

Lessons From The Last Days Of Jacob

The study of Genesis 48 brings us into a deeper knowledge of the focus and devotion of the patriarch Jacob. He is on his last leg. Though almost totally blind, immensely infirm and terribly weak, his soul and mind are intact- he has a clear and cogent understanding of the cosmic redemptive purpose of God in general and of its impact on his life in particular. Now, as he nears his end on this earth, or, more specifically, in Egypt, his sole preoccupation is to end his grace well; he has a sacred compulsion to be the faithful mediator of God's covenant promises to his forefathers, Abraham and Isaac, and carries out this responsibility with an admirable steadfastness. He ensures that, as the patriarchal head of the family whom God has sovereignly chosen unto himself to declare his glory to all the nations of the earth, the passing of the divine covenant blessing would continue through the particular lineage that God had intended. Therefore, it is not upon the sons of Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and those of his other male children, who grew up with him in Canaan that he confers the blessing but upon the sons of Joseph, i.e., Ephraim and Manasseh, those who were born in Egypt and who were therefore Egyptian citizens.

Among the several lessons that we learn from the story of Jacob is that God's grace has no boundaries, barriers or brakes. It is not conditioned by time or influenced by our circumstances. He who sovereignly declares, *solī Deo Gloria*, that he is determined to complete the good work that he has started in his elect and that he would demonstrate (t)his efficacy at the day of Jesus Christ, Phi 1:6, is soundly displaying this resolve in the life of Jacob who now has one thing on his mind: the passing on of the divine blessing through the right line.

There's another lesson that we should do well to learn and that is, we need not wait until our old age in order to live a life of faithfulness to our Triune God. As the teacher (in the assembly) admonishes, "Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near of which you will say, 'I have no pleasure in them';" Eccl 12:1. This is true because there is no direct link between old age and spiritual maturity. Sanctification is a gift of God's grace, a work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of God's elect, in which those that have been born again through faith alone in Christ alone, co-operate with the Spirit of God as he conforms them to the image of Jesus Christ. We see this principle at work increasingly in the life of the patriarch Jacob. In him we witness an inverse relationship between the decreasing abilities of his physical body and the increasing desires of his heart to please the God of his fathers. The closer his time comes to go the way of all flesh, the more determined and devoted he is to carry out God's covenant promises. The shorter the distance between him and death, the more resolute he is in protecting the

particularity of God's covenant promise and in ensuring its perpetuation through the divinely pre-appointed channel.

What do you think your deathbed concerns will be? Will they be like Jacob's, thoroughly suffused with the beauty of the knowledge of God's purposes in redemption through Jesus Christ? Will you pass on a legacy of holiness to your loved ones that remain? Will you, like Jacob instruct them that, in spite of the amenities, ease, privileges and comforts that they're now enjoying in this world, their focus is not to be on this land but on the land that God has promised his people by his immutable Word, the new heavens and new earth, the city of God, the place where righteousness dwells, the place which Jesus is currently preparing for those that are in union with him? **You don't know**; really, you can't know without a doubt that such an opportunity would present itself. So, why not do it now? Why not make it a point of duty to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with all you meet, especially those in your immediate family? Why not bring the liberating good news of God's free and full saving grace in Jesus Christ to all those that believe on Christ alone, as your priority in life and not in death, as in the case of Jacob? When? Right now! Because in the words of Dr. R. C. Sproul, "Right Now Comes Forever."