

Turn in your Bibles tonight to Genesis Chapter 49 and we will be looking at verses 1 through 27. What we are continuing to see are the last words of Jacob before he dies. Jacob is 147 years old, and we saw in Chapter 47 verse 29, that he calls Joseph to his himself and asks him to not bury him in Egypt but take his body and bury him back in Canaan where Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah, and Leah are buried.

Last week we saw Jacob bless his two grandsons, Manasseh and Ephraim. Tonight, we see that Jacob now calls all his sons before them.

Genesis 49:1-2

¹ Then Jacob called his sons and said, “Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you what shall happen to you in days to come. ² “Assemble and listen, O sons of Jacob, listen to Israel your father.

Through the 12 sons of Jacob the Nation of Israel is birthed. Each of these 12 sons will father a tribe that becomes known as the 12 tribes of Israel. Israel meaning God Prevails!

Look at this map and you will see how the allotment of land is dispersed for each tribe once they enter the promised land.



It is through these sons that begins the nation that God uses to show his Glory, Power, Faithfulness, Justice, and he is the only true God and the only way for salvation.

What Jacob shares with each son is a prophetic word from God. In Jacob’s words we will see blessings, a curse, promises and consequences that come from if a son continues on their path of what their character has led them so far.

We see Jacob speak to the future of each tribe that comes from his sons and we will see how those prophecies come to fruition as the nation of Israel grows.

Jacob begins his words by speaking to all six sons birthed by Leah. Then he bounces back and forth between the sons birthed to him by Bilhah, the concubine given to Jacob by Rachael, and Zilpah, the concubine given to Jacob by Leah, and then Jacob finishes by speaking to his last two sons, Joseph and Benjamin, birthed by his beloved Rachael.

First up, Reuben!

Genesis 49:3-4

³ “Reuben, you are my firstborn, my might, and the firstfruits of my strength, preeminent in dignity and preeminent in power. ⁴ Unstable as water, you shall not have preeminence, because you went up to your father's bed; then you defiled it—he went up to my couch!”

Reuben, being the first born is the one that should have received the double portion that comes due the eldest son. Things started out pretty good for Reuben! Preeminent in dignity and in power! Wow! Reuben had to be feeling pretty good at that point.

Then, a sin that he might have thought was hidden was not hidden at all.

Numbers 32:23

²³ But if you will not do so, behold, you have sinned against the Lord, and be sure your sin will find you out.

In Genesis 35:22 it records that Reuben lay with Bilhah, his father's concubine. And Israel, Jacob had heard of it. But nowhere in Scripture does it record that Jacob said anything to Reuben. When this act took place, it was shortly after the time that Jacob's beloved Rachael died giving birth to Benjamin. A time that Jacob was in great grief. He doesn't get comforted by his eldest son, he is betrayed.

Because of this act of sexual immorality his preeminence has been taken away. Reuben was the oldest, he was to lead in dignity and power but instead was unstable, looking out for himself. This is where the character of Reuben is prophesied about and seen even in the future of the tribe of Reuben.

In Numbers 16, Dathan and Abiram, rose up in opposition to Moses and challenged his authority, were part of what is called Korah's rebellion. Korah, a Levite, led this rebellion. But these three men and their families were destroyed as they ultimately went against God, not just Moses and Aaron. Also, 250 other men that joined their rebellion died as well.

Our hidden sins, or at least we may think it is hidden, no sin is hidden for God sees it all. These so-called hidden sins can affect other people as we lure them into our schemes of sin. It can affect our relationships. It affects our relationship with the Lord because he can't bless sin in our lives.

Proverbs 28:13

¹³ Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy.

Next up, Simeon and Levi!

Genesis 49:5-7

⁵ “Simeon and Levi are brothers; weapons of violence are their swords. ⁶ Let my soul come not into their council; O my glory, be not joined to their company. For in their anger they killed men, and in their willfulness they hamstrung oxen. ⁷ Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce, and their wrath, for it is cruel! I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel.

We see here Simeon and Levi are linked together. In Chapter 34, while the family was in Shechem, a man named Shechem, defiled, raped their sister Dinah. Jacob didn't appear like he was going to do anything. The brothers were furious. Even though Shechem came back to ask to marry Dinah, that was like insult upon insult. So, Simeon and Levi devised a plan.

That Shechem and all the men of Shechem be circumcised and while they were healing, Simeon and Levi go in and kill all the men by their swords.

Jacob hears of this, and he is angry with them, and he says, "What have you done to me, we are few in number and if other nations want to take revenge they could!" The boys say, "Should he treat our sister like a prostitute?" And the Chapter ended right there.

But weren't they right in defending their sister? My goodness, go back and see what happened to her and how she was abused and then really treated her as a commodity in a way by Shechem that he could somehow just purchase her and take her as a wife.

The brothers had a right to defend their sister, Right? Should justice have been served upon Shechem? Sure! They didn't have the right to murder innocent men that did not have anything to do with the despicable act. They didn't have the right to take what was not theirs. They didn't have the right to hamstring these oxen. Hey, Levi! Let's hamstring all these oxen and make them worthless to everyone! Yeah! That's a good idea.

Acting in anger can make us do very foolish, not so smart things!

Now, there is a righteous anger that can be displayed, but again in the right way.

In Ephesians Chapter 4 where the Apostle Paul is writing about how a new self is to be lived out in our following the Lord Jesus Christ, the Word of God says this about anger.

Ephesians 4:26

²⁶ Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷ and give no opportunity to the devil.

Do we have examples of righteous anger displayed in the Bible? Sure, anything God did! Did Jesus show righteous anger? When? Cleaning out the temple, twice!

We should be angry as we continue to see Satan deceive so many that are so obstinate to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We should be angry when Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is blasphemed, maligned, used as a way to sin and to condone sin. But it is an anger that leads us to prayer, it is an anger that leads us to love the person so much we tell them about what Jesus Christ did for the sin they so desperately need to repent of.

Even in these verses we see that Jacob says, "Cursed be their anger and their wrath!" Explaining what? There are consequences to our sin and if this behavior continues it will have a generational affect and so it was. Though the tribe of Levi become the priests, they are given no land of their own but were given cities within the other tribes territory, Joshua 21.

In Numbers 26, there is another census of the tribes and the tribe of Simeon ended up being the smallest of all the tribes. In Deuteronomy Chapter 33, when Moses gave his final blessing upon the tribes before his death, the tribe of Simeon was not even mentioned. Then eventually the tribe of Simeon is absorbed into the tribe of Judah as the promised land is divided out.

So, it came to fruition, as prophesied. As tribes, Simeon and Levi were separated, and they ended up scattered throughout the land promised to the Israelites. Look at our map again and you see this indicated in the map.



You see Simeon absorbed into the tribe of Judah and Levi is not give a specific area because of them being priests and will be placed through the land in each tribe.

Next up, Judah!

Genesis 49:8-12

8 “Judah, your brothers shall praise you; your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; your father's sons shall bow down before you. 9 Judah is a lion's cub; from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He stooped down; he crouched as a lion and as a lioness; who dares rouse him? 10 The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples. 11 Binding his foal to the vine and his donkey's colt to the choice vine he has washed his garments in wine and his vesture in the blood of grapes. 12 His eyes are darker than wine, and his teeth whiter than milk.

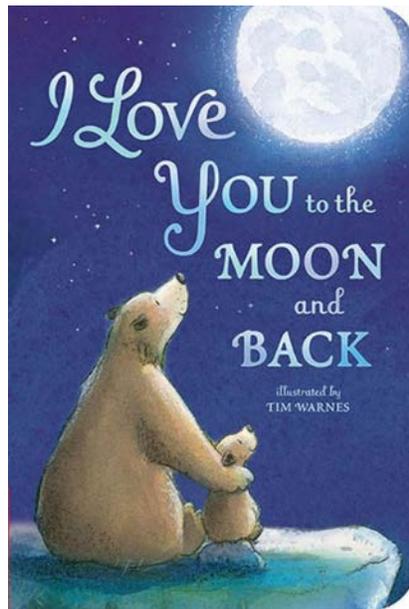
Unlike Judah’s three older brothers, his sins were not mentioned. So, let’s not mention them now. What we saw in Judah’s life is true repentance. We saw that, ***“If anyone be in Christ, they are a new creation, the old has passed away, behold the new has come!”***

With his sins not being mentioned we see in true repentance the expression of God’s mercy on full display just as it says in Psalm 103 verses 11-13.

Psalm 103:11-13

11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; 12 as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us. 13 As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him.

There is a saying I hear from time to time, and I think they have made pillows, pictures, and t-shirts with this saying and there is even a book written, I love you to the Moon and back! Here is a picture of the book.



Well, the moon is 238,900 miles from the earth. So, if we go to the moon and back that is 477,800 miles. Pastor Dale you are being too literal here. That saying is an expression of how undying our love is for someone and that we will love them indefinitely. Okay, I'll give you that.

Even with that statement, our human love cannot even come close in comparison of God's love for us. In Psalm 103 the Hebrew word for heavens is, *shawmahyim*, and is plural, which would include all that we see in the sky and beyond up to God's abode in heaven.

God's love and mercy is so great that it draws us to a point of fear and reverence before him that our understanding of how our wicked, evil sin separates us from him, and we come to a point of repentance and calling out to God to save our souls.

What does he do with our sin when we come to that point of our lives?

As far from is the east is from the west, he removes them! How far is that? Look at this little video.

If you or I were to start walking east, and we end up at the ocean and we swim the Atlantic Ocean, the walk across England, swim the English Channel, walk across Europe through Russia, into China, swim the South China Sea to the Philippines, walk across the Philippines and swim to the Pacific Ocean all the way to the coast of California and walk to the church here, and start over again. When do I ever begin going west?

Never!!!

This shows how great God's mercy and love is toward us and how gracious his salvation is to those that repent and surrender their life to the Lord Jesus. These verses are a great reminder of God's mercy!

Romans 5:6-8

⁶ For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— ⁸ but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

It was Judah that gave an example of this when the sons of Jacob needed to go back to Egypt and take Benjamin with them, as Jacob protested vehemently to not allow them to do so. It was Judah who stepped up and said:

Father, with my own life will I exchange mine for his, a ransom, a pledge, so that he could return safely back to you!

Judah, with his true repentance, now has become the son that will have preeminence in dignity and power and will be the tribe that seeks the Lord more than the others. When the Nation of Israel was split between two kingdoms because of disobedience, it was the tribe of Judah that followed after the house of David in obedience to follow the Word of God, the Levitical law.

We saw the description of the power with which the tribe of Judah would lead, as Judah was described as a lion's cub. Also, that the lion is considered King of the Beasts, therefore, showing that kings would come through the line of Judah and then ultimately the King of all Kings, the promised messiah would come.

Why was the nation of Israel specifically chosen to be God's people?

God was using them to show the rest of the world his Holiness, Power, Love, Mercy, Faithfulness, Salvation through his mercy and grace. Through the Nation of Israel, beginning really with Adam in the Garden the Messiah that would give his life as a ransom, a pledge so that all that come to repentance will return safely back to God.

You see there is another son that said to a father, I will give my life so that others can return to you safely.

Matthew 20:28

²⁸ Even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.

John 10:17-18

¹⁷ For this reason the Father loves me, because, I lay down my life that I may take it up again. ¹⁸ No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I received from my Father.

It is through the line, L-I-N-E of Judah, that the lion, L-I-O-N of Judah would come.

Verse 10 gives prophecy of the Messiah to come. Look at the verse again.

Genesis 49:10

¹⁰ The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him, and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.

Kings would come and go through the history of Judah, beginning with David and through Zedekiah who was the last king of Judah. When the kingdom of Israel was divided the northern kingdom was eventually taken over by Assyria and brought into Assyrian captivity, Judah was protected by the Lord. Even though they had kings that would follow the Lord and other kings that did not.

The kingship as depicted by the scepter will never leave Judah, the authority to rule will come from the lineage as the ruler's staff will never leave the line of Judah. The word tribute in that verse is also translated as Shiloh. This once again is a messianic prophecy of the one who takes all authority and will rule forever.

The prophecy would be fulfilled through Jesus Christ, when he would one day take that scepter and sit on the throne and rule and all people will one day acknowledge and bow before Jesus and proclaim that he is King of Kings and Lord of Lords!

In Hebrews 1:8-9 the kingdom is described as one that is eternal and just.

Hebrews 1:8-9

8 But of the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom. 9 You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions."

There are a few more sons to cover, so for the sake of time I am going to cover several at one time because these are prophecies that will happen within the tribes that come from each son.

Genesis 49:13-21

13 "Zebulun shall dwell at the shore of the sea; he shall become a haven for ships, and his border shall be at Sidon. 14 "Issachar is a strong donkey, crouching between the sheepfolds. 15 He saw that a resting place was good, and that the land was pleasant, so he bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant at forced labor. 16 "Dan shall judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel. 17 Dan shall be a serpent in the way, a viper by the path, that bites the horse's heels so that his rider falls backward. 18 I wait for your salvation, O Lord. 19 "Raiders shall raid Gad but he shall raid at their heels. 20 "Asher's food shall be rich, and he shall yield royal delicacies. 21 "Naphtali is a doe let loose that bears beautiful fawns.

Look at our map again!



What we see is the land that was divided out by lot for each tribe. Remember these prophecies of Jacob are even before how the allotment of land was described by God to Moses and implemented by Joshua.

With Zebulun, as you look at the map you will see this tribe indicated by the purple, the prophecy says they will dwell by the shore of the sea. Well, it is obvious they are not boarded by the sea, but they are in an area that they

become an important thoroughfare between the Sea of Galilee on the West and the Mediterranean Sea on the East. As time went by, many Zebulunites migrate up to Sidon near the Mediterranean Sea.

Issachar is a strong donkey. A donkey being referred to as a beast of burden. As you look at the map, you see the tribe of Issachar indicated in red. The verses said they were crouching between two sheepfolds, or translated as saddlebags, but also burdens, which would be a burden a donkey would carry as they labored.

Picture a donkey with a load heaped on their back, strong and not concerned with the burden but willing to work hard. Issachar was located between two mountains, Mount Tabor to the north and Mount Gilboa to the south, and the water that would run from these mountains kept this land fertile for farming.

Dan shall judge his people. After Joshua died, the Israelites went through a time where they were led by judges. There was one very prominent judge that was a Danite, and when I say his name, you will know the name very well. Samson.

Also, the tribe of Dan is described as a serpent, viper by the path. This comes from the tribe being conniving in several instances. Primarily in Judges 17-18, where they convince Levite, who was a priest to one man, named Micah, to be a priest of a tribe and not just one man. So, they take the priest and his idols and then they go and attack a unsuspecting, mild mannered city called Laish. They killed everyone, burned the city to the ground and then rebuilt it and called the city, Dan. The tribe of Dan also became an idolatrous tribe, rejecting God Almighty.

Jacob pauses for a moment and seems to say something that is out of place. This is God's Word, and nothing is ever out of place. Look at verse 18 again.

Genesis 49:18

¹⁸ I wait for your salvation, O Lord.

There are a couple rules of thought here as I studied. One is that after the prophecy of Dan and the future that is shown, Jacob enters into this prayer for the nation and their hope is not in the abundance of land or crop or herds that they may have but their hope is solely in the Lord.

The other is that Jacob is tired. He is going to die soon, and he sees for himself his only hope is in Jehovah! Jacob, is ready to go home!

In essence we all have death that awaits us, but we too, can pause and say, "I wait for your salvation, O Lord!"

You see our salvation does not come to full completion until our death and our souls go home to be with the Lord or when Jesus raptures us unto himself. Even so Lord, come quickly!

Jacob gets going back at it! Now, remember Jacob's sons are all before him. He is speaking to each of them. And now he gets to Gad, Asher, and Naphtali.

Gad would be in constant battle as they would be raided but they were strong and valiant in battle. Asher's land would be fertile for growing crops and they would be scrumptious enough fit for a king. Naphtali would also have military prowess and also had a land that produced an abundance of crop. Now, we get to Jacob's beloved sons of Rachael, Joseph and Benjamin.

Genesis 49:22-26

²² "Joseph is a fruitful bough, a fruitful bough by a spring; his branches run over the wall. ²³ The archers bitterly attacked him, shot at him, and harassed him severely, ²⁴ yet his bow remained unmoved; his

arms were made agile by the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob (from there is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel),²⁵ by the God of your father who will help you, by the Almighty who will bless you with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that crouches beneath, blessings of the breasts and of the womb.²⁶ The blessings of your father are mighty beyond the blessings of my parents, up to the bounties of the everlasting hills. May they be on the head of Joseph, and on the brow of him who was set apart from his brothers.²⁷ “Benjamin is a ravenous wolf, in the morning devouring the prey and at evening dividing the spoil.”

I am going to start with Benjamin. Benjamin is described as a ravenous wolf. The tribe of Benjamin would become fierce warriors, fighting in many battles. They were the only other tribe to align with the tribe of Judah when the kingdom was split in North and South. From the tribe of Benjamin, would come Israel’s first king, King Saul. Also, from the tribe of Benjamin would come another man named Saul, whose name would be changed to Paul, and God would use this man to write 14 of the 27 books of the New Testament.

We have detailed Joseph’s life quite thoroughly over the past four months. Jacob in his prophecy and blessing of Joseph, describes the trials and tribulations of Joseph with descriptions of being attacked with having arrows shot at him, harassed severely.

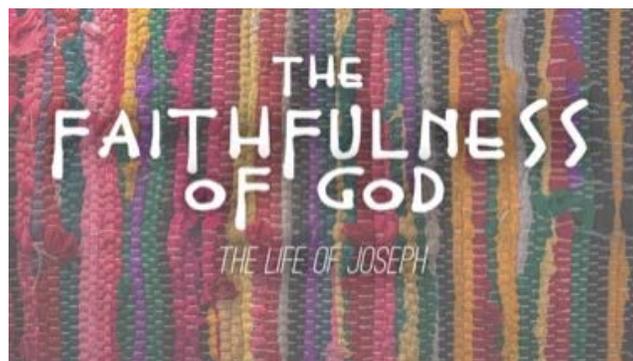
We learned because of the favoritism shown by Jacob to Joseph, Joseph’s own brothers hated him. To the point of contemplating murder, but they threw him into a pit instead, sold into slavery, wrongfully accused of a crime, thrown into prison again.

Jacob details two things. Joseph’s faith and trust in God and the fact that even in the deepest times of his life, as Jacob uses 4 names in reference to God, the Mighty One, the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel, the Almighty, God’s love and favor was upon Joseph.

As this Chapter is called at times, Jacob Blesses his Sons, the word bless or blessing was not used by Jacob until he came to Joseph. Jacob used that word, 6 times. Though Rueben was the oldest and Judah has become preeminent to the point that the savior of the world would come through Judah’s line.

Joseph receives the double blessing here that is supposed to be given to the oldest son, the first born, and Joseph is recognized as the son to lead the family. God was faithful to Joseph to fulfill all his promises given to Joseph.

That is what we have been trying to detail throughout this whole study. Look at this image we began with.



God is faithful! God in his providence will fulfill his will in every life on this earth whether the person repents of their sin and surrender their life to the Lord Jesus, or they don’t and in their pride and obstinance reject his offer of mercy, grace and forgiveness.

God’s providential will is going to take place in each of these 12 men that will begin the nation of Israel. This begins with the last words of Jacob as Jacob would next tell his sons where to bury him and then he would die.

God had given Jacob an insight into the future of his children and their descendants. Some glorious, that would show a faithfulness to God. What Jacob was shown also shows an unfaithfulness of his children to God as well.

As parents we are given a glorious privilege of raising our children. We start out understanding from Psalm 127 verse 3.

Psalm 127:3

³ Behold children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward.

We are only borrowing them for a little while. As parents we have a task at hand. Ephesians 6:4 says:

Ephesians 6:4

⁴ Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

How do we do that? Well, we can take the command that Moses gave the nation of Israel in Deuteronomy Chapter 6 in what is called the Shema. We can take that as a precept to follow for ourselves to diligently teach the Word of God to our children.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

⁴ "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. ⁵ You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. ⁶ And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. ⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. ⁸ You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹ You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Parents what we are to be is faithful to the call on our lives. We cannot and do not determine the outcome. We want what is best for our children, don't we? The greatest desire we should have is that they would come to repentance of their sins and surrender their lives to the Lord Jesus. We need to teach, love, pray, and we probably need to shed some tears along the way as we ask God to work in their lives. One day as they grow up and mature, we will have to let them learn the hard way sometimes and soon they will leave the nest and we have to trust in God's divine providence in their lives.

That's just it everyone! God is in control! God's divine providence will come to fruition as promised in his Word. As God is faithful may we be faithful to honor the Lord Jesus in all we do.