The Dying Faith of Jacob

*By faith Jacob, as he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff* (Hebrews 11:21). Through his trials and troubles, Jacob, the deceiver, became a holy man of God who trusted in the promises of God. His faith is a challenge to us. Like Jacob –

**1. Look forward to the *promised land***

Genesis 47:29-31; 48:21; 49:28-33; 50:22-26  
Hebrews 11:8-10, 13-16

**2. Rely on the *blessing of God***

Genesis 48:1-6, 13-22; 49:22-26; Ephesians 1:3

**3. Wait for the *coming King***

Genesis 49:8-12; Rev 5:5

**4. Recognize God’s *providential care***

Genesis 48:14-16

A. In the *course of your life*

B. In the *crossed hands of blessing*

**For additional study**

1. Reuben’s sin cost him his birthright—a double share of the inheritance and headship of the family (Genesis 35:22; 49:3-5). How were these two benefits divided among Jacob’s sons (1 Chronicles 5:1-2)? In spite of his sin, Reuben was not cast out of the family. Though a believer’s sin will not cost him his salvation, what might he lose (1 Corinthians 3:10-15)?

2. How has God providentially cared for you as He guided Jacob (Genesis 48:15-16)?

3. Has God at times crossed your expectations, as the crossed hands of Jacob frustrated Joseph’s expectations (Genesis 48:17-20)? How can you respond with faith and humble submission when that happens?

4. Why does God overturn the natural expectations of the world, as we see in Genesis where God repeatedly chose the younger over the older son? Is not His preference for the weak the reason that He chose you (1 Corinthians 1:26-31)?

5. The violence of Simeon and Levi cost them the favor of their father (Genesis 34; 49:5-7). By the time Israel entered Canaan, they were the smallest tribes (Numbers 26). They were scattered in Israel in two different ways. Simeon received a few cities within the territory of Judah, and so it gradually ceased to be a separate tribe (Joshua 19:1-9). How did God graciously turn Jacob’s curse of Levi into a blessing for that tribe (Numbers 3:1-13). How were the Levites scattered in Israel (Joshua 21:1-3). So God has turned the curse we deserved into blessing.

6. An interesting (but perhaps insignificant) sidelight: With the adoption of Ephraim and Manasseh replacing Joseph, the 12 sons of Jacob became 13 tribes. However, 12 was a symbolic number, so sometimes when the tribes of Israel are listed something is done to make the 13 into 12.

Simeon is left out (Deuteronomy 33)

All thirteen are listed (Ezekiel 48)

Dan is left out (Revelation 7) – (note: Joseph and Manasseh instead of Ephraim and Manasseh)