modern-day Iraq, all the way to the Euphrates itself. "This land, although right now it is being occupied by Canaanite city-states, will be completely and totally under your jurisdiction one day—forever."



"Forever" is the Hebrew word "olam." This is a covenant which is unconditional, meaning it does not rest on Israel's performance for the details to be executed. When we were in Genesis 15, which is the origin of that covenant, I gave you the reasons why we take it as unconditional. Abraham alone was put to sleep while God alone passed through the severed animal parts. There are no conditions stated for Israel to receive these benefits. The covenant is eternal and unchangeable, meaning it must rest completely on God's shoulders. No matter how wayward Israel went (and she became very wayward in the pages of the Old Testament), God kept reaffirming the covenant to them. It has never been canceled.

The fact of the matter is, the Nation of Israel has never received, even to this present day, everything that God promised her. What she possesses today is just a small fraction of everything that she will possess. These promises were not fulfilled, contrary to what many people will tell you, in the days of Solomon. They were not fulfilled in the days of Joshua,

because God says, "You will have the land forever." They were evicted from the land after the days of Joshua and Solomon.

When is God going to make good on these promises? He is going to make good on these promises during the thousand-year Kingdom. This belief that we have of a coming land portion for Israel—and we see it is never been fulfilled unless you want to just symbolize it away and say God really does not mean what He says—but if you want to take it at face value, it forces us in the direction that Israel is going to possess this land forever.

God cannot allow this earth to go out of existence until this covenant is fulfilled. Even when God dissolves this earth by fire and replaces it with a new heavens and new earth, Israel is very prominent in the new heavens and the new earth, as the gates of the city around the city of Jerusalem coming down out of heaven, are named after the Twelve Tribes.

God keeps His promises because God keeps every promise He has ever made. We very strongly believe in a future earthly kingdom, where Israel will possess, from Egypt to Iraq, everything that God promised. This is what God said to Abraham. This is what was reconfirmed to Jacob when he was a fugitive, fleeing the wrath of his brother at this place called Bethel—this language that God gave him and this "stairway to heaven" with angels ascending and descending on this ladder that connected Earth to heaven. It is an amazing thing what God has said and done for Israel.

By the way, it is the same territory that the youth of today, on their college campus, are shouting, "From the river to the sea." They have got the river wrong, because my river says Euphrates, their river is Jordan. "From the river to the sea, the land of Palestine shall be free." Can you find the name Palestine in the Bible? I do not see it. That is what they say. Whether they know it or not they are calling for an eradication of the Jewish presence in the Land of Israel today, when they say, "From the river to the sea, the land of Palestine shall be free."

That is why we came up with our own verbiage here. We say, "From the river to the sea (Euphrates to the Mediterranean) the Land of Israel will always be." We have some stickers where we promote that. This is a conversation starter because I think we need something to say to the youth that are being captivated by wrong doctrine. This is a land portion that is unconditional. It is unfulfilled; and it drives us in the direction of a future Millennial Kingdom.

Then you go down to Genesis 48:5, and now you see the actual adoptions. It says,

"Now your two sons, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, are mine; Ephraim and Manasseh shall be mine..."

This is what Jacob is saying on his deathbed to Joseph's two sons that were born to him through an Egyptian woman whose father happened to be an Egyptian priest in the land of Egypt. Jacob, on his deathbed, says, "Those two kids, they are mine. They are adopted. Egyptian born, yes, but they belong to me." "How can you do that, Jacob?" "I just did it because I can adopt whoever I want."

Did you know that God has done the exact same thing to you? You, as a Gentile, do not belong. We are an unnatural branch. The natural branch is being broken off; an unnatural wild branch is being brought into the tree. Paul tells us this in Romans 11. "How can God do that?" Because He is in the adopting business. In fact, He will take people that are dead in their trespasses and sins, that are hell bent (literally speaking) and rebellion against Him; if they will trust His son, He will bring it right into the family. Over and over again, the Bible tells us that we have been adopted as Christians by God.

I like the title of Michael Reagan's book, President Reagan's son. The title of it is "Twice Adopted." He was adopted by Ronald and Nancy Reagan, and then he says, "Twice adopted, because then God adopted me." It is a beautiful title.

Galatians 4:5-6 says,

"So that He might redeem those who are under the Law, that we might receive adoption as sons."

Galatians 4:7 says,

"...and if a son, then an heir through God."

You are the heir to the whole estate. It is not as if God has given you a job offer to run the Fortune 500 company. He says, "You are the heir to the whole thing." What can give me that right as an heir? I have been adopted. I have been adopted into the royal priesthood and family of God. Do I have privileges in that role? You bet.

Galatians 4:6 says,

"Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!'"

Abba means "daddy." You have the privilege, as a Christian, of approaching God as Daddy, loving Father, because you have been adopted.

Romans 8:17 says,

"And if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may be glorified with Him."

That is our journey: temporary suffering in this world; eternal glory to follow. That is just what happened to Jesus. Why is it the same program for us? Because we have been adopted as sons.

Ephesians 1:5 says,

"He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will."

The kindness of God—do you know what the Bible teaches? It says,

"...the kindness of God leads you to repentance" (Romans 2:4).

It is His kindness that leads us unto repentance. It is not so much the harshness of God and the severity of God that leads us to a repentant heart. Although, it can happen that way. It is understanding how kind God has been to us by taking us as wayward people and adopting us right into the family, right into the will, right into heirship. You are not even sitting at the kids table anymore. You are right there at the adult table with Jesus Christ and God the Father. You have been adopted into His royal family, because you have received His free pardon available in Jesus Christ.

Is this adoption that Jacob just did for these two real? Because he says at the end of Genesis 48:5, *"...as Reuben and Simeon are."* "Manasseh and Ephraim are just as much my children as are my first two born."

There is the adoption, first part of Genesis 48:5; and there is the analogy, second part of Genesis 48:5. Who was the firstborn? Reuben through Leah. Who was the second born? Simeon through Leah. "Just as those two kids, the first two born, are mine, I just made Manasseh and Ephraim mine—coming from Joseph in Egypt to a pagan woman whose father was a pagan priest.

It does not matter what your background is. It does not matter what your resume is. It does not matter what your biography is. What God does for the believer, at the point of faith alone in Christ alone, is that He adopts them into the royal family of God. What a privilege that is.

You have a balancing statement (Genesis 48:6), concerning Joseph—an expansion of Joseph's status as Joseph is watching his father adopt his two children. He says in Genesis 48:6:

"But your offspring that have been born after them shall be yours..."

In other words, Manasseh and Ephraim are now Jacob's sons, and Joseph's additional sons will be his own. Joseph did not have any more children that we know of.

The second part of Genesis 48:6 says,

"...they shall be called by the names of their brothers in their inheritance."

In other words, Manasseh and Ephraim are going to develop into separate tribes, yet they are going to be counted as one tribe, the Tribe of Joseph.

Numbers 26:28 says this:

"The sons of Joseph according to their families: Manasseh and Ephraim."

Two tribes, but they are going to be known by the one tribe—the Tribe of Joseph. These are all predictions that Jacob is making that would materialize in the rest of Scripture.

Jacob ends his testimony with Rachel's death. We have her death described in this testimony and then her burial. Look at the first part of Genesis 48:7 as Jacob is giving this testimony to Joseph on his deathbed, speaking of his time in Paddan. That would be up

north in Haran, where Jacob had that encounter with Laban. His wives and their bridesmaids, the Twelve Tribes except for Benjamin coming from those arrangements.

It says in Genesis 48:7:

"Now, as for me, when I came back from Paddan, Rachel died, to my sorrow, in the land of Canaan on the journey, where there was still some distance to go to Ephrath..."

It is interesting how this paragraph develops (Genesis 48:1-7). It starts off with sickness leading to death—Jacob. Now he begins to describe how his wife, his favored wife Rachel, died. It is a reminder of what God said. God said, "The day that you eat from the forbidden tree of knowledge is the day you shall surely die." We see the ramifications of this all the way through the Bible. God's original plan was never death, but it was a consequence of man's rebellion against God. We live in this world with death in it. Death occurs constantly.

In Genesis 2:16-17, God gave Adam the easiest job description that has ever been given to a person. "Do whatever you want. Just do not eat from the Tree of Knowledge." It is like when my wife says, "Help yourself to anything you want, but do not put your hand in the cookie jar." The first thing I want to do is find out what is in that cookie jar.

"The Lord commanded the man, saying, 'From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it, you will surely die'" (Genesis 2:16-17).

We know the end of that story. Death became a reality to the human race, and here we have a reflection of Rachel's death.

Hebrews 9:27 says,

"And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment."

Nobody thinks it is going to happen to them. If we are not the Rapture generation (and I hope and pray we are, but I cannot promise that), every single person within the sound of my voice will die. How important it is to try to understand what happens after the grave. What happens to the soul? How can I be made right with God so that I can live with Him forever? If you are thinking about stuff like that, the Bible says you are wise.

Ecclesiastes 7:2 says,

*"It is better to go to the house of mourning
Than to go to a house of feasting,
Because that is the end of every man,
And the living takes it to heart."*

I would rather go to a wedding than a memorial service or a funeral any day of the week. At a wedding you are not thinking about this reality of death. You are thinking about a

new couple, a new life, happiness, hope—upbeat. You go to a memorial service or a funeral, and you see someone that you talked to a month earlier that is not there anymore. They are a corpse in a casket or however it is done. It really starts to get the mental cobwebs out where you start to think to yourself, "I am not going to be here forever."

What a year this has been for our family, with the death of my father, the death of my father-in-law, the prostate cancer scare. If God told me some of those things were coming in 2024, I would have said, "Thanks, but no thanks, Lord. I want to be happy." I will tell you one thing: those kinds of things make you wise. They make you wise beyond your years because you start to see life for what it is. It is like a mist that appears for a little while and then it is gone (James 4:14).

We can find ourselves in the Ecclesiastes 7:2 camp, where we are learning from these things via wisdom and becoming wise. How important that is, because as we move in that direction, it teaches us how to govern our lives accordingly.

We have this record of Rachel's death in Genesis 35:17-20. It says,

"When she was in severe labor the midwife said to her, 'Do not fear, for now you have another son.' It came about as her soul was departing..."

That is what happens when you die—there is a severance between the part of you that is designed to live forever, the soul, and the body. The Greek calls the soul the "psyche." It departs from the body.

"It came about as her soul was departing (for she died), that she named him Ben-oni; but his father called him Benjamin."

Benjamin is the only one of Jacob's sons born in the land of Canaan. The rest of them were born in Haran. As they came back and reconciled with Esau, they were in Canaan en route to Bethlehem. We do not know exactly where Rachel's tomb is. People think they know. Arnold Fruchtenbaum, in his commentary says that we do not know exactly because they were in transit when she died, and Benjamin was born. Is that not what God said in Genesis 3? "You will have travail in childbirth." Thank God for modern medical technology and equipment. Many women in the history of the world have died while giving birth.

You know, in fact, my daughter, when she was conceived and Anne was pregnant, was so big—hard to believe, given her father—that they had to do an emergency C-section just to get the kid out. Then the doctor, after he informs me what they are going to do, he says to me, "By the way, if this had happened in the 1800s, your wife and daughter would be dead. I am like, "Thank you for those encouraging words."

It is true that many women in human history have died from the process of childbirth. In fact, God said that all the way back in Genesis 3; and this is what happened to Rachel.

You will notice that as Jacob is narrating all of these things at the age of 147, he says that when she died, he mourned. It says,

"Now as for me, when I came from Paddan, Rachel died, to my sorrow..."
(Genesis 48:7)

There is a very weird teaching out there today that says a Christian should not mourn the death of a fellow Christian loved one. Such a teaching is not found in the Bible.

Paul, in 1 Thessalonians 4:13 says,

"But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope."

The Bible never says, "Do not grieve at the passing of a Christian loved one." What it says is, "Do not grieve as if you have no hope. Do not grieve as if you are never going to see the person again, because you will see the person again, either at death or rapture, whichever comes first." The Bible never says, "Do not sorrow, do not grieve." Christians, for whatever reason, get a mistaken idea about that in their minds.

You can see very clearly here, as Jacob is reflecting back on Rachel's death, how he did so at her death with great sorrow. Why bring up Rachel at this particular point, as Jacob is adopting these two Egyptian born children? Arnold Fruchtenbaum says:

*"The point Jacob was making is simply that Rachel died too soon, and there would therefore be no more sons by her. However, three tribes will end up descending from her two sons: the Tribe of Ephraim, the Tribe of Manasseh, and the Tribe of Benjamin."*¹

Benjamin was already born at Rachel's death in Genesis 35. I think Jacob brings this up because he says, "My wife, my favorite wife, she died way too soon." Do you know what? God is a God of grace, because through Rachel came number one, Benjamin; number two, Joseph; and because of this adoption, Ephraim and Manasseh. She died too soon. She should have had more children, but look what God did through this adoption. He allowed these tribes—if we count them all separately Joseph, Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh, those are four entities that came through Rachel, even though she died way too fast. I think that is why Jacob is bringing this up on his deathbed.

Then you get to the end of this, and you see that he makes a reference to the fact that Rachel was buried. He said,

"...and I buried her there on the way to Ephrath (that is Bethlehem)"
(Genesis 48:7).

Arnold Fruchtenbaum, in his commentary, makes a big deal about the fact that they buried her along the way. The current place that they think is the burial plot of Rachel probably is not. We do not know exactly where that burial plot is. This becomes, I believe, an amazing testimony as Jacob, at the end of his life, is getting ready to bless Manasseh and Ephraim. Before he does that, he adopts them into his own family.

¹ Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Book of Genesis*, 626.

Would you like to be adopted if you have not been? I know how that could happen. I know how that could happen right now. It is through the gospel, meaning "good news." It is called "good news" because Jesus came into the world to fix a problem that we have, that we cannot fix on our own, which is our sin and our separation from a holy God. That is a big problem, and yet, Jesus came into the world to fix that. That is why His final words on the cross were: "It is finished!" (John 19:30). In other words, "Do not trust in yourself to fix this problem. Trust in what I did—completely and totally."

Trusting in Christ is not a matter of joining a church, walking an aisle, or giving money. It is a matter of privacy between you and the Lord, where the Lord puts you under conviction of your need to do this. The Holy Spirit has been sent into the world to convict us of our need to trust in the Savior for the resolution of this problem that we cannot solve on our own. Our exhortation for anybody within the sound of my voice is to respond to that convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit and trust in that provision. The moment that happens, you receive, according to Lewis Sperry Chafer, 33 things that you did not have before, one of which is adoption.

You are no longer a stray; you are no longer an alien; you are no longer someone that is out of the family; but you are brought right in as a son, daughter, and heir. You have such intimacy with God in that newfound status and relationship, which is a legal reality that has happened. Just like adoption in our natural world is a legal process, this is something legally that happened to you—and it happened to you in an instant. You did not have to fill out paperwork for this. There is no background check for this. This is something that God does instantaneously when we trust in the provision of His Son. He adopts us into His family, and now I have such intimacy with God that I can call Him Daddy—Abba Father.