

GENESIS 49

The Blessing Of The Sons Of Jacob

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Abdi Ministries
Joseph Abdi



(256) 752 JOSEPH



info@abdiministries.org



www.abdiministries.org

KEYWORD

God (Plural)
God (Singular)
LORD
GOD
Lord
lord
El Olam
Bara
Asah
Beth
Numbers

REVERANCE

Elohim (The Trinity)
El
Jehovah & or Yahweh (YHWH)
Jehovah & or Yahweh
GOD the Master (Kurios), Adonai
Man the Master
Everlasting God
God creating from nothing
God making or assembling from existent materials
House

- 1 - Unity between God the Father & His Son Jesus (John 10:30)
- 2 - Represents union, division, and verification
- 3 - Harmony, New Life & completeness (467 times)
- 4 - Creation & The creative ability of God.
- 5 - God's grace, goodness and favor toward humans (318)
- 6 - Imperfection of man and the sin and weakness he has
- 7 - Perfection
- 8 - New beginnings
- 9 - Divine completeness or conveys the meaning of finality (49)
- 10 - God's authority, completeness, order, and divine perfection
- 11 - Disorder, chaos and judgment (11 - 24 & "11th" - 19)
- 12 - God's power and authority (187)
- 13 - Rebellion
- 40 - Represent completeness or wholeness.
- 70 - Perfect spiritual order carried out with all power.

Keywords

“create” (bara), “make” (asah), and “form” (yatsar). In Isaiah 43:7 – All the three are used.

Jehova means the becoming one as God relates to man and man's needs and becomes to man whatever man may need.

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CORE

Monday, August 7, 2023 @ 4:50 AM

I was created in the beginning as a spirit. (Genesis 1:27) As a spirit I know God only in 1 dimension and that's God the creator.

However, God the creator desires that I know him in rather multiple dimensions such as but not limited to:

God the lover, healer, caretaker, friend, dad so much more

So he brings me on earth to experience and know him in all the different dimensions that are presented here on Earth.

You see it's only here on Earth that I will be given the opportunity to know him in all dimensions.

After I have known him in all these different dimensions, then I can worship him in truth and in spirit.

Then I can see him without the fear to run or be intimidated. Then he can dwell and I can dwell in him as one.



PRAYER

Father we thank you for the privilege of studying your word together.

Thank you for the records Jesus, that lead us to you and eternal life in you.

Jesus let your Holy spirit now implant upon our hearts your truths.

Thank you Jesus that revelation knowledge will flow freely, uninterrupted & un-hindered by satanic or demonic forces.

In Jesus's name and everybody say Amen!



REVIEW

Jacob urgently seeks to complete two important pieces of business with his twelve sons before he dies.

First, he wishes to give a prophetic message appropriate to each.

While these are titled "blessings, not all are positive and in fact are presented more as predictions than bestowing favors.

Second, he wants to command them to bury his body in Canaan and not in Egypt.

The predictions given here are in a style often termed a "prophetic oracle."

Using poetic language and metaphors, Jacob revealed a small part of the future of each son's descendants which became tribes of Israel.

This oracle served many purposes for the people of Israel.

During the centuries of slavery in Egypt (Exodus 1:7-14), Jacob's deathbed oracle pointed to a future when they take possession of the Promised Land of Canaan.

Afterwards, it served as a reminder.

God's plan has been in place since the beginning, and He is faithful to bless His people (Genesis 49:1-2).

Jacob fathered twelve sons with four women:

- His wives Leah and Rachel, and
- Their servants Bilhah and Zilpah (Genesis 35:23-26).

In this passage, only the first four and last two sons are addressed in exact accordance with birth order.

However, there is still an arrangement to Jacob's speech.

The first six sons addressed—

- Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Zebulun, and Issachar—are the naturally-born sons of Leah.
- The next four—Dan, Gad, Asher, and Naphtali—are sons carried through surrogacy by Rachel and Leah's servants.
- The last two—Joseph and Benjamin—are the naturally-born sons of Jacob's dearest wife, Rachel.

The first three predictions from Jacob are harsh.

He holds Reuben, Simeon, and Levi accountable for sins committed decades earlier.

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The tribes descended from them were less esteemed, as a result.

- Reuben was vilified for sleeping with his father's concubine (Genesis 35:22).

This causes him to lose his esteemed position as the firstborn and his tribe was noted for indecisiveness.

- Simeon and Levi were closely linked in their violent, vengeful personalities, for which both are condemned.

The most notable evidence of this was their deceptive and sadistic response to the rape of their sister, Dinah in Genesis 34:1-2 & 13-15, 25-29.

Neither tribe posed much of the Promised Land;

- The tribe of Levi became priests with no established territory of their own
- In contrast, Judah's tribe became great.

This fourth son of Jacob will be the ancestor of most of Israel's kings and rulers.

In fact, the kingship will remain with Judah forever.

Much later in history, Jesus, the Messiah, descended from Judah and King David, will also be known as the Lion of Judah.

Part of Jacob's prediction was a prophecy about Messiah and the everlasting nature of His rule (Genesis 49:8-12).

Brief mentions are made of the futures of the tribes of Zebulun, Issachar, Dan, Gad, Asher, and Naphtali.

- Zebulun was associated, in some way, with sea trading.
- Issachar was known for hard work and possibly enslavement.
- Dan was cryptically described as a lurking serpent, possibly a reference to military skill.
- The oracle about Gad uses rhyming Hebrew words to imply conflict.
- Asher's prediction involves food.
- Naphtali is associated with independence and beauty.

In the middle of these prophecies, Jacob exclaimed his desire to see God's salvation (Genesis 49:13-21).

Jacob saved his greatest blessing for Joseph and the people to come from him.

Having already given the family blessing to Joseph's two sons (Genesis 48:5-6), Jacob now includes Joseph specifically.

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- His people will be fruitful and fight off their attackers in the strength of the Mighty One of Jacob.

Notable Old Testament warriors such as Joshua, Gideon, and Deborah will be from the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh.

Further, all the material blessings of the earth will come to them (Genesis 49:22–26).

The final prediction is for Jacob's youngest son, Benjamin.

- His people are compared to a voracious, vicious predator.

The Benjaminites were known for their military accomplishments.

They would also be associated with a horrific incident in Judges 19:25–27 which sparked a civil war in Judges 20.

The first king of Israel, Saul, was from this tribe, and his rule was marked by a predatory, violent streak.

After the extensive praise given to Joseph, this brief remark seems anticlimactic (Genesis 49:27).

In the moments before he died, Jacob urgently commanded his sons not to bury him in Egypt but that rather, they are to take his remains to the family burial cave near Mamre which was purchased by Abraham.

This cave is one of the few spots in Canaan owned outright by God's people.

Buried there are Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, and Jacob's first wife Leah.

His sons must bury him there alongside them (Genesis 49:28–32).

With his business finished, Jacob unfortunately in verse 33.

That's it, The Summary of Genesis 49

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GEN 49: 1-2

And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days.

(The prior chapter described how Jacob gave the primary family blessing to Joseph's two oldest sons: Ephraim and Manasseh in Genesis 48:5–6.

Now Jacob will address each of his other sons in turn.

Genesis 49 is described as Jacob's deathbed oracle.

Often, it is labelled as his "blessing" on his sons.

However, it mostly contains prophetic details:

Defining characteristics of the peoples that will descend from each of his twelve sons.

Not everything Jacob predicts is positive, and the main family blessing has already been bestowed in Genesis 48:5–6.

Jacob's main point is to explain what will happen to the tribes descending from each of these twelve sons.

So on his deathbed, Jacob summons them all together to speak about "days to come."

Most of the details given in Jacob's oracle will not be fulfilled for several centuries until when the nation is resettled in the Promised Land of Canaan.

The book of Judges records some of these outcomes, while others are reserved for later events in the Old Testament.

Anyways Jacob is now 147 years old and he realizes that he is dying.

In those days, it was a customary practice to summon the family together when one senses death is near.

The twelve sons of Jacob gathered around him that he might prophecy over them, as he looked into the future of the various tribes and saw those things that would happen to them.

Some of what follows are not so much blessings as they are prophecies regarding what God will do with these tribes in the future.

It should be noted that:

This is the first conscious prophecy spoken by a man in the Bible.

There were many prophecies announced by God (such as the promise of the triumph of the seed of the woman in Genesis 3:15), and other veiled prophecies by men, but this is the first declared prophecy through a man in the Bible.

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Jewish traditions tell us that as Jacob was about to bless his sons, he was ready to tell them the *“great secret concerning the end of time.”*

But at that moment, the glory of God visited and left just as quickly, taking all trace of the knowledge of the great mystery, so he couldn't tell them.

Again, we regard this as just an interesting legend.)

²Gather yourselves together, and hear, ye sons of Jacob; and hearken unto Israel your father.

The oracle formally begins with verse 2 and uses poetic language.

The sons of Jacob are called to assemble and hear the words of their father.

In this lyrical form, Jacob's prophecies could be preserved and read to the succeeding generations.

This would be especially valuable to Israel in the coming centuries, as they will endure harsh slavery under Egypt in Exodus 1:8–14.

Jacob's prophecy would imply a future beyond Israel's captivity in Egypt.

For generations far in the future, it would serve as evidence that God's plan for His people was set from the very beginning.

These words would also warn about the long-lasting consequences of momentary choices.

So at the very beginning of the blessing, Jacob realized he was both Jacob and Israel, and his sons are sons of each.

This was a place of spiritual maturity, realizing both what God made him (Israel) and what he had to battle against (Jacob).

So in verse two, he begins a poem.

In the Hebrew, poetry is not in rhyme form as it is in English; but, is in thought form and in the repetition of words.

So, the contrast of Israel the father to the sons of Jacob comprise the poetry in the first two verses and the words “listen” and “hear” comprise poetry.

I really don't understand that kind of poetry, but that comprises poetry in the minds of the ancient Hebrews.

Now his sons are gathered around the bed, and Jacob is almost blind at this point. He musters all of his strength, in order, that he might sit upon the side of the bed.

Looking around the room at his twelve sons he, first of all, fastens his gaze upon Reuben, the eldest, the first born of Leah.

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GEN 49: 3

Reuben, thou art my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power.

Jacob begins with his oldest son Reuben (Genesis 29:32), describing the privilege that comes with being the firstborn.

The eldest male child was often seen as the primary example of a man's virility and strength.

As is still the case in many cultures today, the firstborn son is often treated as the crown jewel of the family, the leader of his siblings, and the hope for the future.

Firstborn sons often received a double portion of the inheritance and the final word in family decisions after the parents were gone.

Under normal circumstances, Reuben would be the most honoured and powerful of his brothers.

However, this privilege was negated due to his rebellious immorality with his father's concubine Bilhah (the mother of his brothers Dan and Naphtali) recorded in Genesis 35:22.

GEN 49: 4

Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel; because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; then defiledst thou it; he went up to my couch.

"He went up to my couch ...":

The use of the second person here might mean that Jacob, turning from his son, made a gesture toward him and addressed the remark to the others.

Anyways ...

After the death of Jacob's beloved wife Rachel, Reuben apparently had sexual relations with Bilhah, one of Jacob's two servant-wives.

Bilhah was something like Reuben's stepmother, as well as his father's wife.

Scripture gives no reason why Reuben did this, however It's possible he was trying to rebel against Jacob—to assert his dominance and take over leadership of the family in Jacob's moment of weakness.

All Genesis has revealed, so far, is that Jacob (Genesis 35:10–11) heard about this heinous act.

The fact that Scripture recorded no immediate punishment does not mean there was no such reaction; but whatever happened was not included in that passage.

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Here, we see that this act was by no means forgotten.

That sin is given as the reason Reuben lost the firstborn status.

Jacob comments that Reuben is "unstable as water."

Scholars are unclear about exactly what that phrase means, but a lack of conviction marks Reuben's descendants throughout the Old Testament in Judges 5:15-16.

Further, no prophets, kings, or judges will be associated with the tribe of Reuben.

This would serve as a clear warning to Israel that God holds His people accountable for sin, even when circumstances make it appear they have "gotten away with it."

Also, God considers the marriage bed holy (Hebrews 13:4).

To defile it as Reuben did brings serious consequences.

Anyways because of Reuben's instability, the birth right was divided.

Usually the firstborn was the spiritual and social leader of the clan; but among the sons of Israel, the rights of blessing, priesthood, and ruling authority were divided among brothers rather than being centralized in one.

Though we see the great wisdom of God in decentralizing authority among the sons of Israel, Reuben paid a high price for his instability.

As much as anything, God looks for stable character in those who will lead His people.

James tells us, in the New Testament, concerning the double minded man,

"For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord. A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways." (James 1:7-8).

The lack of excelling because of instability.

When Reuben sinned in going to Bilhah, the concubine of Jacob, nothing was said to him or against him at that time; however, it stuck in Jacob's mind and now, he calls attention to it and deals with it.

"Because you went up to your father's bed; you defiled it."

It's as though he first of all, addresses Reuben and then as though he is talking to himself.

"I can't believe he went up to my couch!"

Jacob tells Reuben why he does not get the birth right; it was the defiling of his fathers bed.

Incidentally the tribe of Reuben never did excel.

No prophet, no judge, or no king that we know of came from the tribe of Reuben.

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Reuben is an example of how the first can be last (Matthew 19:30).

So a man may have great opportunities, and yet lose them.

Uncontrolled passions may make him very little who otherwise might have been great.

It was basically a nothing tribe.

They settled on the East banks of the Jordan River, where the land was rich for pasture, and didn't claim any inheritance within the land.

GEN 49: 5-6

Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations.

(Now, the focus shifts to Jacob's second- and third-born sons: Simeon and Levi (Genesis 29:33-34).

Although all Jacob's sons were "brothers" by definition, Simeon and Levi were sons of the same mother, Leah.

And yet, Jacob's description of them indicates an especially close relationship.

Unfortunately, this also implies they were closely linked in their violent tendencies.

Their response to the rape of their sister, Dinah, by a local prince (Genesis 34:1-2), was to slaughter the entire town in a planned ambush (Genesis 34:25-29).

This brutally violent revenge is condemned and results in consequences.

This verse contains an often-debated Hebrew word only used once in the Old Testament.

Most translations render the word *mekērōtē* as a reference to a weapons, such as "swords" or "knives."

The term is apparently related to an older word referring to digging, stabbing, or piercing.

Since it would be redundant to point out that swords are weapons, some interpreters believe Jacob is implying something else.

Suggestions range from Jacob referring to schemes, to the circumcision knives involved in the brothers' deceptive tactics towards Shechem in Genesis 34:13-15, 24-25.

Others note that *mekēra* is also translated as "habitations," so this could be a veiled reference to the sons' reproductive members.

Regardless of such details, Jacob is clearly condemning these two sons generally for their fierce and violent anger.

More specifically, he is reprimanding them for their massacre of Shechem.

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Jacob, perhaps in weakness, did nothing at the time except register a small, self-centred complaint in Genesis 34:30.

Yet he (and the LORD) remembered this event.

This illustrates the principle that the sins of our past can come back and haunt us.

Even when forgiven, they may carry consequences we must face for a lifetime.

Unfortunately, the fate of their two tribes will be a form of scattering.)

60 my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united; for in their anger they slew a man, and in their self-will they digged down a wall.

This verse also contains a reference to these brothers deliberately crippling animals. Scripture is unclear as to when Simeon and Levi might have done this.

It might have been during the incident with Shechem, or a pattern of animal abuse.

Thus this verse, therefore, provides a detail omitted in the previous reference.

This is a common practice in the Holy Scriptures and there are numerous other examples throughout the Bible.

Another example is the additional detail that Jonah told the mariners (when he boarded with them) that he was fleeing from Jehovah (Jonah 1:10).

Either way, Jacob holds it up as another example of their stubborn, unnecessary acts of rage.

As with Reuben (Genesis 35:22; 49:3-4), Scripture does not mention what—if any—immediate consequences were suffered by the sons in the aftermath of their crimes.

Even if steps were taken, long-term effects are now being felt.

Jacob goes so far as to say he shuns these sons; he doesn't want to be with them.

Worse, Jacob doesn't want his own glory to be associated with them.

Simeon and Levi lost their good standing in Israel's inner circle.

Sins of anger and violence often lead to loss of meaningful relationships.

For the peoples to come—the descendants of Simeon and Levi—it will lead to loss of standing, as well.

Simeon's tribe will practically dissolve (Joshua 19:1).

Levi will become tied to the priesthood (Numbers 3:6), which also means a lack of land for their tribe (Deuteronomy 18:1-2).

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GEN 49: 7

Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel; I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.

The real problem with Simeon and Levi was their anger (in their anger they slew a man).

Their anger was sin because it was rooted in self-will (in their self-will they hamstrung an ox).

The Bible speaks of a godly anger (Be angry and do not sin, Ephesians 4:26) and an ungodly anger (Let all bitterness, wrath, anger...be put away from you, Ephesians 4:31).

Often, the difference between a godly, righteous anger and an ungodly anger is self-will.

The prophecy of dividing and scattering turned out to be a curse for Simeon.

The tribe of Simeon was the weakest numerically of the 12 (Numbers 26:14) and shared an allotment of land with Judah (Joshua 19:1).

The tribe of Simeon became small during the wilderness wanderings.

They started out from Egypt being the third largest tribe (Numbers 1:23), but some 35 years later, at the second wilderness census of Israel, 63% of the tribe perished and they became the smallest tribe (Numbers 26:14).

They settled in the area, to the south of Judah, which today is the area of Beersheba.

The tribe of Simeon never, again, produced leadership.

The prophecy of dividing and scattering became a blessing for Levi.

Because of the faithfulness of this tribe during the rebellion of the golden calf in Exodus 32:26-28, it was scattered as a blessing throughout the whole nation of Israel.

They received no large tract of land, for the LORD was their inheritance, not land (Joshua 13:33).

The tribe of Levi produced Moses and Aaron and their descendants and God chose the Levites for the priesthood.

This was certainly a demonstration of the grace of God.

It wasn't because of the righteousness of the fathers, that this tribe was chosen for priesthood, but God's sovereign grace.

So both Simeon and Levi were scattered, but one as a blessing and the other as a curse.

"Happy is that man who, though he begins with a dark shadow resting upon him, so lives as to turn even that shadow into bright sunlight. Levi gained a blessing at the hands of Moses, one of the richest blessings of any of the tribes." (Spurgeon)

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One author said:

"It lightens the stroke to draw near to him who handles the rod."

When we suffer from our sin, we should draw near to God and anticipate that in mercy He will turn suffering into blessing.

GEN 49: 8

Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise; thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee.

Now, the oracle turns to Judah (Genesis 29:35), and this prediction is overwhelmingly positive.

Jacob points to a time when Judah's brothers will praise him and bow down before him.

This resembles Joseph's dreams of his brothers and father bowing before him in Genesis 37:5-11 which prediction has already been fulfilled (Genesis 43:26).

Judah's tribe will produce many leaders and kings.

The statement that Judah's brothers would praise him is a play on Judah's name, given to him when his mother declared at his birth in Genesis 29:35,

"This time I will praise the Lord"

Jacob also points to a time when Judah's hand will be on the neck of his enemies, a sign of dominance over them.

Again, this indicates that the tribe of Judah will lead Israel to victory in battle.

Unlike his brothers, Judah's people are destined for greatness and they will become the most dominant of the twelve tribes.

But don't forget that Judah wasn't a completely an exemplary character.

He suggested a profit motive in getting rid of Joseph in Genesis 37:26.

He did not deal faithfully with his daughter-in-law Tamar in Genesis 38:26, and he had sex with her as a prostitute in Genesis 38:18.

But he showed good character when he interceded and offered himself as a substitute for Benjamin in Genesis 44:18-34.

Overall, this blessing is an example of the richness of God's grace to the undeserving.

Judah also inherited the leadership aspect of the firstborn's inheritance.

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The firstborn normally had two rights.

- 1) *First, he became the leader of the family, the new patriarch.*
- 2) *Second, he was entitled to a double share of the inheritance, receiving twice as much as any of the other brothers.*

This leadership position among his brothers meant that the eventual kings of Israel would come from Judah and that the Messiah – God’s ultimate leader – would eventually come from the tribe of Judah.

➤ In Revelation 5:5, Jesus is called the Lion of the tribe of Judah.

In a powerful way, this prophecy over Judah is a description of Judah’s greatest descendant: Jesus Christ.

GEN 49: 9-12

Judah is a lion’s whelp; from the prey, my son, thou art gone up; he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?

(Lions are often mentioned symbolically in the Old Testament.

The figure of a lion is a symbol of bold strength and courage and is common throughout history, even until the days of Richard the Lionhearted of England.

Jacob refers to Judah as a lion: first as a cub, then a lion, and finally a lioness.

The picture is of a lion who has taken down his prey and now crouches over it, defying anyone to take it from him.

In other words, Judah will be mighty and victorious and dangerous to his enemies.

To even dare to challenge his dominance would be an act of bravery.

This blessing points to the time when King David, of the tribe of Judah in 1 Samuel 17:12, would conquer all the enemies of Israel and become the strongest power in the region.

The lion would become the symbol of Judah's people.

Finally, Jesus the Messiah, who will also descend from this tribe in Micah 5:2, will carry the title of the Lion of Judah.

Revelation 5:5 says this about Him:

"The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.")

¹⁰The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh

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(This word occurs (with slight variations) three times in the Bible, and in every one of them, the reference is to JESUS CHRIST.

As far as this passage goes,

Believing Shiloh to be the name of a person, the majority of commentators, both Jewish and Christian, the ancient as well as modern, agree that the Messiah is the person referred to, and Jacob here foretold that the appearance of that Messiah would not occur until the staff or regal power had dropped from his hands.

In Isaiah 8:6...

"This people have rejected the waters of Shiloah that go softly."

Here the benign and peaceful government of God is compared to waters that go softly, called in this place SHILOAH!

Thus, in this usage the peaceful government reaching its zenith in the Messiah is definitely meant.

In John 9:7 ...

"And Jesus said unto him, Go wash in the pool of Siloam (which is by interpretation 'Sent')."

That the reference here is to Christ is certain.

The bringing of a pitcher of water from this particular pool and pouring it out ceremoniously upon the Great Day of the Feast of Lights demonstrates that the Jews so received it as a symbol of the coming Messiah; and the apostle's reference here confirms that.

However, NOTE:

These three words, while not identical, are definitely variations of the same word, the unanimous testimony of all three being that they are witnesses of Christ and his kingdom.)

come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.

(A scepter is held by a king as sign of authority.

According to Jacob, this symbolic rulership will never leave the tribe of Judah.

But this did not come to pass at once.

- Moses was from Levi,
- Joshua from Ephraim,
- Gideon from Manasseh,
- Samson from Dan,

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- Samuel from Ephraim, and
- Saul from Benjamin.

However, in the long sweep through history the prophecy was completely fulfilled only in Judah and the house of David, one of his descendants whose reign prefigured the everlasting kingdom of the Messiah.

The mention of "thy father's sons" indicates that not merely the children of Judah's natural brothers (the other sons of Leah) would be subject to him, but that all of Israel would likewise be.

Therefore ...

Each king, in turn holding the ruler's staff, will come from the genealogy of Judah—poetically phrased as "between his feet."

This will be echoed by God, through Samuel, who will later say to King David of Judah in 2 Samuel 7:16

"Your throne shall be established forever"

The phrase translated in the ESV as "until tribute comes to him" is much debated by Bible scholars.

Some read it as *"until he—meaning the scepter—comes to whom it belongs."*

Others understand the key word to refer to a place called Shiloh: *"until Shiloh comes" or "until he comes to Shiloh."*

Many commentators believe this is referring to the coming of the final King of Israel of the line of David, the Messiah Himself.

He will reign forever.

In that sense, then, a descendant of the tribe of Judah will rule eternally.

Finally, all people will obey this King.

This may refer to the peoples of all the tribes, not just Judah.

Or it may refer to the people of the earth during the future reign of Christ Himself, perhaps hinted at in the following verses.

This is a beautiful prophecy concerning Judah which did not happen for several hundred years, until David ascended the throne; then Judah became a dominant tribe and remained dominant, especially in the southern kingdom.

Now Shiloh is related to the Hebrew word shalom, "peace".

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The Prophecy is that from Judah the Messiah was to come and the tribe of Judah would be the ruling body until the Messiah came.

It is interesting that about the year six AD, the Roman government took from the nation of Israel the right of capital punishment.

Remember when they brought Jesus to Pilate, and Pilate said,

“You have your law, go ahead and judge Him by your law.”

They said, “It is not lawful for us to put a man to death,” signifying that the sentence that they wanted for Jesus was death.

They could not condemn a man to death, for that power had been stripped by the Roman government about six AD

When that power was stripped from them, many went mourning through the streets; because, they thought that God’s word had failed.

Little did they know that in Nazareth, the Messiah, a lad at that time, was growing up.

They were mourning in sack cloth and ashes, feeling that the promises of God and the word of God had failed.

In 70 AD, the scepter was taken and there was no longer a lawgiver which means that the Messiah had to come sometime before 70 AD or, indeed, the word of God did fail.

If Jesus is not the promised Messiah of Israel, there is none.

There is to be none, because here God’s word plainly declares that the scepter will not depart from Judah nor a lawgiver from between his feet until the Messiah, the Shiloh, the peace has come.

“...Unto Him shall the gathering of the people be,”

and that, of course, is a prophecy that was repeated by Isaiah in the 9th chapter when he says,

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.” (Isa.9:6-7).

Jacob speaks a phrase from Isaiah here in reference to Jesus, “...Until Shiloh come,” or until our Prince of Peace comes.

In the latter portion of this prophecy, Jacob seems to quote from Isaiah’s prophecy,

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“Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.

Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat?

I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me; for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment.”

(It speaks of the second coming of Jesus after the great tribulation period.)

¹¹Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes;

(Now Jacob points to a time of great abundance in the future of Judah's people.

The king mentioned in the previous verse who will come from the tribe of Judah is very likely a reference to the eternal King, the Messiah Himself in Acts 2:36.

Jacob's mention of Judah's descendant riding a donkey fits Zechariah's prophesy that the King of Zion will come "humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey" (Zechariah 9:9).

Jesus fulfilled this prophesy in what Christians refer to as the triumphal entry on the Sunday prior to His crucifixion in Matthew 21:1-11.

Normally, nobody would tie a donkey to a choice grapevine: the donkey would eat the valuable wine grapes.

What Jacob describes is a time when grapes are so abundant that nobody worries about running out.

They even wash their clothes in wine—an exaggeration meant to imply that fine wine will be as plentiful as water.

This points to the enormous blessings under the rule of the Messiah in a distant era in Revelation 20:4.)

¹²His eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk.

Continuing the poetic language, Jacob compares the eyes of Judah's future descendants to wine.

This may be a reference to attractiveness.

Some believe this is better translated as "dark with wine," another reference to how wine is easily available in their land.

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Their teeth may be "whiter than milk" from drinking abundant amounts of milk or this may be another suggestion that Judah's descendants will be attractive, prosperous people.

So this concluded Jacob's oracle about the future of the tribe of Judah.

GEN 49: 13

Zebulun shall dwell at the haven of the sea; and he shall be for an haven of ships; and his border shall be unto Zidon.

Jacob now skipped the birth order, moving to the tenth-born and ninth-born sons, but keeping his focus on the sons born of Leah.

What is said here of Zebulun is more applicable to Israel as a whole than to this particular tribe, and perhaps that is the way Jacob intended it, with the meaning that Zebulun shall share fully as a participant in the blessings promised to all Israel in Palestine.

Regardless ...

The prophetic statement here points to a time when the people of Zebulun would be associated with sea trade.

The border of his lands would be near the Phoenician city of Sidon.

It is unclear what time, exactly, this refers to;

Zebulun's actual settlement will not be on the seashore in Joshua 19:10–11.

Some scholars suggest Zebulun may have settled along the seashore temporarily before making their permanent home elsewhere or that the people benefited from trade which was directly tied to sea traffic.

Parts of Jacob's prophecy look far into the future, at the earthly reign of the Messiah (Revelation 20:4), which may see this fulfilled more directly and literally.

Also the tribe of Zebulun was noted for its faithfulness to David, supplying the largest number of soldiers to David's army of any single tribe:

We read in 1 Chronicles 12:33 that:

Of Zebulun there were fifty thousand who went out to battle, expert in war with all weapons of war, stouthearted men who could keep ranks.

They also settled on the piece of land sitting between the Mediterranean Sea and the Sea of Galilee.

Literally, shall dwell by the haven of the sea can be translated looking towards the sea.

Zebulun did look to the sea, both to the east and west.

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GEN 49: 14-15

Issachar is a strong ass couching down between two burdens;

(Issachar, as a tribe, is depicted to resemble the sturdy, thick-boned structure of a donkey.

It is unclear if Jacob intended the metaphor to describe Issachar's descendants as strong, hard workers.

Alternatively, he may mean the tribe is stubborn and resistant, since they are depicted as lying down, which is the ultimate act of defiance from a working animal like a donkey.

Depending on the translation, Issachar is said to be lying down or crouching between sheepfolds or packs.

Issachar was a large tribe – third in size according to the Numbers 26 census.

Because of their size and abundance, they were often targets of oppressive foreign armies who put them into servitude.

Thus, they became a band of slaves.

“The meaning seems to be that Issachar was strong, but docile and lazy.

He would enjoy the good land assigned him but would not strive for it.

Therefore, eventually he would be pressed into servitude and the mere bearing of burdens for his masters.”)

¹⁵And he saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant; and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute.

In simple terms Issachar was going to be a lazy fellow ☺

Issachar inherited the area that is known as the valley of Megeddo.

That is, probably, some of the most fertile area in the land and they didn't have to do much work.

Throw out your seed and it just grew.

He became prosperous and lazy.

That area is called the breadbasket of Israel and produces, even to the present day, an abundance of beautiful crops.

It is in the area of Mt. Gilboa.

Next, Jacob fixes his eyes on Dan.

This is probably the order in which they are standing around his room.

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Dan was born to Bilhah, who was the maiden of Rachel, and his name means “to judge.”

GEN 49: 16-18

Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel.

(Though the tribe of Dan will be smaller than the others, they will remain an independent group.

In fact, Dan's people played significant roles in fighting and judging for Israel.

This was especially true in the time of the judges before Israel had a king.

They supplied one of the most prominent of the Judges, Samson in Judges 13:2 who fought for Israel against the Philistines in Judges 13—16.

However, not long after Samson, the tribe of Dan was be associated with idolatry in Judges 18:27–31.)

¹⁷Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward.

(Here, the small tribe of Dan is described as a snake that ambushes a horse, knocking its rider off when the horse reacts.

This statement is unclear, and heavily debated.

Two interpretations are commonly put forward.

One is more positive, suggesting Dan, though small, will still do its share of damage to Israel's enemies.

In fact, Samson was from Dan and served as one of Israel's judges.

He repeatedly defeated their enemies, the Philistines, in various battles (Judges 13—16).

Also, the people of Dan attacked and defeated the town of Laish (Judges 17—18).

Comparison to a waiting serpent, in that case, is a compliment about a relatively small being that is capable of great effect, thanks to skill and strategy.

It's also possible to read Jacob's description of Dan's descendants in a negative light.

Snakes are often associated with sneakiness and falseness.

Dan's descendants will be some of the first to delve into worshiping idols, which brought on the people the wrath of God in Judges 18:27–31.

Jeroboam set up one of his idolatrous golden calves in Dan in 1 Kings 12:26-30, and later Dan became a centre of idol worship in Israel in Amos 8:14.

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A more obscure interpretation considers the association of Satan with the serpent in Eden in Genesis 3:1 and this passage's end-times implications in Revelation 5:5; 20:4–6.

Likewise, Dan, as a tribe, is not mentioned as part of end-times Israel regarding the 144,000 in Revelation 7:4–8.

This leads some to suggest the "beast" of Revelation in Revelation 13:1, the Antichrist, could be from the tribe of Dan based on Daniel 11:37 and Jeremiah 8:16.

But Dan is the first tribe listed in Ezekiel's millennial roll call of the tribes in Ezekiel 48.

This is a remarkable sign of God's redemption.)

¹⁸I have waited for thy salvation, O LORD.

I have waited for your salvation, O LORD," seems to be thrown in without any reference to Dan.

It is sort of a little afterthought.

The word salvation in Hebrew, as used here, is "Yeshua."

Literally, Jacob said,

"I have waited for Yeshua or Jesus."

Now may be Israel saw the future of Dan as they introduced idolatry to the children of Israel.

In the later years, when there was a division of the kingdom, Jeroboam set up one of the golden calves in Dan.

Next in order is Gad, one of Zilpah's sons.

GEN 49: 19

Gad, a troop shall overcome him; but he shall overcome at the last.

This brief remark about Gad is an overt play on words.

The Hebrew term geduwd, sometimes transliterated as gadud, refers to raiding or attacking.

It can be either a noun, meaning "raiders," or a verb, meaning "to raid."

That word sounds very much like the name Gad, which primarily refers to a blessing, but which can also refer to troops.

The tribe of Gad supplied many fine troops for king David in 1 Chronicles 12:14.

Eventually Gad settled in an area prone to border raids by foreign invaders and in the days of Jeremiah 49:1 (among other times) foreign armies oppressed them.

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Yet victory would be his in the end (he shall triumph at last).

Just as was with Gad; has been the blessing of many a child of God – to fight, and apparently to lose the battle, yet to win it at the end.

1 Chronicles 5:18–19 records that Gadites became famous for their fighting fierceness and strength.

GEN 49: 20

Out of Asher his bread shall be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties.

The oracle about Asher is one of the simplest, and possibly the most peaceful, of all Jacob's predictions.

Asher was named for Leah's response at his birth to her servant Zilpah in Genesis 30:12–13:

"Happy am I! For women have called me happy".

Asher's people were destined for a happy future.

They settled within a fertile strip of land in Joshua 19:24–31 and were known for rich foods.

Their main interaction with other tribes may have been providing "delicacies" to the people of the land around Israel.

Asher's descendants were also bakers and provided the land with rich bread and cookies.

In Deuteronomy 33:24, Moses again took up this prophecy regarding Asher:

Asher is most blessed of sons; let him be favoured by his brothers, and let him dip his foot in oil.

Apparently also, the land eventually occupied by Asher was good enough to bring not only necessities, but also luxuries.

In 1 Kings 5:11, it is revealed that Asher lived in the lowlands along the Mediterranean between Carmel and Tyre, a fruitful and fertile region; and Solomon supplied the household of King Hiram from the wheat and oil products of this region.

GEN 49: 21

Naphtali is a hind let loose; he giveth goodly words.

This is another verse which scholars struggle to accurately translate.

The first part of the sentence seems straightforward:

Naphtali is compared to a female deer which has been set free.

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The second part of the verse is a bit less clear.

The words ha nōtēn' 'imre sāper seem most literally to mean "gives beautiful fawns."

However, similar Hebrew words mean things like "he said," or refer to speech.

This is why some translations render this to mean Naphtali's tribe will produce beautiful "words."

There is no question that Naphtali's descendants would settle in mountainous terrain, which in that region was associated with "deer" and similar animals.

Deborah, a judge over Israel, described Naphtali "on the heights of the field" in Judges 5:18.

Naphtali settled northwest of the Sea of Galilee in Joshua 19:32–39 where Jesus did much of His teaching and ministry.

Because so much of the ministry of Jesus took place in the region of Naphtali, this was fittingly said of him.

Now when Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, He departed to Galilee.

And leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying in Matthew 4:12-16:

"The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, by the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles: The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned."

Basically the tribe of Naphtali became the poets and speech makers.

GEN 49: 22

Joseph is a fruitful bough,

(This was both a description of Joseph's life and a personal blessing concerning his descendants.

In a sense, Joseph's tribes were already blessed when his sons received their blessing in Genesis 48.

This description of Joseph – as a fruitful bough by a well – speaks of his being well-watered and provided for in his deep and real relationship with God.

"The main point in Joseph's character was that he was in clear and constant fellowship with God, and therefore God blessed him greatly.

He lived to God, and was God's servant; he lived with God, and was God's child.)

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even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall.

Joseph, Rachel's first born, the son that Jacob loved and had established, in his mind, as the heir.

He claimed the two sons of Joseph, Manasseh and Ephraim, as his own; thereby, giving Joseph the double portion.

He talks about Joseph being a fruitful bough by a well and his branches running over a wall.

Psalms are an equivalent kind of a phrase,

"...He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." (Ps.1:3).

Here is a tree planted by a well, its roots go down and draw from the subterranean water source and thus is a tree that is green and a tree that produces abundantly.

Joseph, a tree that is loaded with fruit.

This could refer to the opulent style of life that he enjoyed as second in Egypt, only, under the Pharaoh.

He had his own physicians, and we know from the text that he had them embalm his father.

He, no doubt, had multitudes of servants and lived in a very grand style and thus, he is called a fruitful bough, his life bearing an abundance of fruit.

"...Whose branches run over the wall," could mean that he doesn't hoard it all to himself.

He is willing to share what God has blessed him with.

Others also can partake of the benefit and purpose of God.

If He has blessed your life, it is because he wants you to share those blessings with others.

GEN 49: 23

The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him.

Joseph himself was bitterly attacked during his lifetime.

He was mocked and eventually sold into slavery by his brothers (Genesis 37:18-36).

He was falsely accused of attempted rape by Potiphar's wife and wrongly imprisoned for years (Genesis 39:11-20).

He was forgotten and abandoned by Pharaoh's cupbearer (Genesis 40:23).

In all these cases, Joseph continued to "fight back" by trusting God to provide for him.

Jacob's oracle also seems to be pointing forward:

To the time when two tribes descended from Joseph will be attacked by Israel's enemies.

Many of the Old Testament's renowned warriors, such as Gideon, Joshua, and Deborah, came from the tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim.

SO ...

Though Joseph was shot at and hated, he was still a fruitful bough.

This was because the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the Mighty God of Jacob.

The idea is that God's hands were on Joseph's hands, giving him strength and skill to work the bow expertly.

God was there, even when Joseph did not know it.

GEN 49: 24

But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel;).

Here Jacob describes a severe and bitter attack of arrows shot at Joseph.

Instead of being hit, or running and hiding, Jacob describes Joseph's bow as remaining steady and strong.

He returns fire with skill.

The agility ascribed to Joseph's arms, however, does not come from his own strength but that Joseph's arms are empowered by the hands of God.

In other words, Joseph's strength comes from the Lord.

This reference to skill in battle is proven by Joseph's future descendants who were famous warriors of the Old Testament, including Joshua, Gideon, and Deborah, all these being members of the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh the sons of Joseph adopted by Jacob as his own in Genesis 48:5-6.

Furthermore, in his words about Joseph, Jacob listed five great titles for God.

These titles show that Jacob did come to an understanding of who God is.

- The Mighty One of Jacob. (Psalms 132:2,5; Isaiah 49:26; 60:16).
 - The Shepherd. (Psalms 23; Ezekiel 34:11-16; Psalms 80:1).
-

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- The Stone of Israel. (Deuteronomy 32:4,15,18,30,31; Psalms 18:2).
- The God of thy Father. (Exodus 3:15)
- God Almighty. (Genesis 17:1; 28:3; 35:11; 43:14; Exodus 6:3).

This is much better than when Jacob referred to God as the God of Abraham or the Fear of his father Isaac in Genesis 31:53.

Now he knew who God was for himself.

Now though Joseph was prospered abundantly, though he had the great wealth of Egypt at his fingertips, he had gone through some really heavy trials.

Life was not always easy for Joseph.

The archers had sorely grieved him.

He had experienced a lot of grief in having them plot together to kill him.

The grief of being sold by his brothers as a slave.

The grief of being falsely accused by Potiphar's wife, of rape, and spending years in prison because of the false charges.

There was a deep hatred in the brother's hearts concerning Joseph.

It says that they hated him and when he told the dreams that he had, they hated him all the more.

Hatred so great that they actually conspired to kill him, then opted later to just sell him as a slave.

Many arrows had gone his way; but, his bough remained in strength.

That is, he did not retaliate though it was in his power to do so.

So many times when I am shot at, I want revenge.

I want to get even.

Who did that?

I just start shooting at anything that is moving.

It is part of our nature to desire to get even.

It takes great strength not to get even, when it is in your capacity to do so.

Joseph doesn't try to get even, his bough abides in strength.

He could have destroyed those that sought to destroy him, but he didn't.

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The secret of that strength was the arms of his hands were made strong by Almighty God.

God was the one that was the restraining power in Joseph's life.

He is a restraining power in our lives and is able to help us if we have that habit of just sort of flying off in a fit of temper.

You can know the power of God.

He will hold the arms of your hands so that you will not strike back.

"From thence is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel."

God in the figure of a shepherd, something that becomes quite common as we move through the scriptures.

This is the first direct reference to God as a shepherd.

In chapter forty-eight, verse fifteen, Jacob declares that God had fed him all the days of his life.

The word "fed," as used in that passage is translated "shepherd," from the Hebrew word "ra'ah," and could also be translated, "the God who has shepherded me."

This is possibly the first reference to shepherd, but, it's translated the God who has fed me, the God who has tended me and is equivalent to the Greek word tend.

Jesus said to Peter, *"Tend my sheep or shepherd my sheep."* God is the shepherd.

Then the stone and this is the first reference to God as the "rock" or God as a "stone."

Through the Psalms, this symbolism for God is used over and over.

The Lord is "my rock" or "my strong defense."

Even in the Song of Moses, Deuteronomy thirty-two, *"their rock is not as our rock"* and many other references to God as a rock in the Song of Moses.

The rock was a symbol of strength, the symbol of protection.

"Hide me in the rock that is higher than I."

The place of defence, the place of protection, the place of safety and that is what God becomes to us.

There was a special symbolism of the "rock" according to the book of Daniel.

There is that classic dream of Nebuchadnezzar seeing the progressive kingdoms that would rule over the world.

When he came to the ten toes which are ten kings, and during the reign of these ten kings he saw a rock, out of the mountain, not cut with hands.

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It hit the great image in the feet so that the whole image crumbled and the rock grew into a mountain that covered the world.

In Daniel's interpretation of the dream, that "rock" was the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to establish God's reign over the earth.

The "rock" for the children of Israel, when they were in the wilderness and were perishing because of thirst gave them water.

They came to Moses and they said to Moses,

"You've brought us out here to die, we and our children are dying of thirst."

Moses said, *"Who am I that I can give you water?"*

He went in before the Lord and said, *"Lord, they are out there complaining, they need water".*

God said, Take your rod and strike the rock and water will come forth.

Moses went out and he took his rod and smote the rock and the water came flowing forth and the people drank and they were saved.

In Corinthians Paul said,

"There was that "rock" with them in the wilderness and that "rock" was Jesus."

He is the rock from which the water of life flows.

The "rock" that was smitten for our sins; but, in the smiting of Christ the water of life flows to us today; thus, in the New Testament there is the beautiful invitation for all who are thirsty to come drink.

Jesus gives the final invitation of the book of Revelation 22:17 saying,

"...And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

Jesus said,

"If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink and if you will drink of the water that I give out of your innermost being there will flow rivers of living water."

When the people came a second time to Moses asking for water, after they had been in the wilderness for forty years, Moses was fed up with their complaining.

Moses went in before God and said,

"God I can't take it, I have had it."

God told Moses to speak to the "rock" and it would give forth water; but Moses was angry with the people and he struck the "rock."

This was the reason that Moses was not allowed to enter "the promise land."

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He failed to represent God in the right way at the waters of Meribah.

Once the “rock” was smitten, it didn’t need to be smitten the second time.

Jesus suffered once and for all.

He was that “rock” and Moses destroyed the beautiful symbolism that God was setting up.

All you need to do to receive the water of life is to speak to the rock.

Come to Jesus and ask and you will receive the water of life freely.

Moses paid heavily for that little outburst for he let his arrows fly.

He did not hold his bow in strength.

GEN 49: 25

Even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee

(Joseph was certainly blessed in his posterity.

His tribes were some of the most populous.

In this sense, he received the material blessing, the double portion aspect of the inheritance of the firstborn.)

with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb.

Jacob here blessed Joseph with all the blessings that he himself had received from God.

Now these blessings promised did not partake of the spiritual nature but rather to worldly glory and power.

As often noted, Judah received the spiritual leadership of Israel, and Joseph the political and temporal leadership.

Joseph’s blessings reached their climax in the glory of the northern Israel which were destined to be swallowed up in the Assyrian invasion and destruction of the ten tribes.

This goes without saying that Ephraim and Manasseh became large tribes and Ephraim became a dominant tribe.

GEN 49: 26

The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors

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(Jacob could say this because he was, for much of his life, a scoundrel.

Now at the end of his days, he saw just how good God was to him.

He was forgiven much and loved much as we read in Luke 7:47.)

unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills; they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren.

Jacob's oracle about Joseph concludes in this verse.

In some ways, this strongly resembles the official, formal family blessing handed down from Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob, and now to Joseph.

God's blessings on Jacob are depicted in grand terms.

Depending on the translation, his blessings have been greater than the blessings of his parents or greater than the blessings of his ancestors or perhaps greater than the blessings of "the ancient mountains" themselves.

God had certainly blessed Jacob with more children than either of the two previous generations of his fathers.

Jacob goes on, saying the blessings of his life have been greater even than the bounty or the riches to be found in the "everlasting hills."

The hills of Canaan would have been rich with precious minerals, perhaps, as well as being blessed by God with vegetation in the summer.

With some of his last words, Jacob offers Joseph evidence of God's faithfulness and power: his own life story.

Then Jacob declares these blessings will be on the head of Joseph.

In other words Jacob is placing the family blessing, which is the very blessing of God, on Joseph's head as a crown.

Some translators see Jacob concluding by calling Joseph the "prince among his brothers" (NIV).

Others read the Hebrew to describe Joseph as the one who was "set apart from his brothers" (ESV), referring to his years apart from the family in Egypt.

In either case, the possible use of "prince" did not mean that Joseph's descendants would become royalty over Israel themselves.

That was the destiny of Judah's people (Genesis 49:10).

Instead, it would have been abundantly clear to all gathered around Jacob that he was passing the official blessing to his beloved Joseph.

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GEN 49: 27

Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf;

("A wolf that raveneth ..." Literally, this means, "A wolf, he shall tear in pieces.")

The ferocious nature of this tribe is exemplified in such men as Ehud in Judges 3:15 and the first king of Israel Saul in 1 Samuel 11:6-11.

History tells how fierce the Benjamites were in battle and how that they produced tough fellows who had a reputation for fierceness.

Later we shall see a group of Benjamites very skilful with the sling who fought with David.

Apparently they could split a hair at a hundred yards.

And finely the glory of Benjamites was enhanced forever by one of their sons, Saul of Tarsus, who became the most gifted apostle of the Christian religion.)

in the morning he shall devour the prey,

(To see the great extent of this, look at Ehud in Judges 3:15-23, Saul in 1 Samuel 9:1, 14:47-52, and Paul in Acts 8:1-3.

The cruelty of the tribe in general is seen in Judges 19 and 20.)

and at night he shall divide the spoil.

Now Joseph's prediction was extensive and overwhelmingly positive and yet in contrast, the prediction for Benjamin feels almost like an afterthought, or an anticlimax.

Jacob uses depicts a wolf who hunts, tears, and devours from morning until evening.

This accurately described the tribe of Benjamin after Israel takes control of the Promised Land.

The tribe of Benjamin was associated with Ehud, the judge who graphically assassinated a Moabite king in Judges 3:15, 20-21.

Later in the book of Judges 19:25-27, a Benjaminite city became the site of a heinous atrocity.

The aftermath of this event caused a surprisingly evenly matched civil war between Israel and the tribe of Benjamin in Judges 20.

The most prominent example of this prophecy is Israel's first king, Saul (1 Samuel 9:1-2; 10:1) whom when faced with a rival, exhibited predatory cruelty in 1 Samuel 19:10; 22:17-19, before David became king in 1 Samuel 15:24-28.

GEN 49: 28-29

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All these are the twelve tribes of Israel; and this is it that their father spake unto them, and blessed them; every one according to his blessing he blessed them.

(Jacob's deathbed oracle about the future of his sons' descendants has concluded.

This verse clarifies that the prophecies were Jacob's "blessing" on each of his sons.

Of course, not all these words were positive.

In this context, the "blessing" of a patriarch is more about prediction than about good will.

The intent is to show what will become of the "blessed" son, more so than to confer some benefit.

In that sense, Jacob blessed some of his sons in the same way his father Isaac "blessed" his brother Esau (Genesis 27:38–40).

Jacob delivered to each son exactly what was appropriate for each; that was not necessarily what those sons wanted.

This verse also marks the first time, in Genesis, where Jacob's sons and their offspring are described as the "twelve tribes of Israel" (Genesis 35:10–11).

Now some of the things mentioned regarding these tribes may seem a bit cloudy, but only because we may not know their exact fulfilment until the age to come.

Each son and each tribe that would come from them had their own calling and destiny.

Yet the remarkable promise remained – that they each would survive and grow into significant tribes, without one perishing during the centuries to come in Egypt.)

²⁹And he charged them, and said unto them, I am to be gathered unto my people; bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite.

Jacob was confident that his father Isaac and his grandfather Abraham continued to live in the eternal state, and that he would be gathered to them.

And though he was now in Egypt, he knew he was not an Egyptian.

He was a son of the promise, an heir of God's covenant with Abraham, and he asked to be buried in the land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob by covenant.

GEN 49: 30-31

In the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite for a possession of a burying place.

(Jacob provides very specific directions to the burial cave beginning in the previous verse.

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It is located in the field of Ephron the Hittite at Machpelah, east of Mamre.

He reminds his sons—who have undoubtedly heard this before—that the cave was purchased by their great grandfather Abraham.

It is one of the few places in Canaan that the family already owns, in this case by legal contract (Genesis 23:17–20).

Now this goes without saying that Egypt was filled with magnificent tombs, and because of the respect Jacob had, he could have been buried like a Pharaoh.

But he wanted to be buried in an obscure cave in Canaan, because Canaan was the land of promise.)

³¹There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah.

Here, Jacob drives home the importance of this location.

Both Abraham and Sarah are buried there, as are his own parents Isaac and Rebekah.

In addition, Leah—Jacob's wife and the mother of six of the sons gathered around him—is buried in the cave as well.

GEN 49: 32-33

The purchase of the field and of the cave that is therein was from the children of Heth.

(Further more Jacob reiterates that the cave is the full legal property of his family.)

³³And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons,

(Jacob did not yield up the ghost until he had delivered the last sentence of admonition and benediction to his twelve sons.

He was immortal till his work was done.

So long as God had another sentence to speak by him, death could not paralyze his tongue.

There are said to be three basic attitudes towards death.

- Among the ancient Greeks, they held to what can be called the death-accepting view.
- Our modern world is sold out to a death-denying approach.
- The Biblical approach is the death-defying attitude.)

he gathered up his feet into the bed,

("Gathered up his feet into the bed ...")

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This expression indicates that after Jacob finished blessing his sons, he took his feet up from the floor where he had been sitting on the bed and folded himself up in bed.

He was in the position that is naturally characteristic of one in the process of dying.

The knees were drawn under the chin, and the body took on something of the position occupied within the womb of the mother.

This is an indication that Jacob died shortly after speaking these words.)

and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people.

At 147 years of age, Jacob dies.

The three phrases used here have both literal and figurative aspects.

Jacob anticipates death, experiences it, and transitions into the afterlife.

Though his life was often marked by sorrow and fear (Genesis 47:9), Jacob's deathbed prophecies included assurance that his blessings were mighty "up to the bounties of the everlasting hills" (Genesis 49:26).

He understood his life to have been powerfully and uniquely blessed by the very God of heaven.

Much as this ends the life of the last of the great patriarchs, of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob;

The work and plan of God did not end.

It continued through men and generations to come.

Historically, we have already covered more than half the time from Adam to Christ.

His death was about 2,255 years after Adam, the creation of Adam.

That means we have only 1,600 years or so left until the coming of Christ.

In the book of Genesis, we cover more than half of the history of the Old Testament as far as chronology is concerned.

It is all compressed into the book of Genesis.

From Exodus through to Malachi we will be covering the other 1,600 hundred years.

THE LESSONS WE LEARN FROM THIS STUDY ARE:

1. You are the soil from which a family tree is going to grow. What kind of soil, what kind of foundation, what kind of base, are you providing for the future health of that tree?
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We want to better ourselves, not just for our personal salvation and Christlikeness, but to infuse Jesus into the upbringing of our descendants.

The richer our soil, the healthier (spiritually speaking) our families will be.

Vice versa, if we fail to cultivate the soil of our lives with the presence of Jesus, future generations will suffer the consequences of having to grow up in less-than-ideal conditions.

2. God Will Bless You When You Return to Him and Listen to His Word.

After blessing and adopting Joseph's two sons, Israel gathered his 12 sons to his death bed and then commanded them to "listen" as he prophesied over them.

3. Christ's Blessings of Mercy and Grace.

These first four sons of Leah are listed separately from the other sons in Genesis 29 because they reflected God's mercy and grace upon Jacob's unloved wife Leah.

The next seven sons, whose births are recorded in Genesis 30, reflected the jealous competition between Leah and Rachel.

The first four sons committed terrible sins.

Each received God's mercy and grace.

But, like many believers, each tribe would treat His mercy and grace differently.

Some used His mercy and grace as a license to sin further.

However, the tribes which responded to His mercy and grace by repenting and drawing closer to Him received the greatest blessings.

4. Leah's Fifth and Sixth Sons: The Blessings Through Unity in the Spirit.

They are instead organized according to the birth mother.

He next blessed out of their correct order the final two sons of Leah, Zebulun and Issachar.

Yet, unlike Leah's first four sons, the blessings related to the last two sons did not relate to God's mercy and grace.

Instead, they received the blessings that come from unity in the Spirit.

5. The Sons of the Concubines: The Blessing of God's Spiritual Adoption.

Israel then blessed the four sons of his combines Bilhah and Zilpah, including Dan, Gad, Asher, and Naphtali.

If these children were alive today, they would be considered illegitimate children.

Yet, out of mercy and grace, each was blessed to be included within God's future 12 tribes of Israel.

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These four tribes, however, failed to fully seize the spiritual blessings that God offered.

Like many, they took His mercy and grace for granted.

6. The Sons of Rachel: God Blesses You For Your Faithfulness.

Israel concluded his blessings by blessing the sons of Rachel: Joseph and Benjamin.

Each remained faithful while they were alive.

God is faithful to bless each son for their faithfulness.

Yet, the children of these faithful forefathers failed to live in the same faithfulness of Joseph and Benjamin.

As a result, their tribes eventually lost their blessings.

7. Jesus' Promise to Bless You According Your Faith-Driven Works.

Israel did not merely give a blessing according to the mother of each son.

Instead, he blessed each son according to the future works of each tribe.

8. Jesus' Promise of the Blessing of Eternal Life When You Believe in Him.

In his final request before dying, Israel requested to be buried in the Promised Land with Abraham and Isaac.

We will start from Chapter 50 next week ...

IF YOU HAVEN'T RECEIVED JESUS CHRIST AS YOUR PERSONAL SAVIOUR, I WANT YOU TO PRAY THIS PRAYER WITH ME RIGHT NOW

- Heavenly Father, I realize that I'm a sinner
 - But right now I repent of my sins
 - I make you my Lord
 - I receive the free gift of forgiveness of sin
 - I need you, Jesus
 - Be my savior
 - So right now I declare by faith that I am saved in Jesus' name. Amen & Praise God
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If you just prayed that prayer with me online, please let us know through our website and we shall send you a free eBook as a gift to you today.

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Otherwise, welcome to the family of God. Amen!

LET'S STANDUP FOR THE FINAL BLESSING

Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us:

- Be with you, bless you and keep you
 - May the Lord cause his face to shine upon you and give you peace
 - May your heart be filled with his love
 - May you walk in the spirit
 - May you be strengthened by the work of his Holy spirit in your inner man
 - May you be increased in knowledge and understanding of His word, His will and His purposes for your life that you might walk before the Lord in a way that's pleasing unto him
 - And may God increase your faith and your trust
 - May he work in your life in a beautiful way as he natures you and as he leads you into that path of fellowship with him self
 - May your life be enriched in all things in Christ Jesus
 - And May the Lord and his blessings be upon you while we are absent from each other until we are brought back together again to continue our fellowship and our growing together in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ
 - Amen
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