***Jehu, Lot, and Manasseh

RV132-02***

We are studying section number 9 on the tribulation evangelists, covering Revelation 7:4-8, which have described for us the 12 sons of Jacob, whose families will be providing the evangelists of the tribulation era. In our study, we have seen the 12 sons of Jacob, and their family traits and parental influences on their children. So, in Genesis 49 we have seen Jacob, on his deathbed, looking at each of His Sons, one-by-one, gathered around him, and characterizing each of them as per that which was true of them relative to their temperament and their conduct, and predicting the future course of their descendants as the result of having that kind of a patriarch at the head of the family.

**Joseph**

We have been looking at Joseph, who was we found a son of high moral integrity, and a young man who had a great devotion to divine viewpoint principles which had been taught in his home. Joseph, therefore, was not ashamed of having been born into a family which possessed the knowledge of the true God. Young people sometimes are intimidated by the fact that they come out of a Christian family. When they get out into the world system, they are intimidated by the fact that they have Christian beliefs, and they have a Christian frame of reference as they move out in life, and in their social relationships, and as they deal with other people.

Joseph was not ashamed of that. He was, as a matter of fact, ready to build on his family's spiritual insight, rather than retrogress to the human viewpoint blindness of his day. Therefore, Joseph was ready to accept the hatred of his family, and of those outside his family who disliked him because of his faithfulness to God. He bore that kind of unfair treatment with grace.

Joseph, consequently, because of these characteristics, always rose to the top in whatever situation he found himself. He rose to positions of authority: whether he was in his home; whether he was in an Egyptian prison; or, whether he was in the court of the pharaoh.

Furthermore, the evil intent of Joseph's brothers was turned by God into the means for saving them all from starvation. So, people are blessed according to the way those who are their parents act. People are blessed according to the way others with whom they are associated respond to the Word of God apart from what other people are doing. Family members, in other words, do suffer the consequences, good or bad, of parental decision, and of their parental character.

**The Third and Fourth Generation**

This principle was explained to the Jewish people at the very start of their history as a nation, following the escape from Egyptian slavery. We have it stated, first of all, in Exodus 20:5-6, where God says to the Jewish people, in the course of giving them the ten moral principles by which they are to live: "You shall not bow down thyself to them (that is, to idol gods) nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers (the sinfulness of the fathers) upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me." And conversely, in verse 6: "Showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me and keep My commandments."

Here, embedded in the moral code was a basic reason why they should not bow down to idol Gods. Namely: "If you do that, you not only will come under My divine discipline and judgment, but you will impose that upon your descendants. Three and four generations down the line – they will suffer the consequences of what you do."

The reason for this is that when a child sees his parents doing a bad thing, he tends to follow in that direction. He tends to follow it to a lesser degree, perhaps, then subsequent generations will. He usually does. But then he has children, and the second generation is acting the same way as the fathers did. Now the third generation is even freer to do the evil. By the time you get down to the fourth one, they have completely abandoned (forgotten about) God. They are totally engrossed in a particular evil, and there is nothing but absolute divine judgment upon the individual.

So, this, in part, is not just that you suffer the consequences of decisions that parents have made. You're not suffering entirely for their sins. It's the fact that their influence upon you causes you to follow a course of action that puts you under God's judgment as well.

So, this was a very important point made in the Word of God, and reiterated several times subsequently. When you get a little farther along, in Exodus 34:7, the same concept is again declared: "Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation. This is the same principle. God, because he is a God of justice, cannot compromise His integrity and do anything else. If parents are out of line with the will of God, as it's contained in the decree of God, then their children will bear certain consequences. If their parents are in line with the will of God, and with the principles of Scripture, then their children will be blessed, even if the kids themselves are out of line with the Word of God. They will be prospered and blessed because of faithful parents. So, it goes both ways.

**Jehu**

We have an example of this in the case of one of the men that God rose up to become king over Israel in the era when Jezebel and Ahab were running amok in their evil. God raised up a man named Jehu. And Jehu was a man who, after listening to God, said, "OK, I understand what you want me to do," and he obeyed. The result of Jehu's action was blessing upon his posterity. We have this described in Second Kings 10:30, where we read, "And the Lord said unto Jehu, 'Because you have done well in executing that which is right in My eyes, and have done into the house of Ahab according to all that was in My heart, your children of the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Israel." Because God ordained that He was going to punish Ahab and Jezebel for bringing in the phallic cult of Baal worship within the nation of Israel, and it was placed upon you to do the executing of that judgment, that he did exactly as God told him. It was not a pleasant job. It was an unpleasant job. It was one of those combat situations that nobody particularly likes to have to have on his hands. But he executed the divine judgment.

God says, "You did good. You did right because you obeyed Me. I'm going to bless you, but more so, I'm also going to bless, down to the fourth generation, your descendants." Well, the result is that the dynasty of Jehu indeed had one, two, three, four kings that came right in a row, and it proved to be the longest dynasty of the northern kingdom, simply because of the faithfulness of Jehu.

Here's something else that's important. Run your eye back up a verse in 2 Kings 10:30, and notice in verse 29 what it says about Jehu: "Howbeit, from the sins of Jeroboam, the sons of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, Jehu departed not from them, to wit, the golden calves that were in Bethel, and that we're in Dan?" The Scriptures observe that, going right back to the beginning, Jeroboam (who rebelled against the authority of the Davidic dynasty in the south) led this rebellion against Rehoboam, the proper King of Israel, and the nation split in two. And when Jeroboam took the 10 northern tribes away, he established his own worship system, so that his people would not go back down to Jerusalem, and maybe be attracted back to loyalty to the southern kingdom. So, he set these golden calves to be worshiped: one in the North at Dan; and, one in the south at Bethel.

Now when Jehu you came to the throne, you would think that, as faithful as he had been to the Word of God (to obeying God), that the first thing he would have done was cleaned up the religious mess that had been instituted by Ahab and Jezebel. But no, he did not. He followed the same kinds of evil that the founder of the Northern Kingdom, Jeroboam, had done. Drop your eye down to verse 31: "But Jehu took no heed to walk in the Law of the Lord God of Israel with all his heart, for he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam, who made Israel to sin."

Now notice what you have there. Verse 30 sturdy says, "Jehu, because you obeyed the Word of God, and because you coordinated your actions with the will of God, your descendants of the fourth generation will be blessed. On the other hand, we see, sandwiched on both sides of that statement, that Jehu himself departed from obedience to the Word of God after his splendid beginnings. But notice the consequences of blessing as the result of his obedience was not lost. And every parent who brings blessing upon his family, because of his obedience to the Word of God, does not neutralize that blessing just because he later slips away from the Word of God, and because he goes into carnality. The blessing of God is locked in. Once the Holy Spirit produces something of divine righteousness in us, that blessing, that is consequent of that action, is locked in to us and to our posterity. We do not lose it. Furthermore, the posterity does not lose it, even if they act out of the will of God. They still retain that blessing. That is a tremendous biblical principle. We are responsible for what we do. We are responsible for the influence upon our children. And it goes a long way down the line for good or for judgment.

Jehu's subsequent reversion, then, did not cancel the family blessing previously gain. Of course, it did result in discipline for Jehu at the particular point of his disobedience and any of his descendants who were disobedient – they received discipline from God. But the fact that this dynasty was going to stay on the throne, that was the reward. It could not be undermined, and it could not be neutralized.

Let's take another look at this principle of the effects of the consequences on children of evil in their parents. I think we need to stress this because our natural sin nature wants to rise up and say, "No, we must do everything we can, no matter how we must compromised the truth. No matter how we must undermine the best interests of God's work, we must not allow children to suffer the consequences of the evil of their parents." And I'm trying to tell you that you're bucking a tiger, and you're up against Almighty God himself who says, "No, this is how I operate.

**Lot**

Let's take another example that you're acquainted with: Abraham's nephew lot. As you know, the time came when Lot was living high on the hog. He was blessed because he was associated with Abraham. He was prospering in a great culture of the day under the wing of Abraham, and under the spiritual influence and guidance of Abraham. The time came when Lot decided he wanted to branch out on his own. So, what does he do? He has a bit of a problem between his herdsmen and Abraham's herdsmen. So, he decides the thing he's going to do to solve that is to cut out and run. He's going to go it alone.

However, notice how he makes his economic move (and that's what this is). It's a money move, which thousands of Christians make today. There are thousands of Christians who walk into the place of their employment, particularly if they have a position of some importance, and some influence, and some skill, especially. There are thousands who walk into work and suddenly find themselves confronted by their boss and by their company, in saying, "Hey, I want you to move over to Timbuktu, where the rich people live with all these nice, wonderful things. We have a big company, and we want you out of here, and we're going to move you and your family, and you're going to go to the other side of the world. And you have to sit and say, "There's only one reason for me to make this move: money. And then you go, and you check the decree of God, and you say, "Is this what you want me to do? Is this what you have ordained in your plan – that I'm to make a move for the sole reason of money? It's an economic move, and that is the lowest, worst possible reason for making a move geographically, and it almost always brings regrets of one kind or another, and loss, particularly if you are in a place of blessing and spiritual enlightenment as Lot was.

However, Lot decides that he's going to make an economic move. Now look what he does. Genesis 13:10-13: "And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the Garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, as you come unto Zoar." The territory of which the Scriptures speak here, the plain of Jordan, is at the bottom of the Dead Sea. The Dead Sea has a little constriction that divides it into a large northern part, and a smaller southern part. The southern part is something like 15 to 20 feet deep. The northern part, however, goes down to something like 1,400 feet deep in some places. It's an enormous difference between the two sections of this huge pond.

It is filled by the Jordan River. The Jordan River flows into it, but there is no outlet. So, everything in it stays. It is a very hot place. If you've ever traveled in that part of the world, we're talking about 130-degree temperatures as day-by-day ordinary temperatures. There's an enormous amount of evaporation, and thus there is an enormous amount of mineral deposits which are left here in this lake, building it up. Therefore, it is very salty. It is called the Dead Sea because basically nothing lives in it because it is so salty. It's fun to swim in. You can lie on your back and stick your feet and your arms straight up out of the air, and if you can balance yourself, you'll still float. In fresh water, you go to the bottom in a position like that. But in the Dead Sean, you have to fight if you wanted to go under. Generally you wouldn't, because the stuff would splash in your eyes, and it burns, because it is like being just in a bathtub that somebody saturated with salt in the water.

However, what happened was that this is the territory in which this plane of Jordan (this whole major section) that Lot was living in. And in this territory were the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah – five cities of the plain that were major centers of culture and of a civilization. This was the territory, as Lot as looked out, where he was attracted to the economic opportunities. Those cities now lie in the waters of the southern part, because in this part of the sea, as it accumulates minerals on the bottom, the water gets pushed up, and it goes creeping out. Of course, nearby, you may remember, is the famous mountain of Masada where the Jews made their last great stand against the Roman tenth legion, when they resisted to the last man, and finally all committed suicide. And you can stand on the top of Masada, and you look down, you can see this whole expanse of the Dead Sea, and the Jordan River coming into it, and realize that you're looking down upon these cities that were so attractive to Lot.

So, a lot makes a financial move. He sees that this is a good, fertile place, which it was at that time. It was a fertile valley: "Then Lot chose him all the plains of Jordan, and Lot journey east, and they separated themselves, the one from the other. Abraham dwelt in the land of Canaan, and lot dwelt in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom. But the men of Sodom were wicked, and sinners before the Lord exceedingly.

So, the moral climate that lot chooses is extremely corrupt. You shouldn't move to a position of less spiritual enlightenment and opportunity than that into which God has brought you, unless you're going to be a missionary or something of that sort – that you're moving out in a missionary enterprise, then you will go to something less than where you are. But God does not move you downhill in your spiritual opportunities. That's one of the signs that your geographic move is wrong. This should have been clear to Lot.

2 Peter 2:6-8 look back upon Lot's experience, and has this to say: "And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them with an overthrow, making them an example onto those that afterward should live ungodly." These cities, because they were centers of homosexuality, finally were destroyed by God. The Scripture tells us that when Abraham, living in the west, here in the land of Canaan, along the Mediterranean Sea, looked out there toward the Dead Sea, it looked to him, the Bible says, "As a huge furnace, blowing up black smoke in turmoil." It was practically akin to a thermonuclear explosion. And the result of it was total destruction of those cities and everybody who was in them.

But it says, "In 2 Peter 2:7, "And delivered just Lot. Lot was a born-again man. He had no business living in that city. He had no business making that as a choice. But he went there: "Vexed with the filthy manner of life of the wicked." It did not please to be in that kind of a filthy, pornographic society: "For the righteous man dwelling among them, and seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day-to-day with their unlawful deeds." It was not pleasant what he had to look at, and in this society, it was so totally evil, that people weren't walking around doing things in the privacy of their bedroom to hide anything.

Furthermore, they were not restricted in what they said with their mouths. It was just dirty talk all day long. And Lot just never got used to it, any more than any Christian who has to work on some site, or in some office, or under some condition where there are evil people around him who have that kind of a mentality of that kind of a way of speaking. I don't care how long you work there, you never become comfortable with that surrounding, if you are a godly person. But Lot, knowing what these people were, chose it for the economic advantage.

Now what we're leading up to is: how does this affect the rest of the family? Did it make any difference? Well, right off the bat, Genesis 19 tells us that Lot made out personally very well within the society. He became one of the civil authorities. Genesis 19:1 says, "And there came two angels to Sodom that evening. (They looked like men.) And Lot sat in the gate of Sodom." That's an Old Testament expression for what a judge does. This is the position of a judge. People come to have judgments administered to the judges who sit at the gate of the city. So, here we have Lot sitting at the gate of the city, indicating that these people, in this society, recognized him as a civil authority.

But the fact that he was accepted by this homosexual population (and that's what it basically was), did not give him an influence over them to dissuade them from evil. That's a mistake some people make – to think that if you play ball with a group that is evil, as per the standards of the Word of God, that somehow it will give you an entree of influence to them, to lead them to something better. It will give you a chance to help to dissuade them from their evil. But that is not, basically and generally, the case. The only way people can be dissuaded from their evil is to be told that there's a god of righteousness and of holiness who is going to deal with them, and who is going to bring judgment down upon them. They will someday face him. His justice will not be compromised. His integrity will not be undermined. And unless they change their ways, their eternity is going to be very grim.

However, Lot was not doing this. Instead, we see in Genesis 19:7-9, that when these two angels appeared, Lot invited them into his home, extending hospitality to them. Now, at the moment, he probably didn't recognize that they were angels. He just saw them as men who were passing through. And for some reason, he felt to extend Eastern hospitality to them, so they came into his home. Pretty soon, the word gets out in town that there are some strangers (some very good-looking, handsome men), and all the homosexual in town noticed them, and the Bible says, "Young and old." That's how degenerative it was. Young and old men alike were gathering at the house of Lot, and clamoring to see the visitors, for the explicit purpose, the Bible says, "That they might have homosexual types of relationships sexually with them.

Well, Lot didn't feel free to do this to his guests, so verse 6 says, "Lot went out at the door unto them, and shut the door after them, and said, "I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly." He calls them "brothers," and he asks him not to do wickedness. This is like talking to a prostitute, and saying, "I just wish you wouldn't do wicked things." The only way that she's not going to do wicked things is by stopping the evil that she's doing as a professional practice. These men were unbelievers. There was only one way they could work, and that was as an expression of their sin nature, and that was wickedly.

Lot says, "Behold now," and here you had the first signal of how he had morally been corrupted by his surroundings himself. He said, "I have two daughters who have not known man. I have two virgin, unmarried daughters." He had a couple of married daughters, but he had these two unmarried girls at home: "Let me, I pray you, bring them out onto you, and do to them as is good in your eyes. Only unto these men do nothing, for therefore they came under the shadow of my roof." He felt that he must protect these men.

Now this is really something when a father says, "Here, I've got my two daughters. You can sexually molested them, but I don't want you to disturb my guests here." So, what's the response? Verse 9: "And they said, 'Stand back.' And they said again, 'This one fellow came into sojourn, and he will needs be a judge. Now we will deal worse with you than with them. And they pressed hard against the man, even Lot, and came near to break the door." So, much for his influence on these evil men. They say, "Here's this guy. He's an outsider. He comes in and sojourns among us. We give him the authority of a judge. We give him civil authority. Now look what he's doing? He's trying to squelch our lifestyle. He's trying to impose his religious moral views against us." They said, "We're not going to have it." So, they came charging against Lot, and just rammed him up against this door. In the ancient world, doors were heavy objects, because they had to be barriers of protection.

Well, the Bible tells us that the two angelic visitors opened the door; grabbed Lot by the nape of his neck; and, jerked him into the room, and shut the door, as they proceeded to handle the situation themselves. There was no influence on the part of Lot over these evil men. Lot himself demonstrated that he wasn't much better than they, because he was willing to offer his daughters to be molested. But, of course, these were homosexuals, and they weren't interested in girls. They were only interested in other men. Therefore, they rejected this offer outright.

But now the angelic visitors got serious. They struck the men outside with blindness to slow them down, at least with sufficient limitation of vision that they had to feel around, and they could not see clearly. Then they turned to Lot to urge him to take the move that needed to be made. Lot, as foolish and degenerative as he had become, was still receiving the blessings of the great man he was associated with – his Uncle Abraham. Because Abraham obeyed God, the consequences of that had to go down upon Lot.

So, God says, "Because of Abraham, I'm going to save your worthless hide, Lot, and I'm going to do it for your whole family." So the angels tell him, "Get out of town."

Genesis 19:12: "And the men said unto Lot, "Do you have any here besides? (Do you have any other of your kin here?) Sons-in-law, and your sons, and your daughters? And whatever you have in the city, bring them out of this place, for we will destroy this place, because the cry of them has become great before the face of the Lord, and the Lord has sent us to destroy it." God has come to the end of His toleration of this evil.

So Lot scurries off to talk to his two sons-in-law: "And Lot went out and spoke unto his sons-in-law (who married his daughters), and said, "Up, get you out of this place, for the Lord would destroy the city." What was their reaction? Oh, did they show great respect for their father-in-law, this wonderful man of God? Was there great respect on the part of the sons-in-law? What did they do? They look at him, and they say, "You must be nuts. Surely you jest," they said. That's what the Bible means when he said: "But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons-in-law." "Mock" means "jest:" "You're kidding. Do you mean that you're asking us to leave this? Do you realize what this place is? This is one of the greatest cities of the ancient world. This is culture at is best. We're going to have a big concert downtown. The Sodom Symphony Orchestra is playing, and you're going to ask us to skip it tonight? Surely you just."

Lot says, "No, I'm not kidding. I have these men here. They're emissaries of God, and they have brought me a message from God and told us to get out, because he's going to destroy this city." Now they really thought he was crazy: "Oh, you have emissaries from God too! You must have real contact with God, don't you? So they have nothing but scorn and contempt for this man. Yet he knew what he was talking about, but his lifestyle did not merit the respect to listen to him. So, it was all a big joke.

Well, the angel messengers took things in hand; grabbed the family; shoved them out the door and said, "Get on your way." Verse 15: "And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot saying, 'Arise. Take your wife and your two daughters (the two unmarried girls) which are here, lest you be consumed in the iniquity of the city.'" The angels were going to perform this destruction at a critical time, where people were still inside the city, just waking up, but before innocent outsiders, who may work in the city, or come from outside of this municipality, had not yet entered the city. So, they were telling Lot, "You've got to get out. Our time is almost up. We've got to hit it very soon.

Verse 16 said, "And while he (Lot) lingered (he's still standing around, thinking it over, whether he should go), the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters – the Lord being merciful unto them, and they brought him forth, and set him outside of the city." They just literally had to drag the whole family, and bring them out to the city limits.

"It came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he (the angel) said, 'Escape for your life. Do not look behind you, neither stay in all the plain. Escape to the mountain, lest you be consumed." The angel says, "Get out, and don't look back."

Well, Lot proceeds to argue with them for a little bit, that he'd like to not have to go all the way to the mountains, because that's uncomfortable. But he'd like to go to a city nearby – just a little city called Zoar. And the angel says, "Alright, we won't knock Zoar out in this destruction. Go there. Just get yourself going. But don't look back. Don't express any longing or any hope. Don't look back.

Now Lot got the picture. It was serious business. So, he starts off with his wife and his two daughters, but his wife longed for the good life of Sodom. She was still hating to leave. As the Bible describes their procedure (their procession), it says that she started to fall back. She was hanging back – dragging behind the daughters and her husband Lot.

In verse 26, she just couldn't restrain herself any longer. She did what God forbad them to do: "But his wife looked back from behind, and she became a pillar of salt." She was already dragging behind. And she turns around, and in some way, something happened. I can't explain exactly how it happened. It may not have been entirely a miracle as such. It may have been some natural phenomena that took place – that suddenly encased her in salt, and she became a pillar of salt.

Then, of course, Sodom and Gomorrah were just blown off the face of the earth by the action of the angels. Verse 29 adds the principle that we're studying. And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when He overthrew the cities in which Lot dwelt." Here's Lord being blessed why? Because of faithful Abraham. It does go down to your family. The consequences do result in blessing or cursing upon your descendants. Faithful Uncle Abraham was carrying Lot through.

Ah, but the story is not over. Does it make any difference to your children? The consequences of Lot's choice of making an economic move for his personal advantage, in spite of the evil that that involved in his surroundings had reared his children in a very corrupt society? He reared his children in a society that had clearly taken the position publicly that the biblical standard of sex within marriage is obsolete. You can go at it anytime you want with anybody you want. This surrounded them constantly, so that this was the frame of reference of the day. Lot's two unmarried daughters picked up that concept.

Because things got so hot in Zoar, probably because Lot was resented there, they then decided to go indeed – to flee to the mountains. They went to the mountains, and they found the cave where they could find some shelters. Now the two virgin daughters are sitting there. Their mother is dead, and here's their father. All the life they've ever known is a smoldering ruin. They're looking at themselves. There are no young men left to court them. They're wondering, as people did in that time: "What's going to happen to me in my old age."

In a culture like China today, the most important thing is to have a son, so that in your old age, you have someone who will care for you when you cannot care for yourself. That was the system. That was how it worked. In China today, where the brutal communist government has made the rule that every family can only have one child, the result has been an enormous amount of infant girls that are found drowned in the rivers of China – that are found destroyed. That is because if a girl is born, the parents want her killed immediately, so that they can be eligible to seek another pregnancy until they get the son they need to care for them in their old age.

So, here these daughters were thinking the same thing. That was the way – to have a son to care for them in their old age. So, they came up with a plan. Genesis 19:30-38 tell how they talked it over with one another, and said, "The only way we can secure our sons for ourselves is through the only man around – our father. The fact that that was incest (forbidden by the Word of God, and they knew it) did not dissuade them. They had now become so corrupt because of the society in which their father had been willing to rear them. But there's one interesting thing. The technique for doing this, verse 32 says is, "Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father." They said, "We'll get him drunk; then he won't know what he's doing; and, we can perform the act of incest.

I think it is interesting that here they are, with everything gone. They had to leave it all behind. They had a very good life. They had a high standard of living. Now they're in a cave. The rent is cheap. That's it. There's nothing else around them. But isn't it interesting that even though they have nothing but this cave, they brought the booze with them? That's one thing they didn't leave out. So, the alcoholic beverage comes along, and they have that at hand in order to drug the old man.

Well, you can read the sordid story. The result is that both girls became pregnant, and the firstborn had a son. She called him Moab. From him descended the Moabites, which were a thorn in the flesh of the Jews. The younger girl bore a son that she called Benammi, from whom descended the Ammonites, who also were a thorn in the side of Israel nationally.

So, here's a fantastic case history of the result of parents who do evil; who are willing to surround themselves with evil; and, who are willing to bring up their children in an evil culture. You can see why, today, how similar our culture is to what we read here in Genesis 19. You can see why Christian schools are so supremely important as an agency for parents to try to undo what kids are seeing on television; what they hear among their peers; and, what they see in literature. It is astounding how immorality is now the norm. I mean, I'm seeing it constantly. The tempo is rising. Sexual morality is the norm. It's no longer the exception, and certainly not something that you're ashamed of.

**Joseph**

Well, Joseph was in contrast to all this, as we have seen, Joseph was represented in Israel by two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, who became half-tribes, and Joseph thus received a double-portion of blessing. Now in contrast to the sordid pictures we have seen of Jehu and of Lot, Joseph gave a very precious heritage to his children, that they built on spiritually, so that these two tribes were among the most prosperous in the nation of Israel.

**Manasseh**

The first son, Manasseh, the oldest one, was born in Egypt to Joseph's wife, Asenath. In Genesis 40:51, we read of that: "And Joseph called the name of the first born Manasseh, for he said, 'God has made me forget all my toil in all my father's house.'" The word "Manasseh" means "forgetting." This was the son which was viewed by Joseph as a divine provision to help him forget all the sufferings, and the family that he longed for, which was back in Canaan. He saw this Son as a comfort to him.

Later, when Jacob was brought to Egypt, and he met his two grandsons, he had a word of prophecy indeed from God through the Holy Spirit. God worked in that way in those days. God told him that God's decree had decided that Manasseh, the firstborn, would not have the privilege of the firstborn. But for some reason, Ephraim, the younger, would hold the privilege of firstborn. So, in Genesis 48:17-20, we have this description of Jacob blessing these two boys. He proceeds to put his hand on the boys to give the patriarchal blessing. That was very important. It was a divine act. When you got this blessing, it meant that you were number one. When Jacob proceeds to do this, he crosses his hands. Joseph had put the boys in front of Jacob in the right order, so that the right hand of fellowship would go on the oldest boy, Manasseh. Instead, Jacob crossed his hand, and puts the right hand of blessing on Ephraim, the younger; and, he put his left hand goes on Manasseh:

"And Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim. It displeased him, and he held up his father's hand to remove it from Ephraim's head onto Manasseh's head. Joseph said of his father, 'Not so my father, for this is the firstborn. Put their right hand upon his head.' And his father refused and said, 'I know it, my son. I know it.' He also (that is, Manasseh) shall become a people. He also shall be great, but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations.'" So, God revealed that there was going to be a change in the divine order for these sons.

Verse 20 says, "And he blessed them day, saying, 'And these Israel shall bless,' saying, 'God make you as Ephraim and as Manasseh,' and he set Ephraim before Vanessa." The reason he did this was that God the Holy Spirit guided him to do this. But as Jacob pointed out, Manasseh was destined to become a great people as well. The Jews, to this day, use Genesis 48:21 when they want to express a great blessing for you. When they want to wish you something well, they use this phrase: "May God make you as Ephraim and as Manasseh." If a Jew tells you that, it's a very honored thing that he's doing for you. He's really saying, "I just wish the best for you. May God make you as Ephraim and as Manasseh." Why?

Well, it was because the godly Joseph was the channel of enormous blessings upon these two sons and upon the half tribes that they represented. Because Joseph was so responsive to the Word of God, there was destined great blessing upon these two sons, so that they became the epitome (the example) of divine prosperity among the people of Israel.

When the Manasseh tribe left Egypt and the slavery there, they had 32,200 troops (Numbers 1:35 and Numbers 2:21). When they got to Kadeshbarnea 40 years later, they had expanded to 52,700 (Numbers 26:34). So, indeed, as the prediction through Jacob had said, "Manasseh will prosper. He will be a great nation. Manasseh joined in the military victories of Israel. Numbers 32:39 tell us how they took Gilead, and they defeated the Amorites. They furthermore helped conquer the west side of Jordan before they settled on the east side. They were one of the tribes that asked Moses to let them have their part of the Promised Land on the east side of Jordan, rather than where most of the rest of them were here on the West Side, up against the Mediterranean Sea.

So, Moses said, "That's fine, you can do that, providing you do the honorable thing, which is to come over here and help us to conquer the land. When we have driven out the pagans, then you may go home and establish yourself on that side." Joshua 22:1-8 tell us that this is exactly what they did, which tells us a great deal about the character of Manasseh. They do reflect the attitude of their father Joseph. They got in there; they fought the enemy; and, they secured the land. Then Joshua came to them and said, "You've done your duty; you kept your word; God has prospered you; you have a lot of gold; you have a lot of silver; you have a lot of cattle; you have a lot of sheep; and, you have been prospered. Now go home in happiness. You've been diligent." Then in verse 5 he says, "Only this, I remind you before you cross the river: Take diligent heed to the commandment and the Law which Moses, the servant of the Lord, charged you to love the Lord your God, and to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, and to cleave unto Him, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul.' So, Joshua blessed them and sent them away. And they went unto their tents on the other side of the Jordan."

Indeed, the only advice he had for them was: "You've proven yourself to be honorable men. You've acted in the finest tradition of your father Joseph. Now act in his tradition of obedience to the Word of God, and you're going to have a beautiful life on the east side of the Jordan.

**Other Great Men of the Tribe of Manasseh**

Gideon was from the tribe of Manasseh. You know what he did to the Midianites. Judges 6:15 tell us how he conquered them. One of the great men of the Old Testament was the judge whose name was Jephthah. He defeated the Amorites (Judges 11:32). He was from the tribe of Manasseh. David found the men of Manasseh to be superior administrators, and they had special ability. He particularly singled out a man named Joel and a man named Iddo, both of the tribe of Manasseh. 1 Chronicles 27:20-21 tell us of the administrative ability of these men. Again, they were very much like their father Joseph.

Manasseh sojourners took part in the spiritual revival in the southern kingdom. This is one of the things that's interesting – that some of the tribe of Manasseh resided in the southern kingdom, though they were part of the northern kingdom. Several Scriptures tell us that they took part in the spiritual revival (2 Chronicles 15:8-10, 2 Chronicles 30:1-11, 2 Chronicles 31:1). All of these passages tell us an interesting thing again about the family characteristic that these men of this tribe were spiritual leaders. They knew their stuff, and even when they were in the other part of the kingdom, there were sojourners. They had kind of flowed over. They were a godly influence in that society.

2 Chronicles 15:8-10: "And when Asa heard these words in the prophecy of Oded the prophet, he took courage and put away the abominable idols." Asa had been told the Word of God: "He put away the abominable idols out of the land of Judah and Benjamin (the southern portion of the kingdom), and out of the cities which he had taken from the hill country of Ephraim, and repaired the altar of the Lord that was before the porch of the Lord. And he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and the sojourners (the outsiders who were living among them) of Ephraim and Manasseh, and out of Simeon, for they fell to him out of Israel in abundance when they saw that the Lord his God, was with him." The tribe of Manasseh rallied to Asa when they saw that he was acting in accordance with the Word of God, and that God was blessing him.

So, you can pursue these other verses on your own, and you will see that all of them say that this tribe characteristically reflected what Joseph had been – a person who responded to the Word of God.

However, we close now on a sad note, because the blessings that were locked in for Manasseh, because of faithful Joseph, continued, but they brought discipline and ultimate national (tribal) disillusion upon themselves because they deviated from the Word of God the centuries that eventually followed. So, we have their demise recorded for us in 1 Chronicles 5:25-26. In case you think that, because you have godly parents, that's all you need, and you'll make it – you'll have certain blessings, but if you persist in your own evil, you will suffer your own discipline, and your own judgment, which will eventually undermine and deny you the blessings that God is ready to give you because of your forebears.

1 Chronicles 5:25: "And they transgressed (that is, the tribe of Manasseh) against the God of their fathers, and played the harlot with the gods of the people of the land who God destroyed before them. And the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul king of Assyria, and the spirit of Tilgathpilneser king of Assyria, and he carried them away, even the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, and brought them unto Halah, and Habor, and Hara, and to the river Gozan, unto this day."

The Bible tells us that the Assyrians came down and took this half-tribe, descendants of Joseph, into slavery. They never were heard from again. They were completely dissipated, and completely lost. They never came back to the land as a tribe. Only in the knowledge of God has their lineage been preserved so that God looks upon Jewish people today, and He knows who of them are descended from the Manasseh so that He can have the appropriate number of 12,000 to become the evangelists representing that tribe in the tribulation era.

So, you can begin with blessing because you have godly forebears, but you can also blow it because of your own evil.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1984

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