

RELIGION

Reliance on God brings blessings

Genesis 48:11-19

The divine plan unfolds one event at a time. The individuals that are used in the development of the eternal plan are those whom most people might not have chosen. These unlikely ones are often those who are able to see their limitations, yet rely upon God, rather than natural ability.

The man, Joseph — against all odds — became second to Pharaoh. Genesis 41:39-43. This son of Jacob, who was despised by his brothers (Genesis 37:5,11), was given the responsibility of gathering grain from over the whole land of Egypt during the seven years of plenty, so that food would be available during the coming seven years of famine (Genesis 41:46-48, 54-56).

When the former slave-prisoner was placed in the governmental position, he was given a wife of the upper level of society. Genesis 41:50. This marriage produced two sons. The oldest was Manasseh, the youngest was Ephraim. Genesis 41:51,52.

During the famine, Jacob sent 10 of his sons into Egypt to buy grain. Genesis 42:1-3. When these men made their second trip into this land of plenty, Joseph made his identity known to his brothers. Genesis 45:1-

3a. Naturally, these men were disturbed at this revelation. Genesis 45:3b. Finally, he was able to convince his captors (Genesis 37:18-28) that he was the one whom they had sold. Genesis 45:4.

The attitude of Joseph toward all the events of his life was expressed in a directive that he gave to his guests. "Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life ... And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance." Genesis 45:5,7.

Joseph sent for his father. Genesis 45:9. Upon hearing of his lost son, "Jacob's heart fainted, for he believed them not." Genesis 45:26c. Finally, the patriarch was convinced of the fact. Genesis 45:27,28.

The trip into Egypt included a stop at Beersheba, where Jacob offered sacrifices to God. Genesis 46:1. During the night, this man heard from God. "And he said, I am God, the God of thy father; fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation; I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again; and Joseph shall put his hand upon

Sunday School Lesson



Rev. James Temples

thine eyes." Genesis 46:3,4.

The record listed the names of the family members who made the journey into Egypt. Genesis 46:8-25. There were 66 people in the group. To this number must be added Joseph, his wife, and two sons, so that the total family number is 70. Genesis 46:27.

The area of Egypt selected by Joseph for his family was the land of Goshen. Genesis 45:10. When the caravan arrived in Egypt, Jacob sent "Judah before him unto Joseph, to direct his face unto Goshen; and they came into the land of Goshen." Genesis 46:28.

Naturally, there was a highly emotional meeting between Jacob and his lost son. Genesis 46:29,30. After this reunion, Joseph arranged for five of his brothers to meet with Pharaoh. Genesis 46:31, 47:2-4. Jacob was, also, brought before Pharaoh. Genesis 47:7. The patriarch was now 130 years old. Genesis 47:9. We are told that "Jacob blessed

Pharaoh, and went out from before Pharaoh." Genesis 47:10. Thus, the family was now safely and securely placed in a land that would sustain them and their cattle — in the area of the delta of the Nile River.

As pleasant as the circumstances must have been for Jacob, he knew that he would not live forever. He received a promise from Joseph that the patriarch would not be buried in Egypt (Genesis 47:29), "But I will lie with my fathers ... and bury me in their burying place (Genesis 47:30a,c). Before his death, Israel saw the need of getting his house in order. Joseph received the message that his father was sick. Genesis 48:1. The ruler-son carried his two sons before their grandfather in order that they might receive a portion of the family blessing.

Joseph was to receive two portions of this blessings through his two sons. The greatest of his portion was to be the inheritance of the eldest. When Joseph presented his sons before the patriarch, the positions were such that Manasseh would receive the larger part.

However, Jacob crossed his hands, "And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who was

the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands wittingly; for Manasseh was the firstborn." Genesis 48:14. The blessing was pronounced. Genesis 48:15-18.

It was, then, that Joseph took note of the actions of his father. "And when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it displeased him." Genesis 48:17. He, then, expressed his displeasure. Genesis 48:18.

"And his father refused, and said, I know, my son, I know it: he also shall become a people; and he also shall be great; but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations. Genesis 48:19. The blessing concluded, "In thee shall Israel bless, saying, God make thee as Ephraim, and as Manasseh; and he set Ephraim before Manasseh." Genesis 48:20.

Jacob called all of his sons together in order that each would receive a personal blessing. He began with his eldest, Reuben. Genesis 49:3. As he had a family roll call, some of the blessings seem to have a greater significance than do others. However, we view the statements from the perspective of history, while these indi-

viduals had to live out their lives in order to find the importance of each promise.

Since we know the rest of the story, our focus in this list turns more readily to the son, Judah. Jacob said, "... Thou are he whom thy brethren shall praise...thy father's children shall bow down before thee ... The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." Genesis 49:8,10.

We know that the ultimate fulfillment of this prophetic statement came when God sent his only begotten son, Jesus Christ of Nazareth, to be the savior of the world. Thus, we are, today, reaping the benefits of this promise made centuries ago. However, if this promise is to be personal, you must accept the forgiveness for sin that is needed by all mankind. Romans 3:23.

This acceptance is based only, on he fact of the blood of Jesus Christ can can sin. 1 John 1:7,9. This act is based, completely on faith. Acts 16:31. This needed faith comes as a gift from God. Ephesians 2:9,10. Then, the verbal witness of this fact is necessary. Romans 10:9,10. Please accept this divine provision today.

The perfect prayer from the perfect person

The "Sermon on the Mount" is the perfect sermon preached by the perfect person which exhorts us to be perfect. For us, "perfect" means mature, complete, consistent with the claims of Christ in our Christian profession and practice. One of our chief practices as Christians is prayer. So it comes as no surprise, then, that this perfect sermon contains the perfect prayer.

This prayer is so perfect that we refer to it as "The Lord's Prayer," even though it is not a prayer our Lord could pray perfectly, or completely. The sinless Christ needs no forgiveness of sins. However, he offered this perfect prayer as a perfect model for sinners striving to become perfect, mature, complete in Christ.

The Lord's Prayer is not intended to be a ritual, although there is certainly nothing wrong with singing, reciting, or literally praying this prayer. The plural pronouns "our" and "us" demonstrate that this is a prayer to be prayed often as a community of worshippers.

But the perfect prayer is primarily personal.

It shows the Lord's way to pray for the person who takes faith seriously, who

sincerely confesses Jesus as Lord. It shows the way to "be perfect, as your heavenly father is perfect." It shows the way of "practicing your righteousness" rightly, not hypocritically. It shows the perfect way to pray, and your living will follow your praying, for better or worse.

So if you want to know how to completely live for Christ, begin with the perfect prayer. Read Matthew 6:9-15. This week we shall look at part one of the prayer, with the next two parts given next week.

The Greatness of God (vs. 9-10, 13b)

The prayer's brevity and simplicity reminds me of another basic prayer, the first one we learn as children. It begins, "God is great, God is good." You know the rest, but I want to emphasize the first: "God is great." That's the essential meaning and message of "The Lord's Prayer."

God has a great name. In fact it is so great, it is to be "hallowed," honored, feared and put first.

God's name, which is a representation of his person, is to be spoken with holy reverence and supreme honor. He is not to be regarded as "the man

The Gospel Truth



Dr. Charles F. DeVane Jr. First Baptist Church

upstairs" or "the big kahuna" or "my co-pilot." He is God, Jehovah, Jesus, the creator, lord of all. He is high above the heavens and so holy that there is a sense in which we should speak his name and then duck. God is great and is greatly to be feared, respected, honored, "hallowed."

God is great and greatly to be known and loved. Jesus teaches us to address the high and holy God as "our father." This was a radical concept introduced at the inauguration of the new covenant. Old covenant Jews so feared the name of God that they would not even speak it or write it. But a pronounced feature of New Testament Christianity is that true believers get to call God "father," which could be even more accurately translated "daddy," in the perfect sense.

God has a great kingdom.

It is in heaven. It is coming to earth. In fact, through the power of kingdom praying and kingdom living, the kingdom exists upon the earth, right now.

God's kingdom is in heaven. There is a heaven we all can see where clouds float and birds fly. There is a heaven only astronauts and satellite cameras have viewed up close. Then there is a heaven that only God, God's angels, and God's people get to see. It is a prepared place for a prepared people that right now we are not prepared to see, hear, or even imagine how great it is. But the perfect prayer helps prepare us.

God's kingdom is on earth. God's kingdom truly exists wherever Jesus Christ is lord. It exists in the heart of a true Christian. It exists in the worship and fellowship of a genuine church. It exists wherever God's will triumphs over my or your will.

God has a great will. And like his name and kingdom, great is the power and the paradox of the will of God.

God's will is free, not forced. Like the Rolling Stones, God can truly say, "I'm free to do what I want any old time." No one can tell God what to do with his will. Prayer cannot be used to blackmail or manipulate

God in any way, only to ascribe to God his greatness and offer the great plea, "Thy will be done."

God's will is irresistible, not optional. Do you think the angels in heaven ever tell God, "No?" It's not that way on earth, however. But through the power of the perfect prayer it becomes that way, for Christians. How can we say "No, Lord?" Obedient praying leads to obedient living, for the person who is truly changed in prayer is the honest

Christian who prays for God's will to be done "on earth as it is in heaven." Ultimately, it will.

So you see the greatest thing about this perfect prayer is its emphasis on the greatness of God. The words literally begin and end with God. Jesus knows that praying theocentrically will lead one into living a God-centered life. And the Lord knows that's what we need. Which will lead us to the second part of the perfect prayer next week.

CHURCH NEWS

Wesley Chapel A.M.E.

Wesley Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church will sponsor a community Thanksgiving program and breakfast Thanksgiving morning Nov. 22 at 9 a.m.

The speaker will be Rev. Millie A. Rambeau. Everyone is invited to attend.

Pleasant Grove

The Pleasant Grove signing convention will be at New Prospect African Methodist Episcopal Church Friday, Nov. 23 at 4 p.m. and Sunday, Nov. 25 with Sunday School at 10:30 a.m.

Everyone is invited to attend.

Southside Baptist

Southside Baptist Church will present their adult choir in "Jesus, There's Just Something About That Name" — a Christmas celebration.

There will be two performances: Saturday, Dec. 8 at 7 p.m. and Sunday, Dec. 9 at 6 p.m. Everyone is invited to attend.

THANKS

James Edward "Boe" Lewis Feb. 4, 1948 - Nov. 7, 2007 The Lewis, Brown,



James Edward Lewis

Henderson and Smith families offer sincere gratitude to all who have been so kind during our bereavement.

Your prayers, visits, calls, flowers, food and any other acts of kindness are gratefully acknowledged.

May God richly bless you.

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Eunice Knighton and her daughters, Anne, Billie and Jane, would like to express their gratitude to all friends and family for making her 89th birthday a wonderful and memorable occasion. A goal of 89 birthday

cards was greatly exceeded by receiving over 170 cards filled with good wishes, photos, fond memories and compliments praising the good nature of Mrs. Knighton.

The family celebrated at Mrs. Knighton's house Sunday, Oct. 28 with a party theme of "You are My Sunshine," the lullaby sung to the three daughters as infants.

Thank you again for being such wonderful family and friends.

Eunice Knighton, Anne, Billie and Jane

Health Notes

Osteoporosis & Homocysteine Levels

by Bob Hall, R.Ph.

Homocysteine is an amino acid that occurs naturally in the blood, and increases when people don't get enough folic acid and other B vitamins. Homocysteine has been linked to heart disease and now to bone fracture. High levels of homocysteine appear to increase the risk of fracture in women and men with osteoporosis. Studies in the U.S. and in the Netherlands involving thousands of people aged 55 and older show that compared with people with the lowest homocysteine levels, men with the highest homocysteine levels have a fourfold higher risk of bone fracture, and women with the highest homocysteine levels double their risk of bone fracture. The association between homocysteine levels and risk of fracture appeared to be independent of bone mineral density and other potential risk factors for fracture, such as age, gender, body mass index, smoking status, and history of recent falls. Folate and other B vitamins (B-6 and B-12) reduce homocysteine levels and vitamin D and calcium are proven to lower bone fracture risk, so good nutrition and supplementation are essential.

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ANNOUNCEMENT WE ARE CHANGING OUR NAME

**E. Lowell Justice, M.D., Roy R. Reardon, M.D.
And Carla Hunter, Physician Assistant
Wish to announce effective November 19
Infomedix, PC will be known as**

"The Doctors Office of Colquitt Georgia"

**To make an appointment call
The Doctors Office of Colquitt Georgia
229-758-5184
210 West Main Street, Suite 4
(Just off the square in downtown Colquitt)**

**Monday through Thursday 7:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.
Friday 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.**

Remember it's time to get your flu shot!