

## LEAVING A LEGACY – PT. 2 | GENESIS 49 | PASTOR MARK BOFILL | 07/14/2024

\* I. Jacob Blesses His Grandsons (48) | II. Jacob Blesses His Sons (49:1-28)

**INTRO:** In Chapter 48, Jacob blessed Joseph and his grandsons, thus solidifying their place and position within the family of Israel. But before his death, it was important for Jacob to bestow blessings on his sons also; because *as the twelve tribes of Israel*, they would continue the Legacy of his name. Chapter 49 is then a record of Jacob's famous last words...

**II. JACOB BLESSES HIS SONS (GEN 49)** – Jacob knew the importance of **Leaving A Legacy** before he passed, so Jacob **GATHERS HIS SONS to bless them before he dies**. – In a poetic, yet obscure manner, **Jacob pronounces the future history for each son**, which is seemingly based on each person's unique qualities up to that time.

READ

**A. The PATRIARCHAL Blessing (1-2)** – *A patriarch's final blessing was important in biblical times* as a practical matter of inheritance rights. So, all the sons were already in attendance (1). Jacob then instructs them to **"Gather Together,"** and **"Listen"** (i.e., Draw near and Pay attention!)

- Jacob's words would include blessings, curses, and even prophetic statements, which would **"befall them in the Last Days."** (The phase is mentioned 14x's in the OT)
- It's significant that he calls to them as **"Sons of Jacob,"** but his instruction for them is to "Listen to ISRAEL, their father" (2) – i.e., *the one who depends on God to raise up His 12 tribes!*

**B. The PRONOUNCEMENT of Individual Blessings (3-27)** – Reading through each pronouncement reveals that Israel did not follow the actual birth order or his sons, but slightly modified it for some reason. Possibly because the way they gathered around his bedside.

As he begins, **HE PRONOUNCES...** READ

**1. A Final Word To REUBEN (3-4)** – *He was firstborn, but he wavered in righteousness!* – Israel described his natural ability, i.e., **"The Excellency of dignity and the Excellency of power" (3)**, but declares his demise **due to his instability**, **"Unstable as water, you shall not excel" (4a)**.

- In particular **Reuben's sin (4b)**, is referenced in (35:22), where he defiled himself w/Bilhah.
- His actions disgraced his father and his family; thus, he was **disqualified from the birthright blessing**, forfeiting it to Joseph (48:22; 1 Chron 5:1-2).
- **Reuben's sin**, which was **driven by his "LUST," cost him greatly!** It eventually weakened him and his leadership decisions (Gen 42:37), which also *affected his descendants later*.
- **Reuben's descendants:** No record of great leaders in his family, only bad leaders are mentioned. Ironically, the Reubenites questioned the leadership of Moses in (Num 16).

*Hardly a blessing... but he was still Jacob's son, so he was allotted land*

**P/A** – Pursuing sexual desire or lust can hinder or weaken one from becoming a strong leader (cf. Prov 31:3). – **Holiness is important to God, especially in leadership (Lev 10:13)**.

Israel then Pronounced...

READ

**2. A Final Word To SIMEON and LEVI (5-7)** – These brothers are characterized by their **Cruelty and Violence!** – Jacob never forgot how they teamed up to avenge their sister Dinah, violently killing ALL the men of Shechem (34:25). – He also mentions their **ANGER** in which they **"Hamstrung an Ox."** – (Prov 12:10) actually tells us that **"a righteous man regards animals!"**

- **Their Cruelty and Anger had consequences.** – Israel would **NOT** allow his council or honor in their midst, pronouncing that they would be **Divided** and **Scattered** in their future:
- **Simeon** later became a small insignificant tribe (**Num 26:14**) and was later **“Divided”** into Judah territory (**Josh 19:1,9**).
- **Levi** was **“Scattered”** throughout Israel into **48 cities**, never possessing their own land. **By the grace of God**, they eventually obtained a **Privileged Priestly role** (**Deut 33:8-11**).

**P/A** – *Unchecked ANGER and CRUELTY can limit your blessings in life also! (Temperance needed!)*

*Moving on with his pronouncement, Israel speaks... READ*

**3. A Final Word To JUDAH (8-12)** – After a grim start, Israel now speaks blessings of **“Praise”** upon **Judah**. – **PRAISE** among his brothers for his leadership role (8), and **PRAISE** for the kings would come from Judah (**9-10**). – He prophesies that **Judah would have lion-like characteristics, rising up** and **resting in power**. – **640 years later**, David would become king of Judah, then Solomon and their family reign all the way up to the **Rightful Owner of the Scepter!**

- The particular reference is **SHILOH**, i.e. the One who is also known as the **Lion of the Tribe of Judah (Rev 5:5)**, *“the root of David who prevails to open the scroll...”*
- In particular, **Shiloh** is that **One King** would eventually receive *“the obedience of the people” (10)*. – **FACT: When the Roman government prevailed over Israel**, many rabbis hopelessly mourned over Jerusalem declaring, *“Woe unto us, for the scepter has been taken away from Judah, and Shiloh has not come.”* Yet, **God’s Word through Israel had not been broken...** Jesus Christ was born before the scepter was taken away!
- **In (vs.11–12)**, **Israel prophesies of the millennial kingdom to come**, where Shiloh’s people live in abundance. So bountiful... that people will *“tie a donkey to a choice vine and let it eat; everyone will be well and drink wine that is as plentiful as water.”*
- **Judah was truly a blessing...** He would go on to be the largest tribe during Moses’ census in (Num 1:27; 26:22)

**P/A** – *Because we follow Jesus Christ, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, may we pursue a life of PRAISE to God for his marvelous Legacy.*

*Israel then turns to Leah’s Sixth Son, Pronouncing... READ*

**4. A Final Word To ZEBULUN (13)** – *The order* is broken as Zebulun precedes Issachar. – Israel specifically prophesies of Zebulun’s allotted geographical location, as *“Haven by the Sea.”* – The territory between **the Sea of Galilee** and **the Mediterranean Sea**.

- His future allotment did not border any shoreline, but was **blessed with an important trade route**, the **Via Maris**. – Because Trade merchants passed through often, they prospered in doing business with the sea merchants. (*aka, the King’s Highway*)
- **His tribe became a valiant people**. During the time of Judges (**Judges 5:18a**), we’re told that they *risked their lives for their brethren*, even to the point of death.

**P/A** – *Learn to stay within the God ordained BORDERS in life, DO BUSINESS ON THE KING’S HIGHWAY!*

*Israel proceeds to address...Leah’s Fifth Son, Pronouncing... READ*

**5. A Final Word To ISSACHAR (14-15)** – Israel prophesied **prosperity** and **industry** over his...

future allotment, because **it would be a fertile land**. – Issachar’s family would later inherit **lower Galilee**, including the **Valley of Jezreel**, which included rich, productive farmland.

- The phrase **“Strong Donkey,”** can mean they **worked hard** on their land
- **(1 Chron 7:1-5)** tells us that they became **mighty men of Valor**, and in **(1 Chron 12:32)**, they were considered men of **Understanding** and **Action**, during David’s take-over

**P/A – May we too WORK HARD in life, bringing Glory to God and blessing our community.**

Israel then Pronounced...

READ

**6. A Final Word To DAN (16-18)** – His name means **“Judge.”** – He was strong in his early beginnings, but **Dan would later be given over to idolatry**, remembered for his betrayal and rise to prominence as a hub for calf worship in the northern kingdom. – Later, Dan is omitted from the sealed tribe list in **(Rev 7)**.

- **Samson** was a judge who came from the tribe of Dan, **(Judges 13-16)**.
- The **“serpent by the way”** reference **(17)**, speaks of Dan’s cunning and crafty aggression.
- Israel’s exclamation in **(18)**, is an expression of hope in Yahweh! As seen in the word **Salvation!** “yashuw’ ah”, which means **Joshua** or **Jesus**

**P/A – Don’t be given over to IDOLATRY – (Jonah 1:8) “He who regards idols will forsake his own mercy”**

Israel then Pronounced...

READ

**7. A Final Word To GAD (19)** – Ironically his name means **“TROOP.”** – Israel declared that **Gad would be harassed!** – In Joshua’s’ day they settled on the east side of the Trans-Jordan **(Josh 22:1-6)**, thus forcing them to become a **WAR-TRIBE**, which had to defend themselves. – **(1 Chron 5:18; 12:8-15)** tells us that they were **valiant** and **skillful warriors**.

**P/A – May we learn how to DEFEND ourselves from the attacks of our spiritual harassments!**

Israel then Pronounced...

READ

**8. A Final Word To ASHER (20)** – He was also a **son of Zilpah**, whose name meant **“Blessed”** or **“Happy.”** – The prophesied riches Israel pronounced upon him was  tied to their allotment, as the tribe benefitted from its location off the coast, just north of Carmel **(Josh 19:24-31)**.

- They became a **Strong Agri-cultural tribe** and gained **Wealth from olive groves**. Their richness allowed them to provide gourmet delights to the palace.

**P/A – Because of our position in Christ, we too are HAPPY and BLESSED, dwelling securely.**

Israel then Pronounced...

READ

**9. A Final Word To NAPHTALI (21)** – He was a **son of Bilhah**, whose name means **“Wrestling.”** – Israel observed Naphtali’s **deer-like quickness and speed**. – According to **(Judges 4:6)**, this attribute was their military strength. **(Judges 5:18)** tells us that **they willfully jeopardized themselves!**

- The reference to **“beautiful words”** can be tied to **“The Song of Deborah and Barak”** in **(Judges 5)** *i.e.*, **“When leaders lead in Israel, when people offer themselves, Bless the Lord!”**
- Within their allotment is **the Galilee**, where Jesus later ministered **(Matt 4:12-16)**.

**P/A – May we be BRAVE, prepared to come against our spiritual enemies – No weapon formed against you shall prosper (Isa 54:17)**

Israel then Pronounced...

READ

**10. A Final Word To JOSEPH (22-26)** – Joseph was Israel’s favorite son and **blesses him 6x’s** in these few verses. – He called Joseph a **“fruitful bough”** because **his character and his calling as a leader in Egypt (22)**. – *He was fertile and fruitful, like a well-watered tree with branched that extend over wall.* (cf. Psalm 1:1-3)

- Using an **archery metaphor (23)**, Israel **poetically describes** the *bitter suffering* inflicted on Joseph by his brothers, and the *“shots taken”* can refer to the accusations of Potiphar’s wife.
- **Despite the hardship (24)**, *“his bow remained in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong,”* because **“The Mighty God of Jacob,” El Shaddai Elohim**, the **Almighty Creator, Strengthened him!**
- Israel then pronounced **God’s FUTURE Help and Blessings on Joseph (25-26a)** – In terms of his descendants, **Joseph was undoubtedly blessed**. Some of his tribes were the most populated. – He so benefited from the material blessing of the firstborn’s inheritance!
- The expansive blessings bestowed on Joseph **(26b)** was like a **“Crown on his head,”** **because he was separate from his brothers** (i.e. Joseph endured through it all!)

P/A – *As Joseph, may the Blessings of ABUNDANCE be upon us as we too seek to walk in INTEGRITY.*

Israel concluded his Pronouncement with... READ

**11. A Final Word To BENJAMIN (27)** – Even though he was a favored son, **Israel did not have much to say about Benjamin**. – Israel calls him a **“Ravenous Wolf,”** foretelling that he would become a tribe with a reputation for fierceness. – Benjamin’s tribe would produce **many military leaders in Israel**, including Ehud, King Saul, and Jonathan, who would exhibit strong, combative personalities (Judges 5:14; 20:16; 1 Chron 8:40; 2 Chron 14:8; 17:17).

- Much later, in (Judges 19-20) we learn that **Benjamin’s Ravenous Spirit** was **almost wiped out in a civil war with all of Israel, at Gibeah**.

P/A – *It’s okay to be possess a fierce spirit but be sure that you are filled with the Holy Spirit who will lead you a guide you in a way that’s pleasing to our heavenly Father!*

And finally, we learn of...

READ

**C. The PERMANENCE Of Israel’s Blessings (28)** – *Moses, writes a summary statement of the Israel’s prophetic blessings to his sons*. – He first clarifies that **the number of tribes are TWELVE**, not thirteen or fourteen (28a), he then confirms that these are the specific blessings uttered by Israel, for each son specifically.

- Later, the writer of Hebrews confirms that Israel’s Patriarchal Blessings was spoken as an act of faith. **“By faith Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, bowing in worship over the head of his staff” (Heb. 11:20–21).**

P/A - *Jacob’s blessings to his sons emphasize the significance of recognizing individual roles and destinies*. He understood the importance of **Leaving A Legacy** as God would have it, because **the whole book of Genesis speaks of God’s desire to Bless Humankind**. Specifically, to BLESS the families of those who call upon his name. Ultimately, we are blessed In Jesus Christ, but are we seeking to be a blessing to others? **This is how to leave a legacy...be a blessing!** – **If there’s time, Read the Be-attitudes (Matt 5:3-12)**