
Pearl Seeking

TREASURING HIS WORD

Let's do a quick overview of the entire Torah portion:

Monday:	Gen. 47:28 - 48:22	The blessing of Ephrayim and Menashsheh
Tuesday:	Gen. 49:1-28	The blessing of the 12 sons of Yisra'el
Wednesday:	Gen. 49:29 - 50:3	Ya'aqob's last instructions for his death and burial
Thursday:	Gen. 50:4-14	Ya'aqob's children bury their father in Kena'an
Friday:	Gen. 50:15-26	Yoseph's brothers fear retaliation; Yoseph's death

Last week, Yoseph sent provisions and gifts with his brothers to bring his father Ya'aqob to Mitsrayim. Yoseph's family settled in Goshen and obtained favor from Pharaoh, including assigning his brothers positions as chief herdsman. In this week's Parsha Pearls lesson, Ya'aqob blesses his grandchildren Ephrayim and Menashsheh as well as his 12 sons. Now, let's read Gen. 48:1-20 & 49:1-28.

PARSHA POINTS

Ya'aqob Blesses Ephrayim & Menashsheh

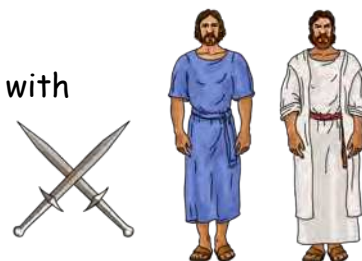
- Yoseph and his 2 (**shtayim**) sons, Menashsheh and Ephrayim, visited his sick father - 48:1
- Strengthened by their visit, Ya'aqob sat up on his bed (**mittah**) - 48:2
- Ya'aqob recounted to Yoseph the blessing and promise that El Shaddai made to him at Luz: the promise of an everlasting (**olam**) possession of the land of Kena'an - 48:3-4
- Ya'aqob informed Yoseph that he was adopting Yoseph's 2 sons as his own - 48:5
- Ya'aqob's eyesight was failing, so he asked Yoseph's 2 sons to draw near so he might bless them - 48:9-10
- Ya'aqob exclaimed that although he had not thought he would ever see his son Yoseph's face again, now he was blessed to also see his offspring - 48:11
- Yoseph brought forth his children from between his knees to be blessed and showed his father honor by bowing down to him - 48:12
- Aware that Ya'aqob could not see well, Yoseph directed his children under the correct hands of his father, according to their birth order - 48:13



- However, Ya'aqob intentionally placed his right hand over Ephrayim's head (**rosh**) and his left over Menashsheh's head - 48:14
- Yoseph saw his father's actions as evil, and tried to reposition his father's right hand on Menashsheh, his firstborn - 48:17
- Ya'aqob insisted that he knew what he was doing, and explained his actions to Yoseph - 48:19
- Ya'aqob told Yoseph that Ephrayim would be greater than Menashsheh and that his seed would become the completeness of the nations - 48:19
- Ya'aqob put Ephrayim before Menashsheh in his blessing - 48:20

Ya'aqob Blesses His Boys

- Ya'aqob then called his 12 (**shtem esre**) sons, in order to bless them and foretell what would befall their future generations - 49:1-28
- Re'uben, the first-born, was (49:3-4):
 - called Ya'aqob's power and beginning of his strength
 - called the excellency of exaltation and power
 - compared to 'boiling water'
 - told he would not excel because of his transgression against his father
- Shim'on and Lewi were (49:5-7):
 - told their weapons were implements of violence
 - told that their father would not take their counsel or share with them his esteem
 - cursed for the cruelty of their wrath
 - told their portion in the land of Yisra'el would be divided
- Yehudah was (49:9-12):
 - told that his brothers would praise him
 - told that his enemies would have his hand on their neck
 - told that his brothers would bow down to him
 - compared to a lion's cub that grew into a powerful lion
 - told that the scepter (**shevet**) would not depart from him until Shiloh (He whose it is) comes, and to Him is the obedience of the peoples
- Zebulun was told (49:13):
 - he would dwell at the seashore
 - he would be a haven for ships
 - his border would be as far as Tsidon



- Yissaskar was told (49:14-15):

- he was a strong donkey lying down between 2 burdens
- that he saw a resting place that was good and its land pleasant
- he would stoop his shoulder down to bear a burden, and become a subject to slave labor



- Dan was told (49:16-18):

- he rightly rules his people as one of the tribes of Yisra'el
- he was a serpent that bites the horse's heel and causes its rider to fall backwards



- Gad was told (49:19):

- that raiding bands try to raid him but do not prevail



- Asher was told (49:20):

- he provides bread and delicacies



- Naphtali was told (49:21):

- he is a deer that has words of elegance



- Yoseph was told (49:22-26):

- he was an offshoot of a fruit-bearing tree by a fountain with his branches running over the wall
- that archers had shot at him because they hated him
- his bow in his hand remained strong by the Mighty One of Ya'aqob
- his blessings would excel that of his fathers



- Binyamin was told (49:27):

- he was a wolf that tears
- that he eats his prey in the morning
- that he divides the spoil at night



- Ya'aqob blessed each son according to their own blessing - 49:28



DIGGING DEEPER

Parents/Teachers may choose to use these prompts for further discussion of the Torah portion.

- When Yoseph saw his father blessing his younger son over the elder, it was 'evil in his eyes'. Do you think Yoseph was recalling what he had suffered at the hands of his older brothers because he had been favored by his father?
- Ya'aqob told Yoseph that he was taking his sons Ephrayim and Menashsheh as his own. (48:5) We also see that he gives the pre-eminence of the firstborn blessing to Ephrayim which is the younger son of Yoseph. (48:19-20) How do you think this affected Yoseph as well as all his brothers? Do you think they resented this?
- The pronouncements to Ya'aqob's 12 sons are more overall declarations of each tribe's destinies as opposed to blessings. Research their prophetic meanings.
- How do you think each brother felt when they heard their father's declarations and compared each other's especially if their blessing seemed less important or significant? Do you think this affected how they saw each other and treated each other? Do you think there might have been envy or resentment about their blessing?
- In this parsha we see that Ya'aqob splits the firstborn blessing to Yoseph and Yehudah instead of Re'uben who dishonored his father. (1 Chron. 5:1-2) As we read further parshas we will see that Re'uben's tribe will choose to dwell on the east side of the Jordan away from the other tribes showing his characteristic of poor decision making. Mosheh will also ask a special request that the tribe of Re'uben continue to live and not die. (Deut. 33:6) Discuss the importance of making wise decisions so that the consequences of our actions do not affect our children negatively.
- Compare and contrast the blessings that Ya'aqob pronounced upon his children in Genesis 49 and Mosheh's found in Deuteronomy 33.
- Research and discuss the symbols that represent the 12 tribes. Why do you think there is a difference between the blessing and what is represented on banners for each tribe?

