

Date: May 22, 2019 at 23:02:34 EDT
Subject: Last Nite's MOB Study on Genesis 48-50

"And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose!"

For 17 or so years Jacob and his household have been "blessed"--and actually thriving--in the land of Goshen, in large part as an expression of appreciation Pharaoh and the hierarchy of Egypt had for Joseph in rescuing their people, and adeptly managing their nation, during the years of severe famine throughout that part of the world! Now, as recorded in Genesis 47, Jacob was bed-ridden and preparing to meet His Maker and he wants to share his "story," and pass on "blessings," and words of wisdom, to his sons, beginning with Joseph and Joseph's two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim!

Most importantly, Jacob wants Joseph to be reminded of the "Abrahamic Covenant," the great and wondrous promises that God made first to Abraham, then reiterated to Isaac, and finally to himself many years ago when he (Jacob) was running from Esau (and from God), leaving the land of Canaan and returning to Mesopotamia, from where God first "called out" Abraham! He reminded Joseph (and his sons), among other things, of how God had promised to make him "fruitful and numerous," and a "company of people," and to give the land of Canaan to his descendants for an everlasting possession! (Although not recorded, he probably also shared how God revisited him again, 14 or so years later, as he was running this time from Laban, and returning to the "promised land," where God reiterated the promises and changed his name to "Israel"! And he may well have shared about how, more recently, on the way to Egypt because of the famine, he stopped over at Beersheba to offer sacrifices "to the God of his father Isaac" and to seek God's approval for "going down" to Egypt; and how God "spoke to him in visions of the night," declaring that He would go with him, and "make him a great nation there, but surely bring him back!") These words which Jacob shared with Joseph undoubtedly made a great impression on Joseph! We know that because Joseph, decades later (in Genesis 50:24-25), when he too was facing the grave, "made the sons of Israel swear" that his bones would be carried back to the land of Canaan! (So much for the 430 year "sojourn" in Egypt!)

Jacob's bedside meeting with Joseph also included Jacob "making claim" for Joseph's two sons! "They're mine," he said! Elevating their status to become two of the future 12 tribes of Israel--in effect, giving Joseph, through his sons, a "double portion of blessing"! And then he pulled off another "switcher roo," stretching his right hand and laying it on the head of Ephraim, the younger of the two sons, to receive the greater blessing! Constable notes that Jacob has learned--based on how he himself was blessed (as the "heir of promise"), albeit "unintentionally" by Isaac, and through the manipulation and scheming of his mother, Rebekah, but in accordance with the sovereign will of God)! (To put it in the vernacular, Jacob "knew a thing or two"--about God's workings--because he had "seen a thing or two"!)

Well, Jacob was not finished with his "last words"! His last piece of business, as stated in Genesis 49:1, was to assemble all his sons to "bless" them and "tell them what would befall them in the days to come"! Most notable among his actions was to designate Judah--in place of Reuben, the "rightful" first-born--as the "heir of promise"! These words stand in infamy: "The

scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until Shiloh comes..."! Translated "until He comes to whom it (the scepter!) belongs!" Prophetic words concerning the coming Messiah! Jesus Christ who would come through the tribe of Judah! (All part of God's sovereign plan!)

Well, there's much more that could be said of Jacob's "blessing"! But, more significantly, at this point in the narrative, is his charge to his sons that upon his death he was to be taken back to the land of Canaan and buried "in the field of Machpelah," along with Abraham and Sarah, and Isaac and Rebekah and Leah (but not Rachel, who was buried near the "little town of Bethlehem"). And it was done! And what a grand procession and ceremony it was, which included "all the servants of Pharaoh and one that, according to Genesis 5:11, even impressed the Canaanites who were (temporarily) occupying the land! Constable notes that "the record of Jacob's burial in the land is important because it demonstrates the faith these men had that God would fulfill His promises! They viewed Canaan as their "homeland to be"! And Joseph would one day follow suit by exercising this same faith in God's promises!

After the death and burial of Jacob, we see a very normal human reaction from Joseph's brothers! Would Joseph now seek the revenge he just might have put off, or so they thought likely, while their father was still alive? Joseph's quick response is reassuring to them! And to us! Who would do well to exhibit the same such "Christ-like" attitude! "Do not be afraid, for am I in God's place? As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive. So therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones"! So, he comforted them and spoke kindly to them! (Genesis 50:20-21)

Constable suggests that Joseph's faith in God's promises provides "a fitting climax for the book of Genesis, and the formative period of Israel's history"!

Arnold notes that "his bones, stored in a coffin (and not in some pyramid!), would be a constant reminder to the Israelites living in Egypt (for another 400 or so years!) that this land was not their home!

And so, Genesis ends, like the Old Testament as a whole, "on a note of expectation"! With a sense of incompleteness!

You could say, the story needs "to be continued"! (Like maybe in the book of Exodus? As a "sequel"?)

Well, among other things, our study of Genesis should serve as a great reminder (to each of us!) that "God causes all things to work together for good, to those who love God; to those who are called according to His purpose"!

And so, as men of the Bible, let's "walk by faith"--confident in God's promises--and be a blessing to someone this week!

Lowell