Bits of Torah Truths | Parashat Vayechi

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Our Strength is in Him!

In this weeks reading from Parashat Vayechi (*Bereshit / Genesis 47:28-50:26*) is the final chapters of the book of Genesis. The opening verses tell us that Jacob (Israel) lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years and the total length of his life were 147 years. Before Jacob died he asked ל וְשָׁכַבְתִּי עִם-אֲבֹתַי וּנְשָׂאתַנִי מִמִּצְרַיִם וּקְבַרְתָּם וַיֹּאמַר אָנֹכִי אֶעֱשֶׂה כִּדְבָרֶךָ: לא וַיֹּאמֶר הִשָּׁבְעָה לִי וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל-רֹאשׁ הַמִּטָּה: " *47:30 but when I lie down with my fathers, you shall carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burial place.' And he said, 'I will do as you have said.' (NASB)* Jacob blesses Joseph's two sons Manasseh and Ephraim (*48:1-2*). Jacob tells Joseph that his two sons will be his (*48:5*) and declares that Joseph's descendents after him shall be called after their names (*48:6*). Jacob then proceeds to make statements against his sons on account of what they had done while in the land of Canaan (*49:1-26*). In the midst of Jacob's blessing over his sons he provides us with a Messianic expectation in his statements to Judah לֹא-יָסוּר שֵׁבֶט מִיהוּדָה וּמְחֹקֵק מִבֵּין רַגְלָיו עַד כִּי-יָבֹא שִׁילֹה וְלוֹ יִקְּהַת עַמִּים *49:10 The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes, And to him shall be the obedience of the peoples. (NASB)* Jacob dies and Joseph and his brothers bury him in the land of Canaan (*49:29-50:14*). Joseph's brothers seek forgiveness and ask for mercy. Joseph assures them that they need not fear. The final verses of Genesis tell of the death of Joseph, he lived 110 years and then died, was embalmed and placed in an coffin (*50:15-26*).

כתבי הקודש / The Holy Scriptures	
ספר בראשית פרק מח יג וַיִּקַּח יוֹסֵף אֶת-שְׁנֵיהֶם אֶת-אֶפְרַיִם בִּימִינוֹ מִשְּׂמֹאל יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֶת-מְנַשֶּׁה בִשְׂמֹאלוֹ מִימִין יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיַּגֵּשׁ אֵלָיו: יד וַיִּשְׁלַח יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת-יְמִינוֹ וַיָּשֶׁת עַל-רֹאשׁ אֶפְרַיִם וְהוּא הַצָּעִיר וְאֶת-שְׂמֹאלוֹ עַל-רֹאשׁ מְנַשֶּׁה שִׂכֵּל אֶת-יָדָיו כִּי מְנַשֶּׁה הַבְּכוֹר: טו וַיְבָרֶךְ אֶת-יוֹסֵף וַיֹּאמַר הָאֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר הִתְהַלְּכוּ אֲבֹתַי לְפָנָיו אַבְרָהָם וְיִצְחָק הָאֱלֹהִים הָרֹעֶה אֹתִי מֵעוֹדִי עַד-הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה: טז הַמַּלְאָךְ הַגֹּאֵל אֹתִי מִכָּל-רָע יְבָרֵךְ אֶת-הַנְּעָרִים וְיִקָּרֵא בָהֶם שְׁמִי וְשֵׁם אֲבֹתַי אַבְרָהָם וְיִצְחָק וְיִדְגּוּ לָרֹב בְּקֶרֶב הָאָרֶץ:	**Bereshit / Genesis 48:13-16** 48:13 Joseph took them both, Ephraim with his right hand toward Israel's left, and Manasseh with his left hand toward Israel's right, and brought them close to him. 48:14 But Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on the head of Ephraim, who was the younger, and his left hand on Manasseh's head, crossing his hands, although Manasseh was the firstborn. 48:15 He blessed Joseph, and said, 'The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, The God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day, 48:16 The angel who has redeemed me from all evil, Bless the lads; And may my name live on in them, And the names of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; And may they grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.' (NASB)

The Scripture from this week's reading says יד וַיִּשְׁלַח יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת-יְמִינוֹ וַיָּשֶׁת עַל-רֹאשׁ אֶפְרַיִם וְהוּא הַצָּעִיר וְאֶת-שְׂמֹאלוֹ עַל-רֹאשׁ מְנַשֶּׁה שִׂכֵּל אֶת-יָדָיו כִּי מְנַשֶּׁה הַבְּכוֹר: *48:14 But Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on the head of Ephraim, who was the younger, and his left hand on Manasseh's head, crossing his hands, although Manasseh was the firstborn. (NASB)* While blessing Joseph's sons, Jacob realized that God does not always choose the first born but in many instances He chooses the unusual thing to complete His will. For example in the Bible God uses common people to do his work. God often chooses the weak to do His will, *1 Corinthians 1:27 but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, (NASB)* David says in *Tehillim / Psalms 8* ג מִפִּי עוֹלְלִים | וְיֹנְקִים יִסַּדְתָּ עֹז לְמַעַן צוֹרְרֶיךָ לְהַשְׁבִּית אוֹיֵב וּמִתְנַקֵּם: *8:2 From the mouth of infants and nursing babes You have established strength Because of Your adversaries, To make the enemy and the revengeful cease. (NASB)* The Lord establishes his strength in the mouth of "infants" and "nursing babes." According to the Apostolic Gospels, in order for us to be strong and mighty in the Lord, we are to become as infants (*Matthew 18:3*). Weakness in our culture is generally viewed as despicable. As a culture, we place value on strength, independence, and achievement. However, the Lord said their is strength in weakness. The reason being is to illustrate our total dependence upon the Lord for all of our needs. As you become more mature in the Lord (*in Christ, in the Messiah*) and grow in your relationship with Him, is your dependence upon the Lord increased or decreased? Truely our strength is in Him alone!

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