

January 27

Scriptures: Read Genesis 47 & 48

Key Verse: “Then Israel said to Joseph, ‘Behold, I am dying, but God will be with you and bring you back to the land of your fathers.’” (Genesis 48:21)

Overview

After Joseph’s family arrived in the land of Goshen, he went with five brothers and his father and to explain to Pharaoh that they were herdsmen. Probably, Joseph, in his wisdom, had instructed his brothers what they should say to the king. Pharaoh showed them kindness and generosity and confirmed that they would live freely in Goshen. He even gave Joseph the authority to put one of his competent brothers as the chief herdsmen over his livestock. Pharaoh seemed interested to meet Joseph’s father and with respect he asked him his age. Without any intimidation, Jacob spoke freely with Pharaoh and told him he was 130. then we are told he blessed Pharaoh, which is amazing in light of Hebrews 7:7 which says, “And without, doubt the lesser person is blessed by the greater” (NIV). Jacob, who had a glimpse of God, spoke with God and heard from God, was the greater, for spiritual greatness is far more important than position or riches.

As the famine became more sever, we see how Joseph, with the gift of administration, wisely set the economic policy for the country. He may have seemed a little hard on the people, but he was truly concerned for them. He was doing his job well and fulfilling his obligations. Before long, all the livestock and land belonged to Pharaoh, for the people traded them for grain and seed after all their money was gone. Joseph wisely distributed the people all over the country, rather than having them concentrated in one area, so that more food could be produced. The people still tilled the land, keeping four-fifths of its produce and giving one-fifth to Pharaoh; yet, they were grateful to Joseph that they were still alive in the midst of such a famine (47:25) and everything he did was acceptable.

With these economic policies, Joseph brought tremendous wealth to Pharaoh and yet was fair to the people as well. We need to pray for those in leadership and government positions that they, like Joseph, will have wisdom and understanding.

When Israel knew he was close to death, he summoned Joseph to his bedside. In the same manner as Abraham had done with his servant (Genesis 24:2, 3), he asks Joseph to put his hand under his thigh, thus making a solemn vows. Jacob asked Joseph to promise to bury him in the Promised Land along with his fathers in the cave of Macphelah. Joseph swore that he would. It seems that it was soon afterward that Joseph was once again summoned to his father’s bedside. He brought along his sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, for it was important that his father bless them before he died. Israel, almost blind, saw dimly the figures of two men standing in the room and asked who they were. When he was told, he kissed and embraced them. They thanks to God that He had brought him to even see Joseph’s offspring, whom he claimed as his own sons, to be blessed and receive the promised inheritance, like his other sons.

With spiritual insight and the gift of prophecy, Jacob blessed the youngest with his right hand on his head, which is significant for it means he would receive the double portion of the inheritance

and be greater than the older Manasseh. The history of Israel proved this to be true. In this chapter we see the great faith of Jacob (Hebrews 11:21), or we should say Israel, in God's covenant promises, and we see his sensitivity to the leading of the Holy Spirit. He repeatedly reminded them, without a doubt, they would return to the land of experiences, Jacob finally came to have complete faith and trust in God. We have the men of faith in the Bible as examples to follow and we have the complete, final and full revelation of God in His Son and in His Word; therefore, we do not need to learn by trial and error (although sometimes in our stubbornness that is what it takes), since all the truth is set before us in the precious Holy Book.

Prayer

Almighty and merciful God, we pray for our government leaders and leaders in all areas of society. Please grant wisdom and righteousness in their decisions and show them Your salvation.