

Lesson 9: What's Your Heritage?

What is Heritage?

1. *Something inherited at birth, **such** as personal characteristics, status, and possessions.*
2. *Anything that has been transmitted from the past or handed down by tradition.*
3. *Something that is reserved for a particular person or group or the outcome of an action, way of life.*
4. *(Judaism)*
 - *a. The Israelites regarded as belonging inalienably to God.*
 - *b. The land of Canaan regarded as God's gift to the Israelites.*

A Godly Heritage

Genesis 48: 1-22

The family is at the center of God's purpose. It is primarily in the family that a Godly heritage is handed down from generation to generation. God chose Abraham and promised to give him a family and from that family to make a nation to bless other nations. Abraham's family was the foundation of the nation of Israel, from which the Savior came. The most important thing we can give our children and grandchildren is a Godly heritage.

We give a Godly heritage by taking spiritual concern not only for our children, but also for our grandchildren. In 48:15 it says that Jacob blessed Joseph. But as you go on to read the blessing, you discover that Jacob blessed Joseph by blessing Joseph's sons. Our goal should be to raise up Godly generations, not only through our children, but also through their children. We must teach God's standards, but we must do it with tenderness and affection.

Tell them of God's covenant faithfulness toward you. Jacob had deceived his father and wronged his brother . God would have been just in finding someone else to use in accomplishing His purpose, but He appeared to Jacob and affirmed the covenant promises to him. We've got to tell them, by our words and our attitudes, that God is faithful, even through the hard times.

Tell them of God's great salvation. Jacob call God, "the angel who has redeemed me from all evil" (48:16). He was probably thinking primarily of his experience at Mahanaim, when the angels camped around him to protect him from Laban, and then when the angel wrestled with him at Peniel just prior to his feared reunion with Esau. He here equates this angel with God. I believe the angel of God is the Lord Jesus Christ. That's a beautiful picture of what God did for us in Christ. We were enslaved to sin with no way to free ourselves. But God sent our Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ to save us with His own Blood.

Tell them of God's amazing grace. In blessing his grandsons, Jacob deliberately crossed his hands, so that his right hand rested upon Ephraim, the youngest, instead of upon Manasseh, the oldest, as Joseph had planned. When Joseph tried to correct his father, the old man said, "I know, my son, I know". Why did Jacob do that? Because God had revealed to Jacob that Ephraim would take prominence over Manasseh among the tribes of Israel. In fact, this didn't happen for hundreds of years. But finally Ephraim did grow larger and more prominent than Manasseh, fulfilling Jacob's prophecy. There was no human reason that Jacob blessed Ephraim above his brother. But in so doing, Jacob was illustrating a divine principle which he had learned: that God blesses us apart from any merit on our part. So we impart a Godly heritage to our children and grandchildren by taking spiritual concern for them and by recounting to them our own experiences with God.

We give a Godly heritage by picturing to our children and grandchildren our hopes for their future in the Lord. By faith Jacob paints a picture of Joseph's future in the Lord. He says, "I am about to die, but God will be with you, and bring you back to the land of your fathers. And I give you one portion more than your brothers, which I took from the hand of the Amorite with my sword and my bow"(48:21-22). Jacob helped Joseph to see what God wanted for his future, namely, to return to the Promised Land. Jacob pictured a great future in the Lord for his children and grandchildren, a future that involved the fulfillment of God's promises.