

## **Ephraim Ahead of Manasseh**

Genesis 48

by Don Falkos

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Jacob's health was failing rapidly. Joseph and his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, went to visit him. Jacob gathered his strength and sat up in bed. He said to Joseph, "God promised to give the land of Canaan to my descendants. I am now claiming your two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, as my own. They will inherit equally with Reuben and Simeon. I do this to honor your mother, Rachel, who, to my great sorrow, died while we were on the road to Bethlehem. Now bring the boys here so I may bless them."

Manasseh was the oldest, so Joseph positioned him by Jacob's right hand. Ephraim was by his left. Jacob said to Joseph, "I thought I would never see you again, but now God has let me see your children, too."

As Jacob reached out to bless the two boys, he crossed his arms, placing his right hand on the head of the younger and his left on the head of the elder. Joseph was upset. He tried to move his father's hands, saying, "No, father. Put your right hand on Manasseh. He is the firstborn."

Jacob replied, "I know, my son, I know. Manasseh will become a great nation, but his younger brother will become even greater."

So Jacob, that is Israel, blessed the boys saying, "The people of Israel will use your names when they give a blessing. They will say, 'May God make you as prosperous as Ephraim and Manasseh.' "

And so, Jacob put Ephraim ahead of Manasseh.