



## Chapter 48 - Answers

Joseph has married an Egyptian woman, given to her by the Pharaoh of Egypt. This marriage is the natural result of Joseph becoming a part of the cultural life of Egypt - as it's 2<sup>nd</sup> highest ruler. Most of the time when Jewish men married non-Jewish women, the children of that union were drawn away from the One, True God by the mothers, who were usually idol-worshippers.

Can Joseph be married to an Egyptian, lead the Egyptian nation, be loyal to the Egyptian Pharaoh, have Egyptian friends, and still remain so connected to the One, True God that his own children also love and follow the ways of the One, True God? That question is answered in this chapter.

1. :1 Who are the two sons of Joseph? Who is the first-born? Why does Joseph bring his two sons to see Jacob?

We saw in chapter 41:50-52 that Joseph and his Egyptian wife, Asenath, had 2 sons: Manasseh (which means "making forgetful" - Manasseh brought Joseph such joy that he forgot all his trials) and Ephraim (which means "fruitfulness" - Ephraim was a sign to Joseph that God was making him fruitful in the land of his affliction).

Manasseh is the first-born, meaning that he has all the rights associated with the first-born. Rights of blessing and inheritance.

Joseph brought his 2 sons to see Jacob in chapter 38 because Jacob was sick and dying - and Joseph wanted Jacob to pass on a blessing to these 2 sons. Joseph did not want his sons blessed by the prosperity of Egypt - he wanted them blessed by the One, True God, Whom his father served and believed in all his life.

I'm thinking that Joseph's 13 years in prison taught him more than just trust God and learn awesome character traits of leadership. It also gave him such

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a love and relationship with the One, True God that he communicated it with his sons, and desired nothing less than that his sons love God and inherit all the blessings of God.

How did he do this? How did he communicate this to his children who would have been so inundated by idol-worship and prosperity-worship and self-worship in the culture around them?

The story is told of Susannah Wesley, who, in the 1700's, was the mother of 19 children. Nine of her children died in infancy. She homeschooled her remaining children successfully through many trials, including persecution, a marital separation, her husband's imprisonment, sickness, and poverty.

Two of her children were John and Charles Wesley, founders of the Methodist movement. Both men were hugely and positively influential in the spiritual life of England and beyond. John preached more than 40,000 sermons, encouraging everyday people to experience a personal relationship with God. He spoke against slavery and reached out to the orphaned, sick, and poor. Charles' main influence consisted in his more than 6,000 hymns, many of which are still sung in churches today.

Susanna is reputed to have recognized her daily dependence on God, and prioritized her relationship with him. When she needed time with him, she simply pulled her apron over her head to pray. That was the children's signal to leave her alone!

Maybe Joseph, like Susannah, did whatever it took to walk with God amidst responsibilities and pressures of life and leadership - and maybe his sons not only received his personal instruction about God, but also saw his close walk with the One, True God. We won't know for sure what Joseph did with and for his sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, but we know they grew up to be Jewish men who served the One, True God for the rest of their lives.

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2. :2-22 What special thing does Jacob do for both Ephraim & Manasseh?

Jacob sets Manasseh and Ephraim aside as grandsons who would also be considered sons. They would inherit the blessings and prosperity as sons - as if they were each one of the 12 (now 14) sons of Jacob...instead of just one of the many grandchildren of Jacob.

3. What would happen to the rest of Joseph's offspring?

If Joseph had any more children they would belong to Joseph as sons, but from this point on Manasseh and Ephraim would belong to Jacob as sons.

4. What special thing does Jacob do for Ephraim?

Jacob moves his right hand purposely to Ephraim's head as he gives the blessing to the two boys. That signified that Ephraim was getting the blessing and the benefits of the first-born. When Joseph objected, thinking his father, who couldn't see well, had made a mistake, Jacob told Joseph that, no, he had not made a mistake. He knew very well what he was doing. It seems the Lord Himself had shown Jacob which son would be the stronger and would prosper the most, and Jacob simply guided his hands to follow what the Lord had already determined.

5. Why does Jacob have the right to do this?

Jacob is the oldest, wisest one - and he was led by the One, True God. All Jacob's authority came not from himself, or even from his age and experience, but instead it came from the direction of the One, True God. Jacob was the spokesman for the One, True God.

6. Did Joseph see this coming?

No. Joseph was shocked.

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7. What would have been the result of this?

As the 2 sons of Joseph took their place amongst the shuffling and wrestling and power-grabbing of the 12 sons of Jacob, they had the authority of God behind them, and they knew that God had made the 2 of them equally able to stand for the One, True God in the affairs of men. Was it going to make their lives easier? Probably not. They were going to endure the same jealousy and maybe even evil intents that their father did. But God put them in these positions of leadership. His will was more important than a calm and easy life.

8. Why would Jacob have done these 2 things which would look so unfair to the rest of his family?

First of all, God told him to. After that, I'm sure there are many more reasons we won't know until eternity. I know there are always many purposes in what God does...but just common sense tells me that at least one of them in this case is that Joseph is rewarded in this way because of what he had to endure in order to save his own family from extinction....and to bring the Messiah into our world.

9. What does that tell you about life? What does that tell you about God?

Here's what it tells me:

- God doesn't always make life fair or comfortable or easy.
- You might often find yourself hated simply because you have been blessed by God.
- If so, you just have to do your job. Be kind. But do your job.
- Sometimes there are rewards.

I'd like to give you an armchair tour of history and the future: of the part Ephraim and Manasseh have played and will play in the world:

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<b>The List of 12 tribes</b>	<b>In their original birth order (<i>Genesis 29&amp;30 and Genesis 49</i>)</b>	<b>As they gathered around the tabernacle (<i>Numbers 2</i>)</b>	<b>As they settled in the land of Canaan (<i>Joshua 13-20</i>)</b>	<b>the 144,000 – (<i>Revelation 7:5-9</i>)</b>	<b>As they will someday settle in the Millennium (<i>Ezekiel 48</i>)</b>
1. Reuben – in all lists	Reuben	Reuben	Reuben	Reuben	Reuben
2. Simeon – in all lists	Simeon	Simeon	Simeon	Simeon	Simeon
3. Levi - Never included when the list had to do with inheritance of the land	Levi			Levi	
4. Judah – in all lists	Judah	Judah	Judah	Judah	Judah
5. Dan – <b>absent</b> from the 144,000.	Dan	Dan	Dan		Dan
6. Naphtali – in all lists	Naphtali	Naphtali	Naphtali	Naphtali	Naphtali
7. Gad – in all lists	Gad	Gad	Gad	Gad	Gad
8. Asher – in all lists	Asher	Asher	Asher	Asher	Asher
9. Issachar – in all lists	Issachar	Issachar	Issachar	Issachar	Issachar
10. Zebulun – in all lists	Zebulun	Zebulun	Zebulun	Zebulun	Zebulun
11. Joseph – Ephraim and Manasseh split up his place as inheritors of land, but Joseph is included in the 144,000	Joseph			Joseph	
12. Benjamin – in all lists	Benjamin	Benjamin	Benjamin	Benjamin	Benjamin
13. Ephraim – inherited Joseph's right to land – but <b>is not</b> included in the 144,000		Ephraim	Ephraim		Ephraim
14. – Manasseh – inherited Joseph's right to land – and <b>is</b> included in the 144,000.		Manasseh	Manasseh	Manasseh	Manasseh

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Look at the chart above:

- There are 12 sons born to Jacob
- 2 more sons are added to that 12 with the addition of Joseph's sons, Ephraim and Manasseh
- Later, when those 12 sons create 12 tribes and they all are following Moses through the wilderness, one of the original 12 tribes (Levi) is set apart to be priests, and the other 11 tribes have proscribed places to settle around the tabernacle. Ephraim and Manasseh are added to that 11, which would have made 13 tribes around the tabernacle, but in order to keep it at 12, Joseph is not included in the 12 tribes around the tabernacle. All of his descendants are in either Ephraim's tribe or Manasseh's tribe.
- Later, when the 12 tribes finally conquer and live in the land of Israel in the time of Joshua, the tribe of Levi is still set apart to be priests, and as such will never inherit any of the land of Israel, so the land of Israel is split up amongst the 12 tribes (Ephraim and Manasseh included, but not Joseph, same as above)
- The next time we see the 12 tribes is in the book of Revelation when they each have 12,000 men as a part of the 144,000 witnesses. These witnesses are Jewish men alive at the time of the Revelation who are believers in Jesus. So...out of the potential 14 tribes, which ones make up the 12 of the 144,000? Levi is in the list this time (because this doesn't have anything to do with land), but the tribe of Dan is out of the list (why?), and the tribe of Ephraim is out (why?). I have my ideas about why on each of those - check out my Bible study on the book of Revelation to see what I think on those (Revelation 7 notes)
- And then, after the Lord Jesus has returned and is reigning as King of Kings during the 1,000-year millennium, the 12 tribes again take possession of their land in Israel, repeating what had happened when they took possession of that land during the time of Joshua - Levi is left out and Joseph is left out.

Now, there's one more place the 12 tribes of Israel appear in the Bible. At the very end, in the book of Revelation, when the New Heaven and the New Earth are brought down from heaven by God, we are told that this awesome

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city has 12 gates. They are magnificent, tall, and each made out of one giant pearl. And on each of those 12 gates is written a name of one of the 12 tribes of Israel. (Revelation 21:9-21)

Here's a mystery we will have to solve when we take our first tour of this city which will be our home forever: What 12 names are on those gates? Is Joseph's name there... or are Ephraim and Manasseh there?

Wait and see!