



Vay'chi– He Lived Gen. 47:28-50:26

Haftorah – 1 Kings 3:14-4:1

B'rit Hadashah- Matthew 37: 15-46

Rabbin Deborah Eliana Brandt

We All Have a Gift, We all Have a Calling in His Kingdom as Redeemed Israel

### Parshah Overview: <sup>1</sup>

**Jacob** lives the final 17 years of his **life in Egypt**. Before his passing, he asks **Joseph** to take an oath that he will **bury** him in the **Holy Land**. He blesses Joseph's two sons, **Manasseh** and **Ephraim**, elevating them to the status of his own sons as progenitors of **tribes** within the nation of Israel.

The patriarch desires to reveal the **end of days** to his children, but is **prevented** from doing so.

Jacob blesses his sons, assigning to each his role as a tribe: **Judah** will produce leaders, legislators and kings; priests will come from **Levi**, scholars from **Issachar**, seafarers from **Zebulun**, schoolteachers from **Simeon**, soldiers from **Gad**, judges from **Dan**, olive-growers from **Asher**, and so on. **Reuben** is rebuked for “confusing his father’s marriage bed”; Simeon and Levi, for the massacre of Shechem and the plot against Joseph. **Naphtali** is granted the swiftness of a deer, **Benjamin** the ferociousness of a wolf, and Joseph is blessed with **beauty** and **fertility**.

A large funeral procession consisting of Jacob’s descendants, Pharaoh’s ministers, the leading citizens of Egypt and the Egyptian cavalry accompanies Jacob on his final journey to the Holy Land, where he is **buried** in the Machpelah Cave in **Hebron**.

**Joseph**, too, dies in Egypt, at the age of 110. He, too, instructs that his **bones** be taken out of Egypt and buried in the Holy Land, but this would come to pass only with the Israelites’ exodus from Egypt many years later. Before his passing, Joseph conveys to the Children of Israel the testament from which they will draw their hope and faith in the difficult years to come: “G-d will surely **remember** you, and bring you up out of this land to the land of which He swore to **Abraham, Isaac and Jacob**.”

---

<sup>1</sup> © Copyright, all rights reserved. If you enjoyed this article, we encourage you to distribute it further, provided that you comply with Chabad.org's [copyright policy](#).

## **Torah Nugget:**

- Gen 48:1** Awhile later someone told Yosef that his father was ill. He took with him his two sons, M'nasheh and Efrayim.
- Gen 48:2 Ya`akov was told, "Here comes your son Yosef." Isra'el gathered his strength and sat up in bed.
- Gen 48:3 Ya`akov said to Yosef, "El Shaddai appeared to me at Luz in the land of Kena`an and blessed me,
- Gen 48:4 saying to me, 'I will make you fruitful and numerous. I will make of you a group of peoples; and I will give this land to your descendants to possess forever.'
- Gen 48:5 Now your two sons, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, are mine; Efrayim and M'nasheh will be as much mine as Re'uven and Shim`on are.
- Gen 48:6 The children born to you after them will be yours, but for purposes of inheritance they are to be counted with their older brothers.
- Gen 48:7 "Now as for me, when I came from Paddan, Rachel died suddenly, as we were traveling through the land of Kena`an, while we were still some distance from Efrat; so I buried her there on the way to Efrat (also known as Beit-Lechem)."
- Gen 48:8 Then Isra'el noticed Yosef's sons and asked, "Whose are these?"
- Gen 48:9 Yosef answered his father, "They are my sons, whom God has given me here."  
Ya`akov replied, "I want you to bring them here to me, so that I can bless them."
- Gen 48:10 Now Isra'el's eyes were dim with age, so that he could not see. Yosef brought his sons near to him, and he kissed them and embraced them.
- Gen 48:11 Isra'el said to Yosef, "I never expected to see even you again, but God has allowed me to see your children too!"
- Gen 48:12 Yosef brought them out from between his legs and prostrated himself on the ground.
- Gen 48:13 Then Yosef took them both, Efrayim in his right hand toward Isra'el's left hand and M'nasheh in his left hand toward Isra'el's right hand, and brought them near to him.
- Gen 48:14 But Isra'el put out his right hand and laid it on the head of the younger one, Efrayim, and put his left hand on the head of M'nasheh—he intentionally crossed his hands, even though M'nasheh was the firstborn.
- Gen 48:15 Then he blessed Yosef: "The God in whose presence my fathers Avraham and Yitz'chak lived, the God who has been my own shepherd all my life long to this day,
- Gen 48:16 the angel who has rescued me from all harm, bless these boys. May they remember who I am and what I stand for, and likewise my fathers Avraham and Yitz'chak, who they were and what they stood for. And may they grow into teeming multitudes on the earth."
- Gen 48:17 When Yosef saw that his father was laying his right hand on Efrayim's head, it displeased him, and he lifted up his father's hand to remove it from Efrayim's head and place it instead on M'nasheh's head.
- Gen 48:18 Yosef said to his father, "Don't do it that way, my father; for this one is the firstborn. Put your right hand on his head."
- Gen 48:19 But his father refused and said, "I know that, my son, I know it. He too will become a people, and he too will be great; nevertheless his younger brother will be greater than he, and his descendants will grow into many nations."

Gen 48:20 Then he added this blessing on them that day: "Isra'el will speak of you in their own blessings by saying, 'May God make you like Efrayim and M'nasheh.' " Thus he put Efrayim ahead of M'nasheh.

Gen 48:21 Isra'el then said to Yosef, "You see that I am dying, but God will be with you and will bring you back to the land of your ancestors.

Gen 48:22 Moreover, I am giving to you a sh'khem [*shoulder, ridge, share, city of Sh'khem*] more than to your brothers; I captured it from the Emori with my sword and bow."

**Gen 49:1** Then Ya`akov called for his sons and said, "Gather yourselves together, and I will tell you what will happen to you in the acharit-hayamim.

Gen 49:2 Assemble yourselves and listen, sons of Ya`akov; pay attention to Isra'el your father.

Gen 49:3 "Re'even, you are my firstborn, my strength, the firstfruits of my manhood.

Gen 49:4 Though superior in vigor and power you are unstable as water, so your superiority will end, because you climbed into your father's bed and defiled it—he climbed onto my concubine's couch!

Gen 49:5 "Shim`on and Levi are brothers, related by weapons of violence.

Gen 49:6 Let me not enter their council, let my honor not be connected with their people; for in their anger they killed men, and at their whim they maimed cattle.

Gen 49:7 Cursed be their anger, for it has been fierce; their fury, for it has been cruel. I will divide them in Ya`akov and scatter them in Isra'el.

Gen 49:8 "Y'hudah, your brothers will acknowledge you, your hand will be on the neck of your enemies, your father's sons will bow down before you.

Gen 49:9 Y'hudah is a lion's cub; my son, you stand over the prey. He crouches down and stretches like a lion; like a lioness, who dares to provoke him?

Gen 49:10 The scepter will not pass from Y'hudah, nor the ruler's staff from between his legs, until he comes to whom [*obedience*] belongs; [*or: until Shiloh comes*] and it is he whom the peoples will obey.

Gen 49:11 Tying his donkey to the vine, his donkey's colt to the choice grapevine, he washes his clothes in wine, his robes in the blood of grapes.

Gen 49:12 His eyes will be darker than wine, his teeth whiter than milk.

Gen 49:13 "Z'vulun will live at the seashore, with ships anchoring along his coast and his border at Tzidon.

Gen 49:14 "Yissakhar is a strong donkey lying down in the sheep sheds.

Gen 49:15 On seeing how good is settled life and how pleasant the country, he will bend his back to the burden, and submit to forced labor.

Gen 49:16 "Dan will judge his people as one of the tribes of Isra'el.

Gen 49:17 Dan will be a viper on the road, a horned snake in the path that bites the horse's heels so its rider falls off backward.

Gen 49:18 I wait for your deliverance, Adonai.

Gen 49:19 "Gad [*troop*]—a troop will troop on him, but he will troop on their heel.

Gen 49:20 "Asher's food is rich—he will provide food fit for a king.

Gen 49:21 "Naftali is a doe set free that bears beautiful fawns. [*or: that says beautiful words.*]

Gen 49:22 "Yosef is a fruitful plant, a fruitful plant by a spring, with branches climbing over the wall.

Gen 49:23 The archers attacked him fiercely, shooting at him and pressing him hard;

Gen 49:24 but his bow remained taut; and his arms were made nimble by the hands of the Mighty One of Ya`akov, from there, from the Shepherd, the Stone of Isra'el,

Gen 49:25 by the God of your father, who will help you, by El Shaddai, who will bless you with blessings from heaven above, blessings from the deep, lying below, blessings from the breasts and the womb.

Gen 49:26 The blessings of your father are more powerful than the blessings of my parents, extending to the farthest of the everlasting hills; they will be on the head of Yosef, on the brow of the prince among his brothers.

Gen 49:27 "Binyamin is a ravenous wolf, in the morning devouring the prey, in the evening still dividing the spoil."

Gen 49:28 All these are the twelve tribes of Isra'el, and this is how their father spoke to them and blessed them, giving each his own individual blessing.

Gen 49:29 Then he charged them as follows: "I am to be gathered to my people. Bury me with my ancestors in the cave that is in the field of `Efron the Hitti,

Gen 49:30 the cave in the field of Makhpelah, by Mamre, in the land of Kena`an, which Avraham bought together with the field from `Efron the Hitti as a burial-place belonging to him—

Gen 49:31 there they buried Avraham and his wife Sarah, there they buried Yitz'chak and his wife Rivkah, and there I buried Le'ah—

Gen 49:32 the field and the cave in it, which was purchased from the sons of Het."

Gen 49:33 When Ya`akov had finished charging his sons, he drew his legs up into the bed, breathed his last and was gathered to his people. (CJB)

### **We see here the power of The Blessings**

**BLESSING** (Heb. *b<sup>e</sup>rāḱâ*; Gk. *eulogía*).<sup>†</sup> The act or means of invoking or granting worship or praise, goodness and favor; also the words used or the gift or quality bestowed. Of particular **significance in the ancient Near East** was the blessing of a son by his father whereby a man passed on his property and authority to the next generation (Gen. 27; 48:15–16; 49). Blessings were an integral part of the Israelite liturgy and were frequently paired with curses to sanction covenantal stipulations (Deut. 11:29; Josh. 8:34; *see* CURSE). Among the more familiar liturgical blessings is the Aaronic blessing (Num. 6:22–27), through which the Israelites were placed in God's protective care. A person might "be a blessing" through a specific mission or by living an exemplary life (Gen. 12:2; Ps. 37:26; Isa. 19:24). The blessing which Isaac granted to Jacob was held to be irrevocable (Gen. 27:33–35), but failure to live faithfully could bring a curse upon a blessing (Mal. 2:2) just as a curse might be transformed into a blessing (Deut. 23:5; Judg. 17:2; Neh. 13:2).<sup>2</sup>

Jacob/Israel pronounces a blessing and/or rebuke upon each of his sons pronouncing upon them the characteristics of their dependents and gifting's.

---

<sup>†</sup> Major revision

<sup>2</sup> Myers, A. C. (1987). *The Eerdmans Bible dictionary* (162–163). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

**Jacob blesses his sons, assigning to each his role as a tribe:**

**Judah** will produce leaders, legislators and kings; (and Messiah Yeshua would come forth from Judah)

Priests will come from **Levi**,

Scholars from **Issachar**,

Seafarers from **Zebulun**,

Schoolteachers from **Simeon**,

Soldiers from **Gad**,

Judges from **Dan**,

Olive-growers from **Asher**, and so on.

**Reuben** is rebuked for “confusing his father’s marriage bed”;

**Naphtali** is granted the swiftness of a deer,

**Benjamin** the ferociousness of a wolf, and

**Joseph** is blessed with **beauty** and **fertility**. ( A type of Messiah Ben Yosef) His sons Ephraim & Menasha receive a blessings as well

Gen 48:5 Now your two sons, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, are mine; Efrayim and M'nasheh will be as much mine as Re'uven and Shim'on are.

Gen 48:6 The children born to you after them will be yours, but for purposes of inheritance they are to be counted with their older brothers.

Gen 48:17 When Yosef saw that his father was laying his right hand on Efrayim's head, it displeased him, and he lifted up his father's hand to remove it from Efrayim's head and place it instead on M'nasheh's head.

Gen 48:18 Yosef said to his father, "Don't do it that way, my father; for this one is the firstborn. Put your right hand on his head."

Gen 48:19 But his father refused and said, "I know that, my son, I know it. He too will become a people, and he too will be great; nevertheless his younger brother will be greater than he, and his descendants will grow into many nations."

**Gen 48:20 Then he added this blessing on them that day: "Isra'el will speak of you in their own blessings by saying, 'May God make you like Efrayim and M'nasheh.' " Thus he put Efrayim ahead of M'nasheh.**

Gen 48:21 Isra'el then said to Yosef, "You see that I am dying, but God will be with you and will bring you back to the land of your ancestors. (CJB)

“The patriarch then stretched out his right hand and laid it upon Ephraim's head, and placed his left upon the head of Manasseh (crossing his arms therefore), to bless Joseph in his sons. “*Guiding his hands wittingly;*” i.e., he placed his hands in this manner intentionally. Laying on the hand, which is mentioned here for the first time in the Scriptures, was a symbolical sign, by which the person acting transferred to another a spiritual good, a supersensual power or gift; it occurs elsewhere in connection with dedication to an office (Num 27:18, Num 27:23; Deu 34:9; Mat 19:13; Act 6:6; Act 8:17, etc.), with the sacrifices, and with the cures performed by Messiah and the apostles. By the imposition of hands, Jacob transferred to Joseph in his sons the blessing which he implored for them from his own and his father's God: “*The God (Ha-Elohim) before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God (Ha-Elohim) who hath fed me* (led and provided for me with a shepherd's faithfulness, Psa 23:1; Psa 28:9) *from my existence up to this day, the Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads.*” This triple reference to God, in which the Angel who is placed on an equality with *Ha-Elohim* cannot possibly be a created angel, but must be the “Angel of God,” i.e., God manifested in the form of the Angel of Jehovah, or the “Angel of His face” (Isa 43:9), contains a foreshadowing of the Unity of the Godhead, though only God and the Angel are distinguished, not three persons of the divine nature. The God before whom Abraham and Isaac walked, had proved Himself to Jacob to be “the God which fed” and “the Angel which redeemed,” i.e., according to the more fully developed revelation of the New Testament, ὁ Θεός and ὁ λόγος, Shepherd and Redeemer.

The thought is rather: the true nature of the patriarchs shall be discerned and acknowledged in Ephraim and Manasseh; in them shall those blessings of grace and salvation be renewed, which Jacob and his fathers Isaac and Abraham received from God. The name expressed the nature, and “being called” is equivalent to “being, and being recognized by what one is.” The salvation promised to the patriarchs related primarily to the multiplication into a great nation, and the possession of Canaan. Hence Jacob proceeds: “*and let them increase into a multitude in the midst of the land.*” הַגָּדֹל: ἀπ λεγ, “to increase,” from which the name אָדָם, a fish, is derived, on account of the remarkable rapidity with which they multiply. (Keil and Delitzsch Commentary on the Bible)”

**Please note that Reuven does not receive the blessing:**

Reuben, *my first-born thou, my might and first-fruit of my strength; pre-eminence in dignity and pre-eminence in power.* - As the first-born, the first sprout of the full virile power of Jacob, Reuben, according to natural right, was entitled to the first rank among his brethren, the leadership of the tribes, and a double share of the inheritance (Gen 27:29; Deu 21:17). (תָּשׁוּ: elevation, the dignity of the chieftainship; עָז, the earlier mode of pronouncing עֶז, the authority of the first-born.) But Reuben had forfeited this prerogative. “*Effervescence like water - thou shalt have no preference; for thou didst ascend thy father's marriage-bed: then hast thou desecrated; my couch has he ascended.*” פָּתַח: lit., the boiling over of water, figuratively, the excitement of lust; hence the verb is used in Jdg 9:4; Zep 3:4, for frivolity and insolent pride. With this predicate Jacob describes the moral character of Reuben; and the noun is stronger than the verb פָּתַח of the Samaritan, and אַתְרַעַת or אַתְרַעַת *effebuisti, aestuasti* of the Sam. Vers., ἐξυβρισας of the Lxx, and ὑπερζέσας of *Symm.* חַוְתָּר is to be explained by חָתַר: have no pre-eminence. His crime was, lying with Bilhah, his father's concubine (Gen 35:22). חָלַלְתָּ is used absolutely: desecrated hast thou, sc., what should have been sacred to thee (cf. Lev 18:8). From this wickedness the injured father turns away with indignation, and passes to the third person as he repeats the words,

“my couch he has ascended.” By the withdrawal of the rank belonging to the first-born, **Reuben lost the leadership in Israel; so that his tribe attained to no position of influence in the nation** (compare the blessing of Moses in Deu 33:6). **The leadership was transferred to Judah, the double portion to Joseph (1Ch 5:1-2)**, by which, so far as the inheritance was concerned, the first-born of the beloved Rachel took the place of the first-born of the slighted Leah; not, however, according to the subjective will of the father, which is condemned in Deu 21:15., but according to the leading of God, by which Joseph had been raised above his brethren, but without the chieftainship being accorded to him. (Keil and Delitzsch Commentary on the Bible)”

**From the 12 Tribes, 2 would emerge as prominent Tribes in their prophetic callings:**

Psa 60:7 Gilead is mine; Manasseh is mine; **Ephraim is my helmet; Judah is my scepter.** ESV

Psa 108:8 Gilead is mine; Manasseh is mine; **Ephraim is my helmet, Judah my scepter.** ESV

Eze 37:19 say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, **I am about to take the stick of Joseph** (that is in the hand of Ephraim) and the tribes of Israel associated with him. And I will **join with it the stick of Judah**, and make them **one stick**, that they may be one **in my hand.** ESV

Hos 6:11 For you also, O Judah, a harvest is appointed, when I restore the fortunes of my people. ESV

**We all have a role to play in the Body of Messiah:**

**The gifts and callings of Israel are irrevocable; Romans 11:25-29**

Rom 11:25 For, brothers, I want you to understand this truth which God formerly concealed but has now revealed, so that you won't imagine you know more than you actually do. It is that stoniness, to a degree, has come upon Isra'el, until the Gentile world enters in its fullness;

Rom 11:26 and that it is in this way that all Isra'el will be saved. As the Tanakh says, "Out of Tziyon will come the Redeemer; he will turn away ungodliness from Ya`akov

Rom 11:27 and this will be my covenant with them, . . . when I take away their sins."

Rom 11:28 With respect to the Good News they are hated for your sake. But with respect to being chosen they are loved for the Patriarchs' sake,

**Rom 11:29** for God's free gifts and his calling are irrevocable. (CJB)

**God has a call on Israel including those who have been grafted into the Olive Tree of Israel. There is also a warning against the Wild Olive Branch becoming arrogant and prideful and thus be in danger of losing the blessings as did Reuben did as noted above.**

Rom 11:16 Now if the hallah offered as firstfruits is holy, so is the whole loaf. And if the root is holy, so are the branches.

Rom 11:17 But if some of the branches were broken off, and you—a wild olive—were grafted in among them and have become equal sharers in the rich root of the olive tree,  
Rom 11:18 then don't boast as if you were better than the branches! However, if you do boast, remember that you are not supporting the root, the root is supporting you.  
Rom 11:19 So you will say, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in."  
Rom 11:20 True, but so what? They were broken off because of their lack of trust. However, you keep your place only because of your trust. So don't be arrogant; on the contrary, be terrified!  
Rom 11:21 For if God did not spare the natural branches, he certainly won't spare you!  
Rom 11:22 So take a good look at God's kindness and his severity: on the one hand, severity toward those who fell off; but, on the other hand, God's kindness toward you—provided you maintain yourself in that kindness! Otherwise, you too will be cut off!  
Rom 11:23 Moreover, the others, if they do not persist in their lack of trust, will be grafted in; because God is able to graft them back in.  
Rom 11:24 For if you were cut out of what is by nature a wild olive tree and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these natural branches be grafted back into their own olive tree!  
Rom 11:25 For, brothers, I want you to understand this truth which God formerly concealed but has now revealed, so that you won't imagine you know more than you actually do. It is that stoniness, to a degree, has come upon Isra'el, until the Gentile world enters in its fullness;  
Rom 11:26 and that it is in this way that all Isra'el will be saved. As the Tanakh says, "Out of Tziyon will come the Redeemer; he will turn away ungodliness from Ya`akov  
Rom 11:27 and this will be my covenant with them, . . . when I take away their sins."  
Rom 11:28 With respect to the Good News they are hated for your sake. But with respect to being chosen they are loved for the Patriarchs' sake,  
Rom 11:29 for God's free gifts and his calling are irrevocable.  
**Rom 11:30** Just as you yourselves were disobedient to God before but have received mercy now because of Isra'el's disobedience;  
Rom 11:31 so also Isra'el has been disobedient now, so that by your showing them the same mercy that God has shown you, they too may now receive God's mercy.

**Just as God through Jacob bestowed gifts and callings upon Israel, He has also placed gifts within those of Redeemed Israel as well to fulfill His purpose here on earth.**

**Only eternity will reveal the impact Israel has had upon this world, but the greatest impact that came from Israel is Messiah Yeshua! It is our calling to impact this world through Messiah Yeshua as Redeemed Israel as well!**

1Co 12:7 Moreover, to each person is given the particular manifestation of the Spirit that will be for the common good.  
1Co 12:8 To one, through the Spirit, is given a word of wisdom; to another, a word of knowledge, in accordance with the same Spirit;  
1Co 12:9 to another, faith, by the same Spirit; and to another, gifts of healing, by the one Spirit;



1Co 12:10 to another, the working of miracles; to another, prophecy; to another, the ability to judge between spirits; to another, the ability to speak in different kinds of tongues; and to yet another, the ability to interpret tongues.

1Co 12:11 One and the same Spirit is at work in all these things, distributing to each person as he chooses.

1Co 12:12 For just as the body is one but has many parts; and all the parts of the body, though many, constitute one body; so it is with the Messiah.

1Co 12:13 For it was by one Spirit that we were all immersed into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, slaves or free; and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

1Co 12:14 For indeed the body is not one part but many. (CJB)

Eph 4:10 The one who went down is himself the one who also went up, far above all of heaven, in order to fill all things.

Eph 4:11 Furthermore, he gave some people as emissaries, some as prophets, some as proclaimers of the Good News, and some as shepherds and teachers.

Eph 4:12 Their task is to equip God's people for the work of service that builds the body of the Messiah,

Eph 4:13 until we all arrive at the unity implied by trusting and knowing the Son of God, at full manhood, at the standard of maturity set by the Messiah's perfection.

Eph 4:14 We will then no longer be infants tossed about by the waves and blown along by every wind of teaching, at the mercy of people clever in devising ways to deceive.

Eph 4:15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in every respect grow up into him who is the head, the Messiah.

Rom 12:6 But we have gifts that differ and which are meant to be used according to the grace that has been given to us. If your gift is prophecy, use it to the extent of your trust;

Rom 12:7 if it is serving, use it to serve; if you are a teacher, use your gift in teaching;

Rom 12:8 if you are a counselor, use your gift to comfort and exhort; if you are someone who gives, do it simply and generously; if you are in a position of leadership, lead with diligence and zeal; if you are one who does acts of mercy, do them cheerfully.

**We must be faithful in our gifting's and callings and use them for His Kingdom and His Glory.**