

The Book of Genesis

Lesson 37

Chapter 48

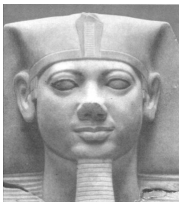


Figure 37: Senusret II
Died four years
before the death of
Jacob.

Senusret II served as Pharaoh for 19 years; he was already in power for six years when he elevated Joseph to second in command of Egypt. Jacob lived in Egypt 17 years before he died which meant that Senusret II had died four years before the death of Jacob. Senusret II's son, Senusret III then reigned for 37 years. He was the Pharaoh at the time of Jacob's death.



Figure 38: Senusret III
took his father's place
on the throne and
served for 37 years.
He was in power when
Jacob died.

At the end of Genesis 47, Jacob made Joseph promise to take his remains and bury them in the cave with Abraham in Hebron. Additionally, Moses gave the age of Jacob at the time of his death; however, Jacob had not died yet. The insertion of the conversation between Jacob and Joseph in Genesis 47:27-31 which includes details concerning Jacob's last days of life, causes a problem in the flow and context of the narrative. Most commentators assume that Genesis chapter 48 occurred at the end of Jacob's life when he was near death, but that could not be true. In the following passage, Jacob will bless Manasseh and Ephraim. The problem occurs in Genesis 48:12 which states that Manasseh and Ephraim were sitting on the knees of Joseph before they approached Jacob. Manasseh and Ephraim were already born when Jacob moved to Egypt. They were born during the seven years of plenty before the seven years of famine. If the following passage occurred when Jacob was about to die, Joseph's boys were more than 20 years old and it is doubtful that two 20 year olds were sitting on their father's knees. More than likely, the promise to bury Jacob in Hebron occurred shortly after Jacob moved to Egypt. He and his family knew that they were going to be there at least five years because of the famine. He also knew that God had instructed him that Joseph would be the one who closed his eyes when he died. With that being so, the following passage must have occurred shortly after the promise was made when Jacob became sick but many years before his actual death. It seems more justifiable that Joseph's two sons were old enough to understand that Jacob was their grandfather yet young enough to be able to sit on Joseph's knees.

Selection of Manasseh and Ephraim

Genesis 48:1 Now it came about after these things that Joseph was told, "Behold, your father is sick." So he took his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim with him. ² When it was told to Jacob, "Behold, your son Joseph has come to you," Israel collected his strength and sat up in the bed. ³ Then Jacob said to Joseph, "God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me, ⁴ and He said to me, 'Behold, I will make you fruitful and numerous, and I will make you a company of peoples, and will give this land to your descendants after you for an everlasting possession.' ⁵ "And now your two sons, who were born to you in the land of Egypt

before I came to you in Egypt, are mine; Ephraim and Manasseh shall be mine, as Reuben and Simeon are. ⁶ "But your offspring that have been born after them shall be yours; they shall be called by the names of their brothers in their inheritance.

Even though Jacob was sick, he was still strong enough to sit up in his bed when Joseph arrived. Jacob took the opportunity to bless Joseph through his two sons. Reuben was Jacob's firstborn and Simeon his second. Jacob placed on Joseph's two sons the same status as his first and second born. It is an interesting seed of thought planted in this portion of the Scripture that will grow into a prophecy of a double blessing for Joseph and will be given to him at the time when Jacob speaks his final blessings over each of his sons at the end of this chapter.

Joseph's sons will take their places as two of the tribal heads when the family leaves Egypt. As such, they were given the same status as the other biological sons of Jacob. However, the descendants of Manasseh and Ephraim would trace their lineage back to Joseph, but their tribal names will be their own.

It is interesting that Moses mentioned Luz instead of Bethel as the place where the LORD met Jacob for the first time. It was Luz at that time; it was not named Bethel by Jacob until he returned for his third encounter with the LORD more than 20 years later on his way back to Hebron.

Sorrow of Jacob

Genesis 48:7 "Now as for me, when I came from Paddan, Rachel died, to my sorrow, in the land of Canaan on the journey, when there was still some distance to go to Ephrath; and I buried her there on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem)."

Isaac was physically impaired when he sent Jacob to Haran; he was blind and bedridden; nevertheless, he lived fifty-nine more years past his instruction for Jacob to go to Haran to make a life for himself. When Jacob purchased the land in Shechem being just 40 miles from his father's home, it is very likely that Jacob had taken his family to meet Isaac during that time. However, we have no Scriptural proof. What we do know is that as Jacob was making his trip to move to Hebron to live with Isaac, Rachel died and was buried just outside the modern-day city of Bethlehem.

This passage is Jacob's attempt to express his great love for Joseph's mother. Because we do not know the age of Joseph or Jacob at the time of Rachel's death, it is quite possible that Joseph was too young to have known and remembered her. In this time with Joseph, Jacob was expressing the sorrow that began with her death and had been a constant presence in his mind to that day. Joseph was 56 years old at that meeting; it is quite possible that Rachel had been gone more than 50 years.

Blessing of Manasseh and Ephraim

Genesis 48:8 When Israel saw Joseph's sons, he said, "Who are these?" ⁹ And Joseph said to his father, " They are my sons, whom God has given me here." So he said, "Bring them to me, please, that I may bless them." ¹⁰ Now the eyes of Israel were so

dim from age *that* he could not see. Then Joseph brought them close to him, and he kissed them and embraced them. ¹¹ And Israel said to Joseph, "I never expected to see your face, and behold, God has let me see your children as well." ¹² Then Joseph took them from his knees, and bowed with his face to the ground. ¹³ And 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. 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 first-born. ¹⁵ And 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, 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." ¹⁷ When Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand on Ephraim's head, it displeased him; and he grasped his father's hand to remove it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. ¹⁸ And Joseph said to his father, "Not so, my father, for this one is the first-born. Place your right hand on his head." ¹⁹ But his father refused and said, "I know, my son, I know; he also shall become a people and he also shall be great. However, his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations." ²⁰ And he blessed them that day, saying, "By you Israel shall pronounce blessing, saying, 'May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh!'" Thus he put Ephraim before Manasseh.

Whether or not Jacob was at the point of death, we do not know. Certainly he and his family must have thought death was near during this sickness and that is the reason they called for Joseph. Most certainly, Jacob did not die until years later. Unable to identify the sons of Joseph means that he was either nearly blind or it was the first time he met the boys. Joseph's answer supports the latter conclusion. Therefore, this visit must have been in the first year or so of Jacob's life in Egypt.

We must not miss the importance of Joseph's bowing before his father. The old man was highly favored by the LORD. Joseph, too, was highly favored in the same ways as his father, save one. Jacob's name would be forever attached to the divine covenant with God. Several times in the Scripture we read the LORD's words, "I AM the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Joseph's name is never mentioned with those three. Joseph had bowed to Potiphar, the jailer, the Pharaoh and now, his father. Of them all, his father, worn down by the elements of nature and the circumstances of life and the years of time, was greater than Joseph.

Jacob laid his hands on the heads of his two grandchildren. The practice of the laying on of hands is mentioned here for the first time, yet, it most assuredly was not the first time it happened in the lives of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Joseph's reaction to Jacob's placing his right hand on the head of the younger son signifies that Joseph understood the importance of the laying on of hands and specifically the use of the right hand on the head of the preeminent

choice. The blessing during the laying on of hands throughout the rest of the Scripture signifies the setting aside of a person for an office, a position, a promise or a work and is considered one of the highest and most holy times in the life of the people involved as well as the worship of the LORD. Jacob's blessing of the sons of Joseph was a special time to set them aside as if they were actually Jacob's sons. In doing so, Jacob was bestowing on Joseph a double blessing.

It is also interesting that Jacob is following a pattern with his blessings of Joseph's two sons that began in the first pages of the book of Genesis and continues to these last chapters and on through the Scriptures. Many times in God's plan, the younger took preeminence over the older. It was Seth over Cain, Shem over Japheth, Isaac over Ishmael, Jacob over Esau, Joseph over Rueben, Ephraim over Manasseh, Moses over Aaron, David over Eliab, Solomon over Amnon. It is the planting of the seed of God's theology that the first shall be last and the last shall be first in the kingdom of the LORD even though they will both be present in the kingdom.

Jacob had not forgotten the Angel Who redeemed him. Jacob was evil. Jacob was deceptive; but, Jacob was redeemable! Angels cannot redeem; only the Angel of the LORD, Yahweh, Who is the LORD Jesus Christ, has the prerogative to redeem. The Angel who redeemed Jacob was the pre-incarnate Jesus Who is the Creator and Savior of all.

In verse 16, Jacob said, **"The angel who has redeemed me from all evil, Bless the lads; And may my name live on in them."** "... may my name live on in them" means that Jacob was asking the Redeemer to allow him to count Joseph's two sons as if they were his own in the future of the nation of Israel, God's chosen people.

Instruction to Joseph

Genesis 48:21 Then Israel said to Joseph, "Behold, I am about to die, but God will be with you, and bring you back to the land of your fathers.²² "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."

The duty of a child to a parent does not end until that parent is laid in the grave. Even then, the child has the responsibility of bringing honor to the name of the deceased parent. For Jacob, the Promised Land was ever-present in his mind. It was promised to his descendants through the Redeemer to Abraham, Isaac and then Jacob. He would not see that land again but he had the assurance that Joseph would see to it that his body would be returned to the grave of his fathers in the land promised to them.

Jacob gives an extra portion of land to the descendants of Joseph, one for Ephraim and one for Manasseh. Each of the descendants of the other 11 brothers would receive only one portion each. Therefore, Joseph's line would be granted a double blessing without using Joseph's name. We do not see it in the English translation but Jacob used the Hebrew word *shechem* for the extra portion Joseph would receive. In Genesis 33, Jacob purchased land in the village area of Shechem which is called Sychar in the New Testament. We do not know for sure, but it is possible that Jacob was promising the land he already owned in Shechem as the extra portion to be given to Manasseh when the family returned to the Promised Land. The tribe of Manasseh

did inherit that area owned by Jacob in Shechem when they took the Promised Land more than 400 years later.

We have no documentation to explain the full meaning of Jacob's statement about taking the land from the "hand of the Amorite with my sword and my bow." Nevertheless, Joseph and his descendants must have understood the full meaning of these words at that time.

Chapter 49

Did Jacob summon his sons immediately following his blessing on Ephraim and Manasseh with Joseph as recorded in chapter 48? Probably not. Most likely Jacob waited until he was well to summon the sons, or, as might be the case, he waited a decade or so until he was nearer the time of his death.

Prophecy to Sons of Jacob

Genesis 49:1 Then Jacob summoned his sons and said, "Assemble yourselves that I may tell you what shall befall you in the days to come. ² "Gather together and hear, O sons of Jacob; And listen to Israel your father.

"Assemble yourselves that I may tell you what shall befall you in the days to come." Jacob was about to speak a word of prophecy for each of his sons. His words cannot be his own; they must come through the inspiration from the Holy Spirit. How could Jacob know the future of his 12 sons without God's all-knowing help? Today, we have the luxury of being able to study the whole written Word of God; we can see the fulfillment of these prophecies reaching even to the last pages of the book of Revelation. Jacob could not have known the full extent of his words, yet the LORD has provided the resources we need to see how important they were to the future of the world.

Reuben

Genesis 49:3 "Reuben, you are my first-born; My might and the beginning of my strength, preeminent in dignity and preeminent in power. ⁴ " Uncontrolled as water, you shall not have preeminence, because you went up to your father's bed; Then you defiled it-- he went up to my couch.

Reuben's sin against Jacob when Rachel died was not forgotten by Jacob or by God. The sin was so grievous that he would not receive the inheritance that was rightfully his as the firstborn. In Deuteronomy 21:17, the law gave the firstborn a double portion of the deceased father's inheritance; however, that standard cannot be applied to this setting with Jacob because it had not been the standard with Isaac's inheritance from Abraham. Jacob would have followed the cultural norm used by Isaac and Abraham. Isaac inherited everything from his father at his death; Ishmael had been sent away with very little when Isaac was four years old. All of Isaac's brothers by Keturah were given money by Abraham and sent away to start their lives in the east.

Isaac then inherited all that was left including money, livestock, servants and more. Jacob had inherited all that was left of Isaac's wealth because he had purchased the birthright from Esau. Nothing could change that. Until the law was delivered after the exodus, the oldest inherited everything. Reuben should have been preeminent in dignity and power by receiving all of Jacob's wealth but because of his lustful act with Bilhah, Rachel's maid, an act that defiled Jacob's bed, he lost his birthright. Reuben knew that the sin was wrong and grieved through the years about it; he even tried to plot a plan to redeem himself in his father's eyes but even that was spoiled by his brothers.

This sin of Reuben and the loss of the birthright did not affect just his life, it affected his entire tribe of descendants for all eternity. During the time of Moses, Reuben's tribe was on average merely a third the size of his brothers.⁴⁶ Furthermore, his tribe was the first to be carried into exile.⁴⁷ Some sins are so grievous that the fate of a family as a whole throughout all generations is affected.

Simeon and Levi

Genesis 49:5 **"Simeon and Levi are brothers; Their swords are implements of violence.**

6 "Let my soul not enter into their council; Let not my glory be united with their assembly; Because in their anger they slew men, And in their self-will they lamed oxen. 7 "Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce; And their wrath, for it is cruel. I will disperse them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.

Jacob had not forgotten the murderous deeds of Simeon and Levi when they took their swords and killed all the men who were still in pain after circumcising themselves in order to enter into a covenant with Jacob's sons that would allow Shechem to marry Dinah and the rest of the Hivittes to intermarry with Jacob's descendants in the future. Instead of using their swords to protect their families, they used them to murder the innocent. Angry with Shechem, they killed all his tribe. It was their self-willed desire without the approval of Jacob or the LORD God Almighty. **"Because in their anger they slew men"** literally should read, "Because in their anger they slew honorable men." The men had kept their promise; Simeon and Levi took advantage of them in the midst of completing their promise.

In the Promised Land, two things happened to fulfill Jacob's words, **"I will disperse them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel."** The position of a priest was both a blessing and a curse. The tribe of Levi became the priests, never owning land, always relying on the donations of others, scattered among the other tribes to minister as servants of the LORD, yet, restricted to their own tribe for marriage arrangements. The parents suffered loneliness separated from their kin and the children were bound to marry those they had never lived around because of their father's assignment among the tribes. According to Joshua 19:1, the descendants of Simeon

⁴⁶ Numbers 1:21

⁴⁷ 1 Chronicles 5:26

became the school masters among the other tribes, given only small portions of land and a few towns in the most disgusting section of Judah's tribal area, down near the Edomites and Amalekites. Thus, both tribes were disbursed among the other tribes and separated from their own extended blood families.

Judah

Genesis 49:8 **"Judah, your brothers shall praise you; Your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; Your father's sons shall bow down to you. ⁹ "Judah is a lion's whelp; From the prey, my son, you have gone up. He couches, he lies down as a lion, And as a lion, who dares rouse him up? 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. ¹¹ " He ties *his* foal to the vine, And his donkey's colt to the choice vine; He washes his garments in wine, And his robes in the blood of grapes. ¹² "His eyes are dull from wine, And his teeth white from milk.**

We must not forget that with the birth of Judah, the fourth son of Jacob and Leah, she had given up on trying to win his love away from Rachel. She turned her eyes to the LORD and named him Judah which means the praise of the LORD.⁴⁸ Judah's descendants would be warriors, protecting the nation of Israel from all enemies. All the other sons of Jacob will follow the leadership of the descendants as their kings by Divine promotion. David, Solomon, and 20 more kings of the Southern Kingdom will come from the line of Judah just as will the incarnate Word of God – King Jesus.

Who is Shiloh? It means the peaceful one and it is a reference to the Messiah. Once He has arrived, there will be no need for any further king; He will be the King of kings even though He will be crucified, He will still be the King Who will return to reign over the earth for 1,000 years. When that time arrives, the grape vines will be so abundant and sturdy that they will be used for the hitching posts of the beast of burden. Wine will be so abundant that people will use it to wash their clothing to retain the deep richness of the color in which it was dyed. **"His eyes are dull from wine"** should actually say, "His eyes are red (or bright) from wine." That follows with **"and his teeth white from milk,"** a reference to the brightness of their teeth which was an oddity in the days of the Genesis story. Teeth were not well cared for in that day. All of this final portion of this prophecy for Judah speaks of the abundant blessing that his family will experience all the years leading to the Kingdom of the LORD.

Zebulun

Genesis 49:13 **" Zebulun shall dwell at the seashore; And he *shall be* a haven for ships, And his flank *shall be* toward Sidon.**

The portion of the Promised Land given to Zebulun fulfilled this prophecy. He was given the northern land nearest the city of Sidon which was in the land of the Phoenicians. Sidon was

⁴⁸ Genesis 29:35

never part of the Promised Land. Most of the Mediterranean shoreline that bordered the Promised Land was not conducive to safe harbors and ports but Zebulun's sea borders were filled with places for both. The tribe of Zebulun made much of its wealth in managing these ports. Unlike the prophecy of Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah, whose records of their lives in the book of Genesis helps us to understand why Jacob pronounced their specific prophecy to them, nothing in the book of Genesis even remotely foretold this prophecy to Zebulun.

Issachar

Genesis 49:14 **"Issachar is a strong donkey, Lying down between the sheepfolds.**

¹⁵ **"When he saw that a resting place was good And that the land was pleasant, He bowed his shoulder to bear *burdens*, And became a slave at forced labor.**

This prophecy over Issachar could be interpreted incorrectly. Most have heard of the stubbornness of a donkey, one who sits with his load and fails to cooperate, but that is not the case with Issachar in Scripture. His tribe was a mighty strong force in the victories of taking the Promised Land. His portion of the land was situated with tribes on each side. His tribe was willing to bear the burdens of his brothers' tribes and served them willingly, almost like slaves at times. In Judges 10, when one of his own was the judge over the Promised Land, his strength kept the land in peace for more than two decades. Therefore, he was not a stubborn donkey who would not cooperate; he was a strong beast of burden that protected his siblings and bore their encumbrances.

Dan

Genesis 49:16 **"Dan shall judge his people, As one of the tribes of Israel. ¹⁷ "Dan shall be a serpent in the way, A horned snake in the path, That bites the horse's heels, So that his rider falls backward. ¹⁸ " For Thy salvation I wait, O LORD.**

Judges 18 gives a glimpse of the reason for this prophecy. The tribe of Dan, before it had obtained its portion of the Promised Land, was the first to fall into the worship of idols in search of a savior. Therefore, Dan became like a horned snake to the rest of the tribes, tripping up his brothers with his idolatrous bite. Jacob did not see the future salvation of the world in Dan's direction, but rather, Jacob saw past Dan to the coming of the salvation from the true LORD.

Both Gideon and Samson were Danites; both men brought temporary salvation to the Israelites during their time as judges. Yet, neither of them brought eternal salvation. Jacob was not looking for a savior in the line of Dan; he was looking for the salvation that only the LORD can bring.

Gad

Genesis 49:19 **"As for Gad, raiders shall raid him, but he shall raid *at* their heels.**

It seems that there is little agreement by translators concerning this prophecy. The Hebrew, Greek, Syrian, Latin, and English disagree on a uniform message for this prophecy to Gad. Probably the most likely fulfillment of this prophecy is found in Joshua chapters 4 and 22 where Gad would cross the Jordan to attack a Canaanite tribe and then retreat with its stolen booty. However, even that suggestion is mere speculation.

Asher

Genesis 49:20 " **As for Asher, his food shall be rich, and he shall yield royal dainties.**

Unlike Gad's prophecy, Asher's blessing will be enforced and reiterated by Moses when he sends them into the Promised Land.

Deuteronomy 33:24-25 And of Asher he said, "More blessed than sons is Asher; May he be favored by his brothers, and may he dip his foot in oil. Your locks shall be iron and bronze, And according to your days, so shall your leisurely walk be."

Naphtali

Genesis 49:21 " **Naphtali is a doe let loose, He gives beautiful words.**

Descendants of his four children that he took to Egypt, Naphtali's tribe left the land with 53,400 men 20 years and older. Like Asher before, Moses enforced and reiterated Jacob's prophecy to Naphtali when he said the following.

Deuteronomy 33:23 Of Naphtali he said, "O Naphtali, satisfied with favor, And full of the blessing of the LORD, Take possession of the sea and the south."

Joseph

Genesis 49:22 " **Joseph is a fruitful bough, A fruitful bough by a spring; Its branches run over a wall.** ²³ "The archers bitterly attacked him, And shot *at him* and harassed him; ²⁴ But his bow remained firm, And his arms were agile, From the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob (~~From there is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel~~), ²⁵ From the God of your father who helps you, And by the Almighty who blesses you *With* blessings of heaven above, Blessings of the deep that lies beneath, Blessings of the breasts and of the womb. ²⁶ "The blessings of your father Have surpassed the blessings of my ancestors Up to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills; May they be on the head of Joseph, And on the crown of the head of the one distinguished among his brothers.

"**Joseph is a fruitful bough,**" opens Jacob's blessing on this son. Joseph was already a fruitful bough at the time of this blessing as he held the position of prince and governor of Egypt. But Jacob reminds Joseph of his past. "**The archers bitterly attacked him, and shot *at him* and harassed him**" must be a reference to the hardships Joseph experienced from his brothers in the early years as well as his time imprisoned in Egypt. In spite of all his adversities, Joseph held

strong and because of that, “**the Mighty One of Jacob ... the God of your father who helps you,**” exalted Joseph to his position in Egypt. Anyone who has read the Bible recognizes the number of times the phrase “the God of Jacob” is used. Here, Jacob speaks of his God to Joseph. It was Jacob’s God who helped Joseph. He is *El Shaddai*, the Almighty sufficient God Who supplied Joseph with every blessing needed whether from the land, sea, or the heavens. From that Jacob pronounces the blessings that will come upon Joseph from the breast and womb. His offspring will be numerous! At the time of the first census of the nation of Israel in Numbers 1, his male descendants 20 years of age and older will be 75,900, a thousand more than Judah’s descendants and many more than his other brothers. Because of Joseph and his involvement in the development of the nation of Israel under the direction of the Almighty, Jacob’s name of Israel was established forever. Therefore, the crown was on the head of Joseph to fulfill his purpose in God’s plan.

Benjamin

Genesis 49:27 "Benjamin is a ravenous wolf; In the morning he devours the prey, And in the evening he divides the spoil."

Moses seems to confirm the thoughts of Jacob in his words to the tribe of Benjamin.

Deuteronomy 33:12

Deuteronomy 33:12 Of Benjamin he said, " May the beloved of the LORD dwell in security by Him, Who shields him all the day, And he dwells between His shoulders."

In Judges 19, the Benjamite heirs raped and murdered a Levite concubine like a pack of wolves. King Saul, a Benjamite, was a constant ravenous wolf in pursuit of David. Saul of Tarsus was a ravenous wolf in pursuit of the destruction of Christianity. But other Benjamites used the characteristic of the tribe for good. Johnathan, King Saul’s son, used his instinct to protect David. Mordecia sniffed out the danger approaching in the plans of Hayman to save the nation of Israel from extinction. Saul of Tarsus was changed on the road to Damascus to a life of pursuit of souls in need of a Savior. Many more examples of the Benjamite prophecy of Jacob can be found in the Scripture.

Conclusion of Jacob’s Blessings on His Sons

Genesis 49:28 All these are the twelve tribes of Israel, and this is what their father said to them when he blessed them. He blessed them, everyone with the blessing appropriate to him.

In this verse, Moses summarized the importance of the blessings placed on the twelve tribes. The blessings foretell the predominate characteristics of the nature and future of each tribe as well as vague references to the coming Savior and Redeemer of the world.

Burial Instruction

Genesis 49:29 Then he charged them and said to them, "I am about to be gathered to my people; bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite,

³⁰ in the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought along with the field from Ephron the Hittite for a burial site. ³¹ "There they buried Abraham and his wife Sarah, there they buried Isaac and his wife Rebekah, and there I buried Leah-- ³² the field and the cave that is in it, purchased from the sons of Heth."

The one interesting point in this passage spoken by Jacob was the burial of Leah. When did Jacob bury Leah in Hebron? She was mentioned with the names of those who traveled with Jacob to live in Egypt at Joseph's bidding. With her name included, the count of the descendants is correct in Moses' record. She must have died during the 17 years of Jacob's life in Egypt and he, or someone, made the journey back to bury her in the cave. But that might not be the case at all; she may have died before the journey to Egypt but her death was not recorded by Moses in the Scripture. If that is the case, then an unnamed daughter might have been included in the count by Moses. We must not forget that wives, daughters and granddaughters were not included; therefore, Bilhah and Zilpah were also excluded from the count and other unnamed daughters or granddaughters were counted instead. Nonetheless, we do not know the answer to that quandary except that Leah had died and was buried with Abraham, Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah in the cave purchased from Mamre by Abraham.

Jacob's Last Breathe

Genesis 49:33 **When Jacob finished charging his sons, he drew his feet into the bed and breathed his last, and was gathered to his people.**

It had been 2298 years since the creation of Adam when Jacob drew his last breath and died. No doubt it was an emotional time for the family. According to the context of this passage, Jacob had just completed the blessings he delivered to each son and reminded them of where he wanted to be buried. It is hard to believe that Jacob was strong enough to deliver the blessings and then take his last breath and die; that is not how humans die naturally as designed by the LORD. In the normal course of a natural death, Jacob would have slipped into semi-unconsciousness, his breathing would have become increasingly shallow with the times between breaths lingering on in extended silence. Finally, the family would wait for the last breath that would never come. Then they knew that death had arrived. It can take just a few minutes or a few hours or many days for death to occur; we do not know why this is often the case; however, it seems that in life, standing by the side of the bed of a loved one for hours allows the participants to say their last goodbyes and settle in their souls the finality of the death of the one passing on. **"Was gathered to his people"** was Moses' way of saying, Jacob had joined all the Godly line of his family who had gone on before him to be with the LORD for eternity. When Jacob died, Senusret III was in his 21st year as Pharaoh of Egypt.



Figure 38: Senusret III
The Pharaoh when
Jacob died.