

Dr. Kenneth A. Mathews, Genesis, Session 25, Jacob's Blessing of Joseph's Sons and death (Gen 48-50)

NotebookLM's 20-min. Podcast

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All right, welcome everyone. We're diving deep into the final chapters of Genesis today, chapters 48 through 50. Yeah, these chapters, man. They're a whirlwind.

Oh, yeah, we see the culmination of Joseph's story, the end of Jacob's journey. Mm-hmm, and get this: even though they're in Egypt, the promise of that return to Canaan, right? It's still like this central thing to their identity, a huge part of their hope. Yeah, we're going to Unpack all this with some help.

Yeah, from Dr. Kenneth Mathews' insight. So it really is remarkable how these chapters just tie together so many threads.

Oh, yeah, from the entire book of Genesis, right? Early promises to Abraham. Yeah, to the themes of God's faithfulness to those unexpected blessings. It's like watching the season finale of a show. You know everything, and everything kind of comes together. Daredevil- one of the things that Dr. Mathews highlights is how these chapters really connect to those overarching themes of the whole book, you know, what was God's purpose for creation, right? And then His desire for a relationship with humanity, right, and of course those blessings that He promised.

They're not just like, you know, good luck or whatever. Oh, absolutely not. Yeah, there's real substance there, real impact. Dr. Mathews breaks it down.

Okay, into three elements: relationship with God, land, and descendants. Oh, yeah, and it's fascinating because it echoes, you know, God's first blessing. Yeah, back in Genesis 1.2 628. That's right.

Yeah, so you see that consistency, right? Those promises to Abraham just woven throughout the entire book. Even as the family faces all those trials and all the mistakes, they make some big mistakes along the way. That's for sure. It really makes you, like, you know, think about how much bigger. Yeah, God's plans are bigger than our own, you know, absolutely. And speaking of God's plans, Dr. Mathews has some interesting things to say about God's choice of Israel.

It's not because they were like more deserving, right, you know, than other nations or anything like that, right? Deuteronomy 7:7-12 makes it very clear. Yeah, God's love for Israel, right, stemmed from his love for the patriarchs, okay, for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Okay, and it reminds us that God's grace often works in ways that we don't expect, right? Yeah, kind of outside of our human system of merit yeah, our systems of merit and deserving.

Yeah, and that's actually really encouraging because it means that none of us are beyond the reach. Yeah, of God's love, of his love and grace. Yeah, even when we really, really mess up, when we mess up, right? Yeah, but this this love for Israel, I mean, it wasn't just about showering one family with like special treatment. No, it's part of a bigger vision, a bigger vision. Right.

Absolutely. Dr. Mathews points out. Okay, that God's plan was to reach all nations through Israel. Oh, it's like a ripple effect, you know. Yeah, it starts with this one family and then spreads out to the whole world.

Yeah. Yeah, it's amazing, but you know, there were some serious obstacles in the way, right? Oh, for sure. I mean, just think about all the internal struggles within the family, family drama. Yeah, the family drama, and then external pressures from other nations.

Yeah, from the surrounding nations, right? It's a wonder that even survived at all. Yeah, definitely challenges along the way. Mm-hmm, but even when things looked bleak, God's love persevered. Yeah, sometimes it meant taking strong corrective measures to keep things on track. Yeah, to keep things moving, you got to admire God's commitment to seeing his promises through. Yeah, even when his people make it hard, you know, it's like, come on, guys, right? All right now, let's not forget about Joseph.

Yes. He wasn't just a dreamer. No, he was a life. He became a lifesaver, rescuing his family and countless others from that horrible famine.

It's great. I mean, it's almost hard to believe pretty incredible story Yeah, and it's more than just a rescue mission, right? Yeah, Dr. Mathews sees this as foreshadowing God's intention To use Israel as a blessing to the entire world.

Oh, wow. Think about it, Joseph. He's sold into slavery. Yeah, he faces all kinds of adversity. He goes through it, but ultimately he becomes this source of life and provision for others, even for the people who? Including those Egyptians.

Yeah who enslaved him who had enslaved him? I mean, it's a beautiful picture, yeah, God's grace and redemption. I love how all these like seemingly random events Mm-hmm are actually all part of the woven together Yeah woven together into God's plan to this intricate tapestry out God's plan. That's amazing.

Yeah, but Let's get to the heart of these final chapters, right? Okay, Jacob's blessings, we're not just talking about some casual, like, good luck. Have a good life. Oh, no, these were a big deal. This is a big deal.

Yeah, this was patriarchal tradition. Mm-hmm. A way of passing on the promises and the favor of God to the next generation. To the next generation. Spiritual, think of it as a spiritual inheritance. Yes, spiritual inheritance with the power to shape the future, shape the future. That makes sense. And we see this play out first with Joseph's sons, right? Manasseh and Ephraim. Mm-hmm. They were born in Egypt, right, to an Egyptian mother.

Yes, so their place in this whole Lineage of blessings. I mean, it's probably like a little uncertain, you know. I'm sure Joseph was a little worried about that. He was, yeah, wanting to make sure his sons were included, yeah, and Jacob's blessed in those blessings.

He wants to secure their place in the story of God's promises, and Jacob doesn't disappoint. No, he doesn't. Genesis 48:5. Yeah, Jacob formally adopts Ephraim and Manasseh, yeah, giving them equal standing, standing with his sons, a powerful act. That's huge; they speak volumes about the inclusiveness of God's covenant, and you know, I was thinking like as someone who values listeners' interest related to inclusion.

This must have been really radical back then. Oh, absolutely. It challenges our assumptions about how God's grace works. Yeah, it's not limited by bloodlines or culture or anything, right? It's available to all who receive it.

Yeah, that's a good point. Yeah, and it's not just a legal transaction, no, right. There's this like real tenderness.

Oh, yeah, in Jacob's words, especially when he mentions Rachel's death. Yeah when he's blessing the boys Yeah, it adds another layer there like an emotional layer to the emotional layer to the scene. Dr Mathews points out something really interesting: the repeated use of the name Israel for Jacob in this passage.

Yeah, that's not accidental. I don't think it is. Remember that name comes from Jacob's wrestling match with God. Oh, yeah, back in Genesis 32, back in Genesis 32, yeah, it's a reminder of his transformed identity and his new calling, right? Yeah, so by using that name here, Jacob emphasizes that these boys are being grafted, wow, into the same covenant promises. Like their identities being redefined right in front of us. Yeah, they're becoming part of something much bigger Yeah themselves and there's this irony to oh, yeah, Jacob's eyesight's failing.

Mm-hmm, but his spiritual insight is like sharper than ever. Yeah, it makes you think about how God works in our lives, mm-hmm, right, sometimes using our weaknesses. Yeah, to show his strength.

Yeah, that's a good point. Yeah, then there's that moment where Jacob places his hands on the boys' heads, right? Right, and that's more than just like a gesture of affection. Absolutely. You'll notice a shift here, almost like a change in tempo, okay, Dr.

Mathews calls this a Literary scene, okay, where the storytelling changes from prose to poetry. Interesting, and it signals something important is happening. Mm-hmm. In this case, Jacob He's not just offering a blessing. He's enacting an ancient ritual.

Oh, wow, you know, reminiscent of oaths being sworn once thigh that we saw, you know, back in Genesis 24. Yeah, that's right. So it adds this whole other layer of weight and significance. Yeah, this is a solemn covenant.

It's a covenant. Yeah, not just a blessing. Yeah, being reaffirmed. Okay, and here's where it gets really, really unexpected.

I think yes, Jacob crosses his hands, giving the greater blessing to Ephraim. Oh, yeah, the younger son, the younger son. What do you make of that? Well, this wouldn't be Genesis without a few twists, right? Yeah, we've seen this theme before, right, with Jacob and Esau, with Jacob and Esau. The younger sibling is elevated. Yeah, unexpectedly, right, and it speaks to God's tendency to disrupt our human expectations, remind us that he operates outside of our limited understanding.

He does things differently. Yes, he does. Yeah, even when Joseph tries to correct him, right, Jacob insists, you know, that Ephraim's destiny is to be greater. Yeah, and what's amazing is that it happens. Yeah, Ephraim's descendants become a powerful tribe later on. Yeah, they even represent all ten tribes of the Northern Kingdom.

Yeah in some prophetic writings. That's amazing. It's a beautiful example of how these blessings weren't just empty words. Yeah, they carried real weight.

They shaped history. Yeah, they shaped history, and that little phrase, may God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh. Oh, yeah, that's a good one. It became a common blessing, you know, a testament to how this small moment. Yeah, became a cultural touchstone. Yeah, yeah, then, you know, on top of all that, Mm-hmm, Jacob assures Joseph that God will bring his family back to the promised land even though they're living in Egypt. That promise of return, of returning to Canaan.

Yeah, it remains a cornerstone of their identity and their hope, absolutely, and that Ridge of land right that Jacob mentions. Yeah, it's not just a random detail. What is it? Dr. Mathews connects it to Shechem, okay, where Joseph will eventually be buried. Oh, wow, according to Joshua 24:32 that's interesting.

Yeah, and speaking of those blessings, okay, Jacob doesn't stop with Joseph's sons. He doesn't; he has something to say about each of his twelve sons. That's right. And these pronouncements there, they're more than just fatherly advice.

They're prophetic. Yeah, they're prophetic. They offer a glimpse into the future, a glimpse into the destiny of each tribe. Yeah, yeah, like he's painting this picture of Israel's future, tribe by tribe. That's incredible.

Yeah, so Let's talk about these blessings on the sons, which you said were prophetic. Yeah, they are. If I remember correctly, he gives them in the order. He does. They were born. Yeah, there's a definite structure to it, the way Jacob delivers these blessings. Mm-hmm, and that order, yeah, really highlights the individual destinies.

Okay, of each tribe. So it's like, you know, Ruben being the firstborn, yeah, you would think he would get like the best blessing. Yeah, the best blessing. Well, not exactly. You remember that incident.

Oh, yeah, with Bilah, Rachel's handmaid. Oh, back in Genesis 35.2 to back in Genesis 35.2 to yeah, that transgression casts a shadow over Ruben's blessing. Oh, wow. So he's described as turbulent like water. Oh, okay, restless and unstable, so almost like he's- yeah- and it's a reminder that our choices, yeah, really do have consequences.

Yeah, even generations later. Wow. Yeah. Yeah, and then Simeon and Levi yes, they were the ones that were involved in that Revenge against the Shechemites right after Dinah was assaulted.

What does Jacob have to say about them? Yeah, I'm a little afraid to ask. Well, their blessing definitely reflects that dark chapter, Jacob calls them out for their anger and their violence. Mm-hmm and Pronounces a curse on their actions. Okay, it's interesting though because dr.

Mathews connects this to their scattered destinies. Oh, you know the tribe of Simeon eventually just gets absorbed into Judah, right, according to Joshua 19.1 and 9. Okay, and then Levi, while they don't receive a distinct portion of land. Okay, they're granted 48 towns, okay, and pasture lands, right? So even in their scattering, they're still part of the 12 tribes of Israel. Yeah, it's interesting how that number 12. It's like, yeah, it holds everything together.

It does. Yeah. Okay.

So what about Judah? His blessing seems like a major turning point, wouldn't you say? Absolutely in the story. Absolutely. Yeah, just blessing. Yeah, it really stands out like a spotlight on the future pointing towards David.

Oh, wow, and even Jesus, and even Jesus. Yeah, he's described as a Lion's cub a lion's cub. Yeah, you know, a powerful image of leadership.

Yeah, of strength, strength, kingship. Yeah, and then there are those symbols. Yes, the scepter and the ruler staff. Yeah, they're not just random props. They represent kingship.

Yeah, and when you connect this blessing to the Davidic Covenant, right in to Samuel 7 to Samuel 7 point 13 16 Yeah, 13 3 16. It becomes even clearer. Okay, God's promise of an everlasting kingdom through David's line, through David's line. It's pretty amazing.

So Judah's blessing It's not just about Judah. It's about this incredible lineage that leads to Jesus, at least to Jesus. Oh, he's even called the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, right, in Revelation 5:5. It's amazing how these ancient words they they echo they echo throughout history and point us toward Jesus. Yeah, that's amazing. Yeah, now there's this part in verse 10 that mentions Shiloh.

Oh yeah, what exactly does that mean? Well, that's where things get a little tricky. Okay, there are different interpretations of Shiloh; it could refer to a person, a place. Okay, or even a tribute, or an offering to a conquering king, so like a gift. Scholars have debated this meaning for centuries, really. Yeah, and it's one of those details that's even more intriguing; it does invite us to dig deeper and explore different perspectives.

I like that. Yeah, so we've covered the big ones there: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, the big four. What about the other sons? Well, Dr Mathews does give us some insights into their individual destinies. Okay, for example, Zebulun- yeah, he's blessed with access to the sea.

Okay, so maybe suggesting a role in trade and commerce, right? Yeah, it's a car that is depicted as strong. Okay, but possibly burdened, maybe hinting at agricultural labor. Oh, interesting, and then there's Dan described as a serpent.

Ooh, so I mean, what does that symbolize? Yeah, what does that mean? Cunning? Danger both a bit of both. Yeah, it's fascinating how these blessings, you know, they leave some room for interpretation. Yeah, allowing us to imagine how these tribes will develop. Yeah.

Yeah. Okay, now over time we can't forget about Joseph, right, because he already received a blessing back when Jacob adopted his sons. Yeah back in chapter 48, right? So is there is there more? Oh, there's definitely more. Okay, I mean, his blessing in chapter 49.

Okay, it's full of this rich imagery. Okay, depicting him as a fruitful vine, a symbol of abundance and prosperity. Okay, acknowledges the attacks he's faced. Mm-hmm, but emphasizes that his strength came from God. So he's like, he's been through the fire.

Yes, absolutely, but still comes out. It's a beautiful testament to his resilience. Yeah, to his faith and his unwavering faith. So how does Jacob, like? differentiate Joseph's blessing.

Yeah, from Judah. Yeah, that's a great question because they both seem like pretty significant. They do, and Dr. Mathews points out.

Okay, that while Joseph is called a Prince among his brothers. Okay, acknowledging his leadership role in Egypt. Yeah, the specific promise of kingship in Canaan, right, belongs to Judah's line, to Judah's line.

So a subtle but crucial distinction. Okay. Yeah, so different kinds of leadership, yes, different destinies.

Yeah, but both rooted in God's blessing, God's blessing. Yeah. Mm-hmm It makes me wonder if there was any like Sibling rivalry.

All right, going on behind the scenes. Yeah, so before we move on to Jacob's death, okay, what's like the overall takeaway? Yeah, so Dr. Mathews highlights three key takeaways.

Yeah, from these blessings first, all 12 tribes were blessed. Okay, highlighting the unity and the shared inheritance of Israel. Okay, so a sense of unity, even though in their diversity, they're different. Yeah.

Okay. What's the second one second? Each blessing was unique. Okay, reflecting God's specific purpose for each tribe. So he had a plan for each of them, yeah, so he had a specific plan for each tribe, okay. And then third, he emphasizes the repetition of that word blessing throughout the passage, right? Okay, underscoring its central importance.

So blessings are important. Blessings are important. Yeah, very important. It's like this beautiful tapestry.

Yeah, it is of blessings weaving together the destinies of a whole nation, and speaking of destinies. Yes, we need to talk about Jacob's death and burial. Yes, and those final instructions that he gives there.

They are powerful, powerful. Yeah, Jacob specifically asks to be buried in the family plot at Machpelah. Mm-hmm. You know, that's the same cave, right? Purchased by Abraham.

Oh, yeah, back in Genesis 23, back in Genesis 23: 17- 19. Okay. Yeah, that's right. So it's a reminder of that continuity of family, of legacy being cast down through generations. You can feel like that connection is to your ancestors. Mm-hmm, that deep desire to be connected, right, to be a part of that ongoing story and all those ancient burial rituals.

Oh, yeah, they're always so fascinating. They are. Dr. Mathews talks about the embalming process, right? And then the mourning period: 40 days for embalming, 40 to 70 days of mourning. Wow. By the Egyptians, it's a long time; it seems like such a long time compared to our modern customs. Yeah, for sure. It speaks to the importance of ritual in that culture, honoring the dead, recognizing the weight of loss.

Yeah, and this wasn't just a private family affair. The funeral procession was a spectacle, a big one, with chariots, officials, horsemen the whole works. Wow, even the Canaanites took notice. They did. They did. Wow. They remarked on the solemnity of the occasion. It was a public.

It was a public event. Imagine the impact on the Canaanites. Yeah, witnessing this grand display of mourning for Jacob, for Jacob, it foreshadows Israel's rise to prominence. Something that you'll see throughout the rest of the Bible. That's amazing.

Yeah, so Jacob's legacy is secure, but what about his sons? Yeah, good question, especially after all that drama, that deception that they put Joseph through. They didn't exactly have the best track record, did they, right? I can't imagine they're feeling too confident. No, after their father dies. Yeah, I mean, they did sell Joseph into slavery. Yeah, it's understandable.

No wonder they're terrified of retribution. Yeah, they plead with Joseph for forgiveness. Well, even using their deceased father's name as leverage. Oh, so like a guilt trip a classic guilt trip. Yeah, but you can understand their fear.

Yeah. So how does Joseph react? Well, his response is actually very emotional He weeps. Oh, well, not out of anger, but because their fear reveals this lack of trust in their relationship.

Yeah, in that restored relationship, even he forgave him. He did it. It's heartbreaking because even after forgiveness, those wounds of betrayal can linger. Yeah, that's a good point. I mean, think about it, listeners. Name. Yeah, if you were in Joseph's position, wouldn't you want your brothers to really believe it, to fully embrace the forgiveness that you'd offered? Yeah, that's a good point. It takes time. Reconciliation takes time; trust needs to be rebuilt, and seeing those brothers bowing before him again- yeah, must have brought back some vivid memories.

Oh, yeah. I mean, it's like those early dreams from Genesis 37, yeah, seven through nine. It's all coming full circle.

It's like it's all coming full circle. Yeah, but Joseph doesn't gloat. No, instead he says, yeah, one of the most profound statements in the entire book: What's that? Am I in the place of God? Wow, what a statement. What do you think he meant by that? Well, Dr. Mathews points out that Joseph is acknowledging God's sovereignty. Okay, he's saying that even in

their evil actions. Yeah, he saw God's hand at work Wow, you know, he remembers those earlier words in Genesis 45:7 to 8. Okay, that God orchestrated this whole thing to save lives. Wow, even in those stark moments, Joseph never loses sight. He doesn't have God's plan of God's bigger plan.

That's amazing. It is, and speaking of plans. Yes, we can't end this deep dive without talking about Joseph's death. Right, and that final request that he makes, yes, it really sets the stage for everything that's to come. What happens? Well, Joseph dies at the impressive age of 110. Wow, and even in his final moments, yeah, his faith in God's promise to return Israel to the promised land. Yeah, it never wavers. Okay, he even makes his brothers swear an oath, oh wow, to carry his bones out of Egypt when that day comes. Man, that day comes. It's like he's holding on to that promise even in death.

Yes, he is. Yeah, and that request to have his bones carried back to Canaan, right? It's more than just a sentimental wish. What is it? This detail about carrying Joseph's bones out of Egypt? Yeah, it sets the stage for the Exodus story.

Oh, wow. So it's like it's a threat of anticipation that runs through the very last verses of Genesis. Wow, so it's not over. It's not over. It's just a comma a pause not a period Yeah, his body's embalmed and placed in a coffin his story, but his story isn't over is not over Okay, I'm ready to dive into Exodus, okay, but first, okay, let's recap Let's recap what we learned from this deep dive from this Incredible deep dive into the final chapter into the final chapters of Genesis. What stood out to you most, you know, honestly? There's just so much here in these chapters.

It really is packed. It's hard to pick just one thing, you know. Yeah, but I think what really got me. Okay, was seeing how faithful God is.

Mm-hmm, like even when we, we humans. Yeah, mess things up. Yeah.

No. Yeah, really bad. Mm-hmm.

He's still working to bring about His purposes. He's working all things together for good, and those blessings, man, it's like they're time bombs, you know, shaping history. They have a ripple effect. Yeah, ripple effect in ways. We can't even imagine.

Yeah, absolutely. And the anticipation, yeah, of Israel's return to the promised land. I mean, it's palpable It really leaves you wanting more it makes you want to go right into exit. Yeah.

Yeah, but before we close this chapter, okay, Dr. Mathews, he leaves us with this one last thought-provoking point. Okay, he reminds us that Jesus is the ultimate fulfillment of God's promises to Israel. Yes, the one who brings salvation to all nations, all nations. That's right.

So it's like, you know, all those threads, all those themes promise blessing, redemption; they all lead to Jesus. Yeah, they all lead to Jesus. Mm-hmm.

It makes you wonder, you know, it does: how do those themes? Yeah, I think and faithfulness. How did they play out in our own lives in our own lives? Yeah, you know, what are those unexpected turns? That God might be using to shape our destinies. Yeah, even when we can't see the big picture. Even when we can't see the big picture.

Yeah, that's a good point. Those are great questions to ponder. Mm-hmm as we move on to Exodus as we move on the story continues Yeah, the story of God and humanity continues and it's full of surprises and it's full of surprises. That's for sure.

That's for sure. Well, that was an incredible deep dive. It was a good one. I feel like I've learned so much about God's Faithfulness, yeah, his amazing plan for humanity, and the power of those blessings to shape history. It's amazing how much is packed into these final chapters.

Yeah, Genesis really sets the stage for everything that follows they do and I can't wait to see how it all unfolds in Exodus. Me too. Thanks for joining me on this journey. It's my pleasure, and until next time, until next time, keep those deep dive questions coming. Yeah, keep them coming.

We'll be here ready to explore. Ready to explore. Yes