

Lent Devotional March 21, 2020

Scripture

Genesis 47:27-48:7

27 Thus Israel settled in the land of Egypt, in the region of Goshen; and they gained possessions in it, and were fruitful and multiplied exceedingly. 28 Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years; so the days of Jacob, the years of his life, were one hundred forty-seven years. 29 When the time of Israel's death drew near, he called his son Joseph and said to him, "If I have found favor with you, put your hand under my thigh and promise to deal loyally and truly with me. Do not bury me in Egypt. 30 When I lie down with my ancestors, carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burial place." He answered, "I will do as you have said." 31 And he said, "Swear to me"; and he swore to him. Then Israel bowed himself on the head of his bed. 48:1 After this Joseph was told, "Your father is ill." So he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. 2 When Jacob was told, "Your son Joseph has come to you," he summoned his strength and sat up in bed. 3 And Jacob said to Joseph, "God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and he blessed me, 4 and said to me, 'I am going to make you fruitful and increase your numbers; I will make of you a company of peoples, and will give this land to your offspring after you for a perpetual holding.' 5 Therefore your two sons, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, are now mine; Ephraim and Manasseh shall be mine, just as Reuben and Simeon are. 6 As for the offspring born to you after them, they shall be yours. They shall be recorded under the names of their brothers with regard to their inheritance. 7 For when I came from Paddan, Rachel, alas, died in the land of Canaan on the way, while there was still some distance to go to Ephrath; and I buried her there on the way to Ephrath" (that is, Bethlehem).

Devotional

The Rev. Dr. Myles W. MacDonald '55, Pastoral Ministry (2009)

Years ago, when preparing for a visit to the Holy Land, I had an opportunity to discuss my proposed itinerary with Dr. Kenneth Bailey, my seminary classmate and a noted theologian who resided and taught for years in the Middle East. When I told him I wanted to visit Hebron, the burial place of the Patriarchs and Matriarchs, he strongly advised me that it was not worth the trip. So I followed his advice and didn't go there (though I admit there are times when I wish I had done so out of respect for our spiritual ancestors).

In today's Scripture reading from Genesis, one of those Patriarchs—Jacob, whose tomb is in Hebron—in what amounted to be his Last Will and Testament, stated first that he wanted to be buried with his ancestors (in Hebron), and second that he wanted to bless Joseph's sons, Ephraim and Manasseh (because of Joseph's birthright).

Jesus, on the night before he died, revealed *his* Last Will and Testament, which is recorded in John 14. First, he bequeathed to his disciples, and to us, the gift of eternal life: "Because I live, you shall live also" (v. 19). Second, he bequeathed to us his Holy Spirit: "But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything" (v. 26). And third, he bequeathed to us his peace: "My peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you" (v. 27).

What an inheritance is ours through our Savior! We are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17). Thanks be to God!

Prayer

Thank you, Lord, for our rich inheritance, received through faith in our Lord, Jesus Christ. We are greatly blessed, since we have received “an inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven” for all who trust in him. We pray in Jesus’ blessed name. Amen.