

### “...I know it...”

As human beings we make plans. But, as Christians, all plans are subject to change by God! Some changes we will think are wonderful. Others make us query. Yet all of God’s plans are for our good, no matter what our human thoughts about them are.

There is nothing wrong with making plans, if we do so with spiritual honesty. As I write this study I am in a position where I do not know what God has in store for me, so I continue with plans I believe are acceptable. In my mind and heart there is a proviso, that my own plans can change at any time, if God desires them to. Occasionally this arrangement lends toward a degree of trepidation – that is what humans are like! Even so, overall, I know God is in control and can change things, sometimes drastically and profoundly.

In this chapter Jacob alters custom and does what Joseph does not expect, causing him anxiety. But, Jacob was God’s servant, and the change he effected were part of God’s plan. What Joseph wanted was not really relevant!

God’s plans operate on a global front. They continue to move throughout history, using peoples and lands and things, to bring about what is required. As humans we are often blissfully unaware of what is happening until we are involved by God. This is a mighty part and sign of predestination.

### Verses 1&2

1.

“And it came to pass after these things, that one told Joseph, Behold, thy father is sick: and he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim.

2.

And one told Jacob, and said, Behold, thy son Joseph cometh unto thee: and Israel strengthened himself, and sat upon the bed.”

## Genesis 48

Written by K B Napier  
Friday, 05 June 2015 09:59

---

Joseph was in his own city palace. A messenger came to tell him his father was sick. The ordinary word, *chalah*, is used, to mean weary, weak or ill. Jacob was old and Joseph knew that any illness could lead to death. So, he took his two young sons with him to see Jacob. Someone, possibly the same messenger from Jacob's group, told Jacob that Joseph was on his way. So, mustering all the strength he had, Jacob sat up straight in his bed and waited.

As Christians we ought to wait with anticipation, even when a situation seems really bad for us. God does not leave us alone in times of need, but He "cometh unto thee". There are times when I have myself let other things get in the way of this truth – and it only leads to anxiety and loss of trust. God's hand is always held out to us, but do we see it there? Do we push it aside in favour of our own grand and often complex schemes?

### Verses 3-7

1.

"And Jacob said unto Joseph, God Almighty appeared unto me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and blessed me,

2.

And said unto me, Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and I will make of thee a multitude of people; and will give this land to thy seed after thee for an everlasting possession.

3.

And now thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt before I came unto thee into Egypt, are mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine.

4.

And thy issue, which thou begettest after them, shall be thine, and shall be called after the name of their brethren in their inheritance.

5.

And as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan in the way, when yet there was but a little way to come unto Ephrath: and I buried her there in the way of Ephrath; the same is Bethlehem."

One sign of a genuine man of God, one who is saved by grace, is that even if he goes through patches of lack of faith, his heart is always with God and recognises His presence and hand in his life. Jacob went through several patches of poor behaviour and thought, yet he was God's man! He was still a key link in God's plan for his family and future nation.

When Joseph arrived, Jacob gave him an outline of God's promises to him. Even if Joseph remembered them from his pre-Egypt life, there was no harm in reminding him. Jacob retold how God appeared to him at Luz (Bethel) in a dream, blessing him with a mighty promise...that his family would grow into a nation that would take possession of the land then called Canaan.

Interestingly, the promise includes the words "for an everlasting possession." What does this mean? Today we see Christians giving large amounts to Jewish migration groups, so that Israel can become mightily populated with Jews from all around the world. Behind this idea is the teaching that the land is theirs by right. But, it is mixed with the unbiblical teaching that people can hasten the progress of God's plan by pushing it along with cash and activity!

The word 'possession' is *'achuzzah*, meaning something inherited. From whom? It must be from God, through Jacob's nation. What about the word 'everlasting', *'owlam*

? The word itself cannot provide a definitive answer, because it can mean one of several things – it can certainly mean 'for ever', but it can also simply mean 'a long time'. However, the overwhelming meaning is 'perpetual' or 'always'. Scripture tells us that the Jews were to hold the land as theirs so long as they were faithful. A time is coming when the mantle of evangelisation (salvation by grace alone) will be removed from the shoulders of gentiles and given to saved Jews. At that time they will again qualify to hold the land of Israel. Of course, this is the same as saying it has always been theirs, no matter what Islamists claim.

Jacob went on to say that Joseph's two sons were, for reasons of inheritance and birthright, of his own blood, counted to be of his own line, but that any born after the first two sons would be left to their own tribes and nations in Egypt. He then recalled how his wife, Rachel, died and was buried in Bethlehem (Ephrath).

### Verses 8-12

## Genesis 48

Written by K B Napier  
Friday, 05 June 2015 09:59

---

1.

“And Israel beheld Joseph's sons, and said, Who are these?”

2.

And Joseph said unto his father, They are my sons, whom God hath given me in this place. And he said, Bring them, I pray thee, unto me, and I will bless them.

3.

Now the eyes of Israel were dim for age, so that he could not see. And he brought them near unto him; and he kissed them, and embraced them.

4.

And Israel said unto Joseph, I had not thought to see thy face: and, lo, God hath shewed me also thy seed.

5.

And Joseph brought them out from between his knees, and he bowed himself with his face to the earth.”

Jacob noticed figures with Joseph and asked who they were. You might ask why he should do this, as he had only just finished talking about them. The reason is that “the eyes of Israel were dim for age, so that he could not see.” He might have made out shapes, but not identities.

Joseph replied that they were his two sons, and Jacob asked that they should approach the bed to be blessed. When they stood before him, Jacob kissed and hugged them. Probably with emotion, Jacob said to Joseph ‘I didn’t think I would ever see you again’ - now I can see your children, too. The children were standing between Joseph’s legs, as shy small ones do. He made them stand at his side and bowed down, prostrate, to the ground, to venerate his father.

### Verses 13-16

## Genesis 48

Written by K B Napier  
Friday, 05 June 2015 09:59

---

1.

“And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near unto him.

2.

And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands wittingly; for Manasseh was the firstborn.

3.

And he blessed Joseph, and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day,

4.

The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.”

When Joseph walked forward with his sons, he was careful to hold Manasseh in his own *left* hand. That is, guiding him toward his father's *right* hand. (This shows us, by the way, that Jacob must have been sitting with his legs over the edge of the bed, otherwise the two small boys would not have reached him). To Joseph's surprise and consternation, Jacob leaned to his left and put his right hand upon Ephraim's head. His right hand should have gone straight forward to touch Manasseh's head, because he was the eldest. Instead, he deliberately turned his hand to his left (Joseph's right). The text tells us Jacob did this 'wittingly'. The word *sakal* can mean to cross one's hands, but it also means to act wisely with insight. It was not a mistake!

Firstly, Jacob blessed Joseph and spoke of God's wondrous hand on his own life. He was the God Who kept him safe and fed all these years. He was the God of his father and grandfather.

## Genesis 48

Written by K B Napier  
Friday, 05 June 2015 09:59

---

In his blessing Jacob refers to God as 'The Angel', *mal'ak*, the angel of God. That is, not the Father but a representative. Does this mean Jesus Christ? It is quite possible, for Jesus appeared to Abraham in the desert. It could also mean an angelic being sent to bless. It does not really matter for such an angel would carry out God's plan anyway, and had God's direct authority. This same angel was asked to bless the two young boys and to transfer to them his own familial title and the ability to found their own nations.

### Verses 17-20

1.

"And when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it displeased him: and he held up his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's head unto Manasseh's head.

2.

And Joseph said unto his father, Not so, my father: for this is the firstborn; put thy right hand upon his head.

3.

And his father refused, and said, I know it, my son, I know it: he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great: but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations.

4.

And he blessed them that day, saying, In thee shall Israel bless, saying, God make thee as Ephraim and as Manasseh: and he set Ephraim before Manasseh."

When Joseph saw Jacob's hand upon the head of his second-born, he was 'displeased'. This was more sadness or perplexity than anger. Perhaps he thought his almost-blind father had made a mistake. 'No,' he told Jacob, 'put your hand upon *this* child's head, for he is the first-born.' He tried to remove Jacob's hand, but Jacob refused to cooperate. 'I *know*

who this child is,' he told Joseph, '...the first-born will also become a great nation and be blessed, but his younger brother shall become even greater and the founder of many nations.' So, Jacob blessed both children, but not according to custom. This is sometimes God's way, is

## Genesis 48

Written by K B Napier  
Friday, 05 June 2015 09:59

---

it not? He humbles those who think they should come first, and raises to prominence those who are in a humble position. Jesus was 'just a Galilean' yet He blessed all nations of the earth by His sacrifice on the cross. Humility is usually the basis for God's blessing and spiritual advancement, not learning or position. This serves to again emphasise predestination.

### Verses 21&22

1.

"And Israel said unto Joseph, Behold, I die: but God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers.

2.

Moreover I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow."

Then Israel told Joseph 'Look. I am dying. But God will be with you and will bring you once more into Canaan, the land belonging to your ancestors.' This was a prophecy concerning the return of the Hebrews, which would not occur for another 400 years. So 'you' means the Hebrews. 'Also,' he adds, 'I will give you an extra gift in your inheritance, "which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow".' Obviously, this refers to booty taken from an Amorite Jacob killed in a battle, though we are not told exactly what it is. Israel/Jacob is now close to death and it is time for the whole family to collect before the patriarch, for their final blessings and details of their inheritance.

### Random Notes: Ephraim and Manasseh

The name Ephraim ('Ephraath) is also another name for Bethlehem. From parah, meaning to be fruitful. Manasseh (Mēnashsheh) means 'causing to forget'. Thus, both names as given by Joseph had specific meanings; the second son bore a far more encouraging meaning than the first, because it is dynamic and ongoing, whereas the first was a once-only panacea.

© April 2006 (Revised October 2014)

## Genesis 48

Written by K B Napier  
Friday, 05 June 2015 09:59

---

---oOo---

{loadposition btm\_address}