

Sunday June 10th 2012
The Letter to the Hebrews
Part Forty Eight

1). Heb 11:20 *By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. 21 By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff.*

a). The focus of the Book of Hebrews as a whole, as we have seen, is the age to come that will not be subject to angels, in other words the 7th Day, the Millennial Kingdom of Christ – and from the opening Chapter of our Book we had seen that this 7th Day and the events that surround it has been God's plan and purpose for the ages; a plan set in place with respect to His Son – Heb 1:5 *For to which of the angels did He ever say: "You are My Son, Today I have begotten You"? And again: "I will be to Him a Father, And He shall be to Me a Son"? 6 But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: "Let all the angels of God worship Him."*

b). Now, not only is our Lord God's Son, but the scripture is deliberate in pointing out that Christ is God's firstborn Son, 'when he again brings the firstborn into the world...'

c). And this status as a firstborn son is key to our understanding of rulership in the 7th Day as within the coming Kingdom of Christ, unlike the present arrangement, only firstborn sons will rule.

d). In that coming Day there will be 3 firstborn sons who will occupy the positions of rulership with respect to both realms of the Kingdom, the heavens and the earth. There will be the only begotten firstborn Son, the Lord Jesus Christ – the nation of Israel, who through a special creative act became a son of God and was then adopted as a firstborn son - Isa 43:1 ¶ *But now, thus says the LORD, who created you, O Jacob, And He who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; You are Mine.*

Ex 4:22 "Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD: "Israel is My son, My firstborn.

And then there are Christians, who are sons also by a special creative act, who will yet be adopted as firstborn sons following the events of the Judgment Seat

2Co 5:17 *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.*

Ro 8:23 *Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.*

e). And it is within this context of firstborn sons, rulership and the 7th Day that we see Isaac, by faith, blessing Jacob and Esau 'concerning things to come'. The faith that he has is based upon that which God had promised his father Abraham and repeated to him personally and what he saw through these promises with the eyes of faith is what took him beyond his lifetime to a fulfillment in the future. This is the very thing described in - Heb 11:1 ¶ *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.* And the very thing commented on in - Heb 11:13 *These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.*

f). Ge 27:1 ¶ *Now it came to pass, when Isaac was old and his eyes were so dim that he could not see, that he called Esau his older son.....*

Our verse here poignantly demonstrates Isaac's blessing 'by faith' – He was not able to see with his natural eyes, therefore he could only act out of what he saw with the eyes of faith.

g). The picture here for us is an obvious one and is completely in line with that which scripture teaches elsewhere - 2Co 5:7 *For we walk by faith, not by sight.*

h). The challenge for us is in overcoming the fact that we do see with our natural eyes, by sight, and as a result what we see may cause us to respond in a way that seems right in our own eyes, but is in fact contrary to the scriptures Pr 14:12 ¶ *There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.*

i). There was no mistake when Isaac blessed Jacob as the firstborn, just as there had been no mistake in Isaac receiving the blessing and not Ishmael – and it will be no mistake that only those walking according to the Spirit, walking by faith to the saving of the soul, will receive the blessing of a firstborn son rather than those who walk according to the flesh.

j). Sadly we may still have a fondness for our old man and we may still be tempted to see his 'good side' and we may still entertain thoughts that God will bless him anyway – but let's remember the clear teaching of scripture – Ro 7:18 *For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells;*

Ga 4:29 *But, as he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, even so it is now. 30 Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman." 31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free.*

2). So then, as we think about the rights of the firstborn and the blessing that goes along with these within the context of the 7th Day, let's just remember exactly what these rights of the firstborn entail.

a). The firstborn son is to be ruler over his father's house.

b). He is to be the priest in the father's house.

c). He is to receive a double portion of the father's inheritance – for example if there were 6 children in the family then the father's inheritance would be divided into 7 equal parts. The firstborn son would receive two of these seven parts and the remaining children would receive 1/7 each.

d) Now with regards to ourselves and the 7th Day – if we are adopted as a firstborn son then we will be a joint-heir with Christ and will rule with Him during the Kingdom age - Re 2:26 *"And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations-- 27 'He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels' --as I also have received from My Father;*

e). Re 3:21 *"To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.*

f). Those adopted as firstborn sons will also be priests in the Father's house - Re 5:10 *And have made us [them] kings and priests to our God; And we [they] shall reign on [over] the earth."*

g). Those adopted as firstborn sons will also receive the double portion of the Father's inheritance – they will receive the Kingdom of the Heavens and the right of rulership over the Gentile nations on the earth.

h). This is, as we have said many times before, no small thing and we must approach it with the same degree of importance and seriousness that God attaches to it.

3). Now, as we have said, in that coming 7th Day Israel, repentant and restored, will also occupy the position of a firstborn son and those receiving the salvation of their soul will also be adopted as a firstborn son and it is the blessing to be given to these firstborn sons, Israel and the Church that is the subject of Hebrews 11:21 - *By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff.*

a). And just so we don't overlook this detail later, just look at what the scripture records with regards to Jacob at the time he gives this blessing – Ge 48:10 *Now the eyes of Israel were dim with age, so that he could not see.*

b). Hence, he gives the blessing 'by faith', just as his father Isaac had done.

c). So what we need to do, which is what we always need to do, is to take this NT detail back to the OT account in order to see God's own commentary on the significance of this event. Unless we do this, as we have seen in past weeks, we cannot possibly understand that which God wants us to know.

4). Ge 41:47 *Now in the seven plentiful years the ground brought forth abundantly. 48 So he gathered up all the food of the seven years which were in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities; he laid up in every city the food of the fields which surrounded them. 49 Joseph gathered very much grain, as the sand of the sea, until he stopped counting, for it was immeasurable. 50 And to Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine came, whom Asenath, the daughter of Poti-Pherah priest of On, bore to him. 51 Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh: "For God has made me forget all my toil and all my father's house." 52 And the name of the second he called Ephraim: "For God has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction." 53 Then the seven years of plenty which were in the land of Egypt ended,*

a). We will I am sure remember the context for this with Joseph coming from prison to interpret the dream of Pharaoh - Ge 41:29 *"Indeed seven years of great plenty will come throughout all the land of Egypt; 30 "but after them seven years of famine will arise, and all the plenty will be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine will deplete the land. 31 "So the plenty will not be known in the land because of the famine following, for it will be very severe. 32 "And the dream was repeated to Pharaoh twice because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass.*

b). And Pharaoh then appointing Joseph as head over all the land of Egypt and changing his name to Zaphnath-Paaneah = 'savior of the world'. Ge 41:39 *Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Inasmuch as God has shown you all this, there is no one as discerning and wise as you. 40 "You shall be over my house, and all my people shall be ruled according to your word; only in regard to the throne will I be greater than you." 41 And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt."*

c). In the dream and the interpretation we see 2 periods of 7 years – 7 years of plenty and 7 years of famine and these 2 periods of 7 years picture 2

complete periods of time – a complete period of time when there is no ‘famine’ and a complete period of time when there is ‘famine’.

d). That which is pictured for us in the famine is the same event that we saw presented in Noah’s flood and the same event presented in the battle with the kings and preceding the exodus from Egypt – it is the same event from a different perspective providing us with additional information on that which we would already know – it is of course a picture of the Tribulation. And that pictured in the time of plenty would cover the extent of Man’s Day up to the point when the Tribulation begins with a particular emphasis on the last 2000 years.

e). As we look at the account of the years of plenty and the years of famine in the Genesis account we will see that Joseph’s brothers are absent from the scene during the time of plenty, picturing the time during this dispensation, the last 2000 years, when Christ’s brothers, Israel, have been set aside; but once the famine has covered all the land they come into a central focus in the scriptures once again.

f). Also during this time of plenty is when we see the birth of Joseph’s 2 sons – so let’s grasp the broad sweep of what is pictured here – before the time of famine 2 sons come into existence who are to receive a blessing.

g). And as we saw with Jacob and Esau the giving of the names to these two sons is very significant to the picture - *51 Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh: "For God has made me forget all my toil and all my father's house." 52 And the name of the second he called Ephraim: "For God has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction." 53 Then the seven years of plenty which were in the land of Egypt ended,*

h). Manasseh as we see was the firstborn and his name is associated with ‘my father’s house’. Ephraim is the second born, and his name has to do with being fruitful ‘in the land of my affliction’. And we will no doubt notice that it is right after the reference to the acquisition of a second son and fruitfulness that we see - *53 Then the seven years of plenty which were in the land of Egypt ended,*

i). I wonder if we are beginning to see the picture? – We will come back to this later, but let’s just add in here for now that Jacob adopts Manasseh and Ephraim as his own sons and together they receive the double portion of their adopted father’s inheritance.

j). Manasseh then, through his association with the ‘father’s house’ is a picture of Israel who is the first son to be adopted by God as a firstborn son.

k). Ephraim, through his association with fruitfulness in the land of Joseph’s affliction, is a picture of the Church – the second son to be brought

into existence, who will also in that future day be adopted as a firstborn son, who is at present producing fruit for the Kingdom in the land of Christ's affliction - Mt 21:43 *"Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it."*

Joh 15:16 *"You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you."*

l). The transition that we then see between Genesis 41:52 and 53 gives the clear implication of the rapture of the Church, when those who comprise the fruitful along with those who are unfruitful will be caught up to meet Christ in the air. It is of course following the rapture of the Church, although not immediately, that, that pictured in the time of plenty ends and that pictured in the time of famine begins.

m). It is only once the Church has been removed from the earth that God will again begin His dealings with the nation of Israel – It is only when the time of famine comes that we see Joseph's brothers center stage again – Ge 42:1 ¶ *When Jacob saw that there was grain in Egypt, Jacob said to his sons, "Why do you look at one another?" 2 And he said, "Indeed I have heard that there is grain in Egypt; go down to that place and buy for us there, that we may live and not die." 3 So Joseph's ten brothers went down to buy grain in Egypt.*

5). The typology presented in these Chapters of Genesis concerning Joseph, his brothers and his children all add to the prophetic picture of the events that are shortly to come upon the human race. Just as surely as there was a worldwide flood in Noah's day and just as surely as there was a severe famine in all the lands in Joseph's day so there is a time of trouble coming upon the earth such as has never been seen. It is without doubt just as the scriptures say - Lu 21:33 *"Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away. 34 "But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. 35 "For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. 36 "Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man."*

6). Ge 41:56 *The famine was over all the face of the earth, and Joseph opened all the storehouses and sold to the Egyptians. And the famine became severe in the land of Egypt. 57 So all countries came to Joseph in Egypt to buy grain, because the famine was severe in all lands.*

a). It is when the famine is severe over all the face of the earth that Joseph's 10 brothers have no choice but go to Egypt, to the one person who may cause them to 'live and not die'; and they go to him completely unaware of who he is. They do not recognize him as the one whom they mistreated and sold into the hands of the Gentiles years before, but Joseph knows exactly who they are – Ge 42:6 *Now Joseph was governor over the land; and it was he who sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brothers came and bowed down before him with their faces to the earth. 7 ¶ Joseph saw his brothers and recognized them, but he acted as a stranger to them and spoke roughly to them. Then he said to them, "Where do you come from?" And they said, "From the land of Canaan to buy food." 8 So Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him.*

b). As we would read through the continuing account in Genesis, which I would encourage us to do, we will see that it is through a series of events and circumstances that Joseph's brothers are brought into a position in which they must confess their guilt concerning their former treatment of him, in his presence - Ge 44:14 *So Judah and his brothers came to Joseph's house, and he was still there; and they fell before him on the ground. 15 And Joseph said to them, "What deed is this you have done? Did you not know that such a man as I can certainly practice divination?" 16 Then Judah said, "What shall we say to my lord? What shall we speak? Or how shall we clear ourselves? God has found out the iniquity of your servants; here we are, my lord's slaves, both we and he also with whom the cup was found."*

c). And it is following this confession that Joseph makes himself known to them and they are forgiven and restored - Ge 45:1 ¶ *Then Joseph could not restrain himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, "Make everyone go out from me!" So no one stood with him while Joseph made himself known to his brothers. 2 And he wept aloud, and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard it. 3 Then Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph; does my father still live?" But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed in his presence. 4 And Joseph said to his brothers, "Please come near to me." So they came near. Then he said: "I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. 5 "But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. 6 "For these two years the famine has been in the land, and there are still five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvesting. 7 "And God sent me before you to preserve a posterity for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.*

d). And all of this of course pictures the experience of the nation of Israel as the Tribulation becomes severe over all the face of the earth – *Jer 30:7 Alas! For that day is great, So that none is like it; And it is the time of Jacob's trouble, But he shall be saved out of it.*

e). *Re 6:15 And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, 16 and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! 17 "For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"*

f). It is at the time when the Great Tribulation is at its most severe, as Antichrist seeks to utterly destroy the Jewish people, that the nation of Israel will cry out to the God of their fathers for deliverance, but they will not know the true identity of the One to whom they cry out; He however will know them. In that day Jesus's brothers will have nowhere to turn for help but to Him; and just as we saw in the type they will go to the One whom they mistreated and sold into the hands of the Gentiles some 2000 years beforehand.

g). And just as we saw in the type Jesus's brothers, through the intensity of the persecution they encounter, will be brought to a place where they will confess their guilt and acknowledge their responsibility for their prior treatment of Him – and Jesus, as Joseph did in the type, will reveal Himself to His brothers and become their deliverer from the time of Jacob's trouble – *Ho 5:15 I will return again to My place Till they acknowledge their offense. Then they will seek My face; In their affliction they will earnestly seek Me." 6:1 ¶ Come, and let us return to the LORD; For He has torn, but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up. 2 After two days He will revive us; On the third day He will raise us up, That we may live in His sight.*

h). And in that day what was true for Joseph's brothers will also be true for the those whom they typify - *7 "And God sent me before you to preserve a posterity for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.*

7). Then within the Genesis account it is following the conclusion of the time of famine that Jacob adopts Joseph's 2 sons and blesses them. This is presented to us in Genesis Chapter 48, which we will now read – *Ge 48:1 ¶ Now it came to pass after these things that Joseph was told, "Indeed your father is sick"; and he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. 2 And Jacob was told, "Look, your son Joseph is coming to you"; and Israel strengthened himself and sat up on 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 said to me, 'Behold, I will make you fruitful and multiply you, and I will make of you a multitude of people, and give this land to your descendants after you as an everlasting possession.' 5 "And now your two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, are mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine. 6 "Your offspring whom you beget after them shall be yours; they will be called by the name of their brothers in their inheritance. 7 "But as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died beside me in the land of Canaan on the way, when there was but a little distance to go to Ephrath; and I buried her there on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem)." 8 ¶ Then Israel saw Joseph's sons, and said, "Who are these?" 9 And Joseph said to his father, "They are my sons, whom God has given me in this place." And he said, "Please bring them to me, and I will bless them." 10 Now the eyes of Israel were dim with age, so that he could not see. Then Joseph brought them near him, and he kissed them and embraced them. 11 And Israel said to Joseph, "I had not thought to see your face; but in fact, God has also shown me your offspring!" 12 So Joseph brought them from beside his knees, and he bowed down with his face to the earth. 13 And Joseph took them both, Ephraim with his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh with his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near him. 14 Then Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand on Manasseh's head, guiding his hands knowingly, for Manasseh was the firstborn. 15 And he blessed Joseph, and said: "God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, The God who has fed me all my life long to this day, 16 The Angel who has redeemed me from all evil, Bless the lads; Let my name be named upon them, And the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; And let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth." 17 Now when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand on the head of Ephraim, it displeased him; so he took hold of 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 firstborn; put 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; but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations." 20 So he blessed them that day, saying, "By you Israel will bless, saying, 'May God make you as Ephraim and as Manasseh!'" And thus he set Ephraim before Manasseh. 21 Then Israel said to Joseph, "Behold, I am dying, but God will be with you and bring you back to the land of your fathers. 22 "Moreover I have given to you one portion above your brothers, which I took from the hand of the Amorite with my sword and my bow."

a). What happens here with Ephraim and Manasseh has to do with the rights of the firstborn with regards to the double portion of the inheritance to be given by Jacob and as a type it forms a picture of the blessing of Israel and the Church with regards to the double portion of the Father's inheritance with respect to the 7th Day.

b). To see how these two things come together though will have to wait until next time – if the Lord is willing.