

## JACOB'S BLESSINGS ON JOSEPH'S SONS

Old Testament Lesson #193

Joseph's father Jacob, along with all his brothers, had come to live in Egypt along with Joseph. Joseph was a key ruler in the land. He was second in command only to Pharaoh.

It was some time after Jacob and his brothers had relocated to Egypt that Joseph was informed his father was dying. This prompted Joseph to get his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, and go to visit his father. Jacob was glad to have Joseph and his sons visit him. Jacob recalled to Joseph how God had blessed him in the past. God had appeared to Jacob and told him, "I am going to make you fruitful and will increase your numbers. I will make you a community of peoples, and I will give this land as an everlasting possession to your descendants after you" (Genesis 48:4).

Jacob then told Joseph that he was going to adopt Joseph's two sons and elevate them to being equal to Joseph's other brothers. Jacob still viewed Joseph as a special son, since he was just one of two sons born to his beloved Rachel. Jacob sadly lost Rachel during the birth of her second son Benjamin, when she gave birth to him just outside Bethlehem. Jacob was heartbroken a second time when Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers, who lied to Jacob, telling him Joseph had been killed by a wild animal.

Now Jacob was in Egypt once again, reunited with Joseph. Jacob sees the two sons Joseph had been blessed with while in Egypt. Jacob tells Joseph, "Bring them to me so I may bless them" (Genesis 48:9). So, Joseph brings his sons forward and Jacob hugs and kisses them. He tells Joseph, "I never expected to see your face again, and now God has allowed me to see your children too" (Genesis 48:11).

As Joseph had brought his sons forward, he arranged for his oldest son Manasseh to be on Jacob's right side so Jacob would put his right hand on his head to bless him. This was normal, since the oldest son received a special blessing. However, Jacob chose to cross his arms and to put his right hand on the younger son Ephraim. Jacob's eye sight was poor due to his old age, and Joseph thought he was making a mistake, but Jacob said, "I know, my son, I know. He too will become a people, and he too will become great. Nevertheless, his younger brother will be greater than he, and his descendants will become a group of nations" (Genesis 48:19).

As a final step in giving his blessing upon Joseph's sons, Jacob reminds Joseph of God's promise. He tells Joseph, "I am about to die, but God will be with you and take you back to the land of your fathers" (Genesis 48:21). He is reminding Joseph how God had promised them an inheritance in the land for an everlasting possession, and though they are in Egypt now, one day in the future God would visit them and return them to the land promised.

### POINTS TO CONSIDER:

- God first appeared to Jacob when he was fleeing in fear of his brother Esau. Genesis 28 records the dream that Jacob had where God appeared to him and made the promises that he recounts here to Joseph. See Genesis 28:10-15
- By adopting Joseph's two sons, they became two of the 12 tribes of Israel. In this sense, Joseph received one of the blessings normally granted to the firstborn son. He was given a double portion relative to the inheritance. In other words, instead of Joseph only receiving a single portion, each of his sons was to receive one along with Joseph's brothers.
- Jacob himself was not the firstborn son. He had stolen his birthright from Esau through the deception of Isaac. His mother Rebecca helped him secure the blessing of the firstborn by dressing him up like his brother when Isaac was old and could not see.
- Notice that in the chapter, it begins with referring to Jacob as "Jacob," but when he goes to give the blessing on Joseph's sons, he is referred to as "Israel." His name had been changed by God to Israel, meaning "prince with God" (Genesis 32:28). In his blessing given here, Israel readily acknowledges how God's angels worked in his life, and how God delivered him from all harm through their watching over him all his life (see Genesis 48:15-16).

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- Ephraim, Joseph's youngest son, did come to be a great nation and one of the largest tribes in the nation of Israel. Later in the history of Israel, when the kingdom split into northern and southern kingdoms, Ephraim becomes the lead tribe of the entire nation. So much so, that in some books of the Old Testament, the northern kingdom is referred to by the name Ephraim as representative of the entire kingdom. Most notable of this is the prophecy of Hosea.

**ANSWER KEY:**

was, ill, son, bed, old, see, put, die, God, you

The God Who has been my shepherd all my life to this day, the angel who has delivered me from all harm.

May God bless these boys  
May they be called by my name  
May they increase greatly on the earth



**W**hen Jacob was very old, he blessed his son Joseph and grandsons.

Cross out the letter in the 1st word that also appears in the 2nd word.  
Use the resulting 3-letter words to complete the story.

- (1) mill — drum
- (2) bead — claw
- (3) your — risk
- (4) told — bath
- (5) seek — king
- (6) punt — sign
- (7) gold — pale
- (8) song — glad
- (9) diet — star
- (10) wasp — rope

Joseph heard that his father Jacob, or Israel, (10) \_\_\_\_\_ very (1) \_\_\_\_\_, so he took his 2 (8) \_\_\_\_\_s, Manasseh and Ephraim, and went to visit him. Jacob sat up in his (2) \_\_\_\_\_. He was very (4) \_\_\_\_\_ and could hardly (5) \_\_\_\_\_. He (6) \_\_\_\_\_ his right hand on Ephraim's head and his left hand on Manasseh's head and blessed them. He said to Joseph, "I am about to (9) \_\_\_\_\_, but (7) \_\_\_\_\_ will be with (3) \_\_\_\_\_."

Jacob told Joseph and his sons about how God had led and protected him. Beginning at the letter T, start counting forward (+) and back (-) on the shepherd's staff to fill in each letter of Jacob's testimony about God on the lines below.



T \_\_\_\_\_

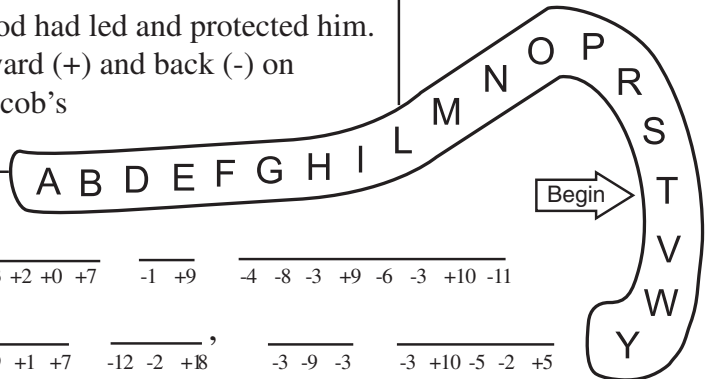
-9 -3    +2 +6 -9    +15 -11 +5    -5 -6 +14    -13 +2 +0 +7    -1 +9    -4 -8 -3 +9 -6 -3 +10 -11

\_\_\_\_\_

-2 +8 +0    +1 +9    -10 -1 -3 -1    +12 -4    +4 -9 +1 +7    -12 -2 +8    -3 -9 -3    -3 +10 -5 -2 +5

\_\_\_\_\_

+9 -11 +5    -5 -6 +14    -12 +1 +5 -1 +9 -13 +10 -10 -1    +7 -6    +1 +9 -2 -2    -9 +8 -0    -2 -6 +13 -4

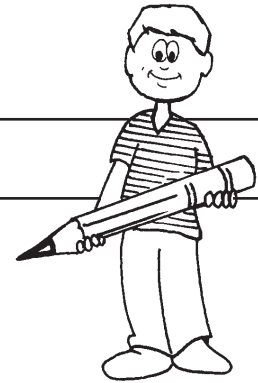


Find the words of Jacob's blessing on Ephraim and Manasseh.  
Cross out every box that contains the letter P or W. Read the remaining words in order.

whip	May	power	God	bless	proud	these
proper	swap	boys	May	two	they	paw
be	wept	called	wander	by	hippo	my
wrap	name	apple	May	awful	they	put
increase	apart	greatly	on	wrapper	the	earth

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**B**efore Jacob died, he blessed 2 of Joseph's sons.  
He gave the 1st blessing to the younger and  
the 2nd blessing to the older.



Match and trace the letters to discover the names of the 2 sons of Joseph.

A

M

N

A



H

E

S

N

I

P

M

A

E

H

E

S

A

R

A

S



P

A

H

E

M

I

S

H

R

M

Name \_\_\_\_\_