LESSON 11

Jacob's Blessings

The scepter will not depart from Judah or the staff from between his feet until he whose right it is comes and the obedience of the peoples belongs to him.

— Genesis 49:10

Jacob tells every son the truth about his past, and then he hands the scepter to the brother who once priced Joseph at twenty pieces of silver.

Introduction

JACOB IS DYING, AND HE KNOWS IT. He's a hundred and forty-seven (47:28). His eyes are going (48:10). The seventeen good years in Goshen have run out, and the man who spent most of his life getting things by grabbing has nothing left to grab. All he has left is words. He has two chapters' worth of them.

This family has been here before. In chapter 27, an old man with failing eyes sat in his tent to give a blessing, and the younger son walked out with what belonged to the older. That younger son was Jacob. He got it with a goat, a borrowed garment, and a lie told to his blind father's face (27:9–24). Now he's the blind father. Two young men are standing in front of him, and one of them is about to receive what every custom in the ancient world says belongs to the other.

Then he calls in all twelve.

Fathers in Genesis bless at the end. Isaac did. Jacob's sons expect a blessing too, and the last verse says that's what they got: *he blessed each one with a suitable blessing* (49:28). Read the verses in between, though, and some of them don't sound like blessings at all. Reuben hears about his father's bed. Simeon and Levi hear about Shechem. Things this family hasn't talked about in decades come out in front of everybody.

And the brightest words in the chapter go to Judah. That's the Judah who said *let's sell him* (37:27). He's the one who walked away from his brothers and then couldn't be bothered to keep his word to a widow (chapter 38).

How does a man like that end up holding the scepter? Genesis doesn't answer that in a verse. It takes two chapters, and they start at a sickbed.

Sitting Up in Bed (48:1–12)

Some time after this, Joseph was told, "Your father is weaker." Joseph takes his two sons and goes.

Somebody tells the old man who's at the door, and *Israel summoned his strength and sat up in bed.* Bethel, the ladder, the wrestling match at the Jabbok: Hebrews passes over all of it and picks this scene as the act that sums up Jacob's faith. *By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph* (Hebrews 11:21).

The first thing he talks about is God. *God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me.* God Almighty is El Shaddai, the covenant name God gave Abraham (17:1). Luz is Bethel, where God promised to make Jacob *fruitful and numerous* and to give the land *as a permanent possession* (35:9–15).

Then he does something with that promise.

Your two sons born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt are now mine. Ephraim and Manasseh belong to me just as Reuben and Simeon do.

It's an adoption. Two grandsons step up beside the two oldest boys in the house, and Joseph's line will carry two tribes into the land instead of one. Centuries later the Chronicler sums it up in a sentence: Reuben *was the firstborn, but his birthright was given to the sons of Joseph* (1 Chronicles 5:1).[160]

Then, in the middle of the legal business, Rachel.

When I was returning from Paddan, to my sorrow Rachel died along the way. He buried her *along the way to Ephrath*, a roadside grave outside Bethlehem.

Nobody asked. He's adopting her grandsons, and suddenly he's back on that road with his wife's body. Kidner calls it a sudden faltering. Maybe that's why he gave Rachel's son a double share. Maybe an old man just misses his wife. Genesis doesn't say which.[161]

When Israel saw Joseph's sons, he said, "Who are these?"

Hold that question up beside another one. A blind father in chapter 27 asked, *Who are you, my son?* (27:18), and he got a lie for an answer. This time he gets the truth. *They are my sons God has given me here.* They aren't toddlers. Do the math and they're young men, twenty or close to it. Jacob pulls them to his knees anyway, kisses them, and holds on. *I never expected to see your face again, but now God has even let me see your offspring.*[162]

Twenty-two years he mourned a son who wasn't dead. Now he has that son's sons on his knees.

Then *Joseph took them from his father's knees and bowed with his face to the ground.*

Read that beside 37:10. *Am I and your mother and your brothers really going to come and bow down to the ground before you?* Jacob asked a seventeen-year-old. At the end of chapter 47 Jacob bowed at the head of his bed (47:31). Now the second most powerful man in Egypt has his face in the dirt in front of his father. The dreams came true. They never made Joseph too big to bow.

Crossed Hands (48:13–22)

Watch Jacob's hands in verses 13 and 14 and notice whose head gets the right one.

Joseph has it all arranged. Ephraim goes toward his father's left hand, Manasseh toward his right. The firstborn lines up under the right hand, where he belongs. Hughes counts *right* and *left* seven times in two verses. Joseph cares about this.

But Israel stretched out his right hand and put it on the head of Ephraim, the younger, and crossing his hands, put his left on Manasseh's head, although Manasseh was the firstborn.

The right hand lands on Ephraim. It shouldn't surprise Joseph. Back in verse 5 his father said *Ephraim and Manasseh*, younger first.[163]

Before anyone can object, the blessing comes, and almost all of it is about God.

The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day, the angel who has redeemed me from all harm — may he bless these boys.

Every line is a memory. The God who *has been my shepherd* is named by a man who kept Laban's flocks for twenty years through heat and frost (31:38–40), living now in a country where shepherds are detestable (46:34). It's the first place in the Bible where anyone calls God a shepherd. David will pick it up: *The Lord is my shepherd; I have what I need* (Psalm 23:1). And *the angel who has redeemed me* sends us back to the river where Jacob wrestled until daybreak and limped away saying, *I have seen God face to face* (32:30).[164]

Then Joseph sees where the right hand is. *He thinks it's a mistake.* The CSB's footnote gives the literal sense: it was bad in his eyes. He takes hold of his father's hand to move it. *Not that way, my father! This one is the firstborn. Put your right hand on his head.*

He's correcting his father in front of his own sons, and Hughes hears exasperation in it. There's something almost funny about it, too. Of all the men in Genesis, Joseph is the last one who ought to be defending the rights of the firstborn. He wore the coat. He had the dreams. Ten older brothers hated him for it.

But his father refused and said, "I know, my son, I know!"

He knows. He's blind, and he's dying, and he knows exactly which head is under which hand. The last time a blessing jumped over a firstborn in this family, the blind man was fooled. This blind man isn't. *He too will become a tribe, and he too will be great; nevertheless, his younger brother will be greater than he.*

Genesis has been doing this since Abel's offering was accepted over Cain's. Isaac over Ishmael. Jacob over Esau. Joseph over ten older brothers. Now Ephraim over Manasseh, with a blessing Israel would speak over its sons for generations: *May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh.* God keeps choosing the one custom wouldn't, and Jacob of all people knows it.[165]

There's a word for Joseph alone, too. *Look, I am about to die, but God will be with you and will bring you back to the land of your fathers.* That's God's own promise, heard at Bethel on the way out and at Beersheba on the way down, and both times the CSB uses the same words: *I will bring you back* (28:15; 46:4). The family went down. For the first time since they came, somebody says out loud that they're going back up.

And a gift: *the one mountain slope that I took from the Amorites with my sword and bow.* Genesis never tells us about that fight. The word for *slope* is also the name of a town, and the CSB's footnote names it: Shechem. Centuries later Joseph's bones will be buried there (Joshua 24:32).[166]

Turbulent as Water (49:1–7)

Then Jacob called his sons and said, "Gather around, and I will tell you what will happen to you in the days to come."

Twelve grown men around one bed. Some of them have grandchildren. All of them know what they've done, and so does he.

Mark which sons are rebuked instead of blessed. There are three of them, and they're the three oldest.

Reuben is first, and for one verse it sounds wonderful. *Reuben, you are my firstborn, my strength and the firstfruits of my virility, excelling in prominence, excelling in power.* Then it caves in. *Turbulent as water, you will not excel, because you got into your father's bed and you defiled it.*

Genesis reported that sin in one flat sentence and moved on. *Reuben went in and slept with his father's concubine Bilhah, and Israel heard about it* (35:22). Israel heard, and as far as Genesis tells us, he said nothing. Decades of saying nothing. Now he says it in front of all of them, and halfway through the sentence he quits talking to Reuben and starts talking about him: *he got into my bed.* Kidner calls the turn a gesture of revulsion. It's a father looking away from his son.

Turbulent water goes wherever it's pushed, and that's Reuben all through this story. He planned to rescue Joseph and wasn't there when it counted (37:22, 29). He meant well, and it never added up to much. No judge, prophet, or king ever came from his tribe.[167]

Then *Simeon and Levi are brothers; their knives are vicious weapons.*

That's Shechem, chapter 34. The brothers talked a whole town into circumcision, and while the men were still in pain, these two walked in and killed every one of them. When it happened, Jacob's complaint was about himself: *You have brought trouble on me, making me odious to the inhabitants of the land* (34:30). Not a word about the dead.

He's had a long time to think about it since.

May I never enter their council; may I never join their assembly. For in their anger they kill men, and on a whim they hamstring oxen. Their anger is cursed, for it is strong, and their fury, for it is cruel!

Look at what he curses: their anger and their fury. He's still their father. Genesis told chapter 34 without a word of comment, and readers sometimes take that silence for approval. Kidner says this verse settles it. The narrator was holding his tongue the whole time.

I will disperse them throughout Jacob and scatter them throughout Israel. Both tribes were scattered. Simeon all but vanished inside Judah's territory. Levi got no land at all and became the tribe of priests, spread through all Israel to serve at its altar. Same sentence, two very different endings.[168]

The Lion of Judah (49:8–12)

So, the three oldest are passed over, and the fourth son steps up.

Anybody who's been reading Genesis ought to be a little uneasy. Judah is the one who sat eating a few feet from his brother's pit and asked, *What do we gain?* (37:26). He broke his word to his own daughter-in-law, and it took her trick to make him admit it: *She is more in the right than I* (38:26).

He's also the man who stood before an Egyptian governor and said, *Now please let your servant remain here as my lord's slave, in place of the boy* (44:33). More than twenty years lie between *let's sell him* and *in place of the boy*, and Genesis shows us enough of the road to believe it.

Judah, your brothers will praise you. Leah named him for praise (29:35), and now his father plays on the name. *Your hand will be on the necks of your enemies; your father's sons will bow down to you.*

There's the bowing again. The dreams that made the brothers hate Joseph were dreams about bowing, and Joseph got his bows (42:6; 43:26; 44:14). Now Jacob turns the bowing toward Judah, in nearly the words Isaac spoke over Jacob himself: *may your mother's sons bow in homage to you* (27:29). Joseph gets

the birthright. Judah gets the throne. The Chronicler keeps both straight: *Although Judah became strong among his brothers and a ruler came from him, the birthright was given to Joseph* (1 Chronicles 5:2).[169]

Judah is a young lion — my son, you return from the kill. He crouches; he lies down like a lion or a lioness — who dares to rouse him?

Now the verse this whole lesson leans on.

The scepter will not depart from Judah or the staff from between his feet until he whose right it is comes and the obedience of the peoples belongs to him.

A scepter belongs in a king's hand. It'll stay in Judah's until someone comes, and when he comes, it's his. The line about his coming is one of the hardest in Genesis to translate, and the CSB's footnote lists three other ways to take it. The reading the CSB prints makes it a person, the one the scepter has belonged to all along. That's how the oldest Jewish interpreters heard it, and the earliest Christians after them.[170]

And when he comes, Judah's brothers aren't the only ones who answer to him. *The obedience of the peoples belongs to him.* Peoples. Nations.

Jacob describes that King's reign, and it's almost giddy. *He ties his donkey to a vine, and the colt of his donkey to the choice vine. He washes his clothes in wine and his robes in the blood of grapes. His eyes are darker than wine, and his teeth are whiter than milk.*

Nobody ties a donkey to a grapevine unless there are vines to spare. Nobody does laundry in wine unless there's more wine than water. It's deliberately the language of excess, as Kidner puts it.

Hold one more thing loosely. The last time anyone in this family dipped a garment in something red, it was Joseph's robe in goat's blood (37:31), and Judah was there. Now Judah's King washes his robes in the blood of grapes. Genesis doesn't draw that line for us. Notice it, and leave it there.[171]

A Fruitful Vine (49:13–28)

The rest come quickly. Zebulun by the sea. Issachar, who likes his pleasant land so well that *he leaned his shoulder to bear a load and became a forced laborer*. Dan, who *will judge his people* and *will be a snake by the road*.

And right there, between Dan and Gad, Jacob stops blessing anybody and prays.

I wait for your salvation, Lord.

It comes out of nowhere. Maybe the snake biting at the horse's heels put him in mind of his own name, the heel-grabber (25:26). Genesis doesn't explain. Kidner points out something easy to miss, though. From chapter 40 to the end of the book, God's covenant name, the one the CSB prints as Lord in small capitals, appears exactly once. It's here, in a dying man's sigh.[172]

Then Gad, Asher, Naphtali. Then Joseph.

Which son gets the longest word? Count the verses and it's a tie, five for Judah (49:8–12) and five for Joseph (49:22–26). Count the words and Joseph edges it, in the CSB and in the Hebrew alike. The brother who was sold and the brother who thought up the sale get more than a third of the poem between them.

Joseph is a fruitful vine, a fruitful vine beside a spring; its branches climb over the wall. Ephraim's name is in it. Joseph named that boy for fruitfulness, because, he said, *God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction* (41:52).

The hard years come next, in a soldier's picture. *The archers attacked him, shot at him, and were hostile toward him. Yet his bow remained steady.* Jacob doesn't name the archers. He doesn't need to. Some of them are standing around the bed.

And God's names pour out: *the Mighty One of Jacob, the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel, the God of your father, the Almighty*. That last one is El Shaddai again, and this time it comes loaded: *blessings of the heavens above, blessings of the deep that lies below, and blessings of the breasts and the womb.* Rain, springs, children, all of it coming down *on the head of Joseph, on the brow of the prince of his brothers.*

Prince of his brothers. The sheaves bowed in a boy's dream (37:7), and now his father says it outright.

Benjamin closes the list with a wolf, *he tears his prey*, the fiercest word of all for the son Jacob doted on.[173]

Then the summary. *These are the tribes of Israel, twelve in all.* Sons have become tribes. *He blessed each one with a suitable blessing.* Genesis calls the whole thing blessing, rebukes, and all.

Gathered to His People (49:29–33)

One more time, the burial instructions. Joseph has already sworn to them (47:29–31). Now every son hears it. *Bury me with my ancestors in the cave in the field of Ephron the Hethite.*

He gives directions like a man afraid somebody will get them wrong. The cave is at Machpelah, near Mamre, in Canaan. Abraham bought it, and Jacob says *purchased* twice (49:30, 32). Then he calls the roll of who's already there. *Abraham and his wife Sarah are buried there, Isaac and his wife Rebekah are buried there, and I buried Leah there.*

Leah.

It's the only place Genesis tells us she died. Rachel, the wife he worked fourteen years for, the one he brought up at Joseph's visit without anybody asking, lies by the road to Bethlehem (48:7). Leah, the wife he never wanted, the mother of Reuben and Simeon and Levi and Judah, is in the family tomb. Jacob will be buried in that cave with Leah. Genesis lets it sit there without a word.[174]

When Jacob had finished giving charges to his sons, he drew his feet into the bed, took his last breath, and was gathered to his people.

He sat up in that bed to bless (48:2). He draws his feet back into it to die.

Chapter 49 doesn't tell us who wept or what anyone said. It stops right there, with twelve brothers around a dead man, one of them the man who runs Egypt and ten of them the men who threw him in a pit.

The father who stood between them is gone.

Looking to Christ

The New Testament draws this line itself, and it runs straight through Judah.

Now it is evident that our Lord came from Judah (Hebrews 7:14). The scepter Jacob handed to his fourth son stayed in that tribe through David and the kings after him, and it came at last to the one it belonged to.

John sees him in Revelation. He's weeping because nobody can open the scroll, and one of the elders stops him. *Do not weep. Look, the Lion from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered so that he is able to open the scroll and its seven seals* (Revelation 5:5).

So John turns to look at the lion.

Then I saw one like a slaughtered lamb standing in the midst of the throne (5:6).

He's told to look for a lion, and he sees a lamb with the marks of the slaughter still on it. Jacob promised Judah a King nobody would dare rouse. The King came, and his strength was the strength of a lamb that let itself be killed. Kidner calls it a finer strength than the lion's.[175]

There's a shape in Judah's own story too, as long as we don't press it. The brother who once sold his brother for silver offered himself as a slave in the boy's place, and nobody took him up on it. The tribe that came from him produced a King who went through with it, for brothers who had no claim on him at all.

Applying the Text

Say the thing that needs saying while there's time to talk about it. Jacob let Reuben's sin go unspoken for decades and treated Simeon and Levi's massacre as a problem for his reputation. The truth came out anyway, on a deathbed, in front of everybody, with no chance to work it through. Some families run on silence for generations. If there's something in yours that must be said, say it in love and say it soon.

Your worst chapter doesn't decide where you end up. Judah sold his brother and shamed his daughter-in-law, and Genesis hides neither. Jacob hands him the scepter anyway. Judah had changed, and God had plans for his line that Judah never earned. You may know exactly which chapter of your life you'd tear out if you could. God isn't limited by it. Ask Judah.

Quit telling God which head gets the right hand. Joseph had everything lined up the way it ought to go, and he was sure his father had made a mistake. Most of us have lined something up in front of God the same way, a plan or a hope we've prayed over for years. Sometimes the hand crosses over anyway. When it does, you'll probably get the answer Joseph got: *I know, my son, I know.*

Spend your last strength blessing. Jacob spent most of his life grabbing for a blessing. At the end he gave them away. You may not get two chapters at the end. Tell your children and grandchildren now what you see in them and what you're asking God to do with them. Put a hand on a head this week and pray over it out loud.

Pray in the middle of the hard words. Halfway through the toughest speech of his life, Jacob stops to say, *I wait for your salvation, Lord.* When you have to tell hard truths to people you love, pray while you're telling them. Say what you have to say, and leave the rest with God.

For Discussion

1. Set 48:8–20 beside 27:1–29. List the ways the two blessing scenes are alike. What's the biggest difference?

2. Joseph tries to move his father's hand (48:17–18). Why would Joseph, of all people, insist on the rights of the firstborn?

3. Jacob waited decades to say what he says to Reuben, Simeon, and Levi (49:3–7). Was he right to wait that long? Was he right to say it in front of all their brothers?

4. Simeon and Levi receive the same sentence in 49:7, yet their tribes end up in very different places. What does that suggest about how God's word over a life works?

5. In chapter 37, what odds would you have given Judah of carrying the line of kings? Is there someone you've written off the way his brothers might have written off Judah?

6. Jacob's last words to his sons were honest, and some of them hurt. If your family heard your honest last words today, what would you want them to hear? What would you need to make right first?

Looking Ahead

Lesson 12: Forgiveness Sealed (Genesis 50)

The old man is dead. Joseph keeps his oath and carries Jacob home to Canaan with the elders of Egypt walking behind the body. Then the brothers come back to Egypt, and they're afraid.

Before you come: read Genesis 50. Look hard at the message the brothers send Joseph in 50:16–17, and then go back through chapters 47 through 49 and see whether you can find Jacob ever saying it. Then notice what the brothers do in 50:18, and think about where you've seen it before.

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[160] Hughes, *Genesis*. On 48:1–2 he observes that this is the first reference to illness in the Bible and that Hebrews 11:21 selects the blessing of Joseph's sons as the event that characterized Jacob as a man of faith. Kidner, *Genesis*. On 48:1–22 he likewise notes that Hebrews 11:21 singles this out as Jacob's outstanding act of faith, reaching toward the promise in the face of death; on 48:3 he identifies Luz as the old name for Bethel (28:19); and on 48:5 he says the adoption left its lasting mark on Israel's structure, Ephraim inheriting the headship forfeited by Reuben (cf. 49:4). Hughes on 48:3–4 takes the appearance Jacob recalls as the second at Bethel (35:9–15), and on 48:5 notes that the two boys take the place of Reuben and Simeon as Jacob's first sons (cf. 1 Chronicles 5:1–2). Smith, *Pentateuch*. On 48:3–4 he also refers the recollection to 35:9–13.

[161] Kidner, *Genesis*. On 48:7 he calls the mention of Rachel a poignant backward glance in a context of hope, a sudden faltering that shows in the effort with which the old man returns to the present. Hughes, *Genesis*. On 48:7 he suggests that through the adoption Rachel's firstborn could now extend her line, since Joseph's sons become Jacob's direct heirs.

[162] Joseph was thirty when he entered Pharaoh's service (41:46), and both sons were born before the famine (41:50), during the seven years of plenty. Jacob arrived in the second year of the famine (45:6) and lived in Egypt seventeen years (47:28). The sons were therefore at least nineteen or twenty when Jacob blessed them, and possibly in their mid-twenties. This arithmetic is an observation on the text. Kidner, *Genesis*, on 48:10–12, calls them youths, and on 48:8–9 contrasts the question *Who are these?* with the dialogue at Jacob's own blessing (27:18–19).

[163] Hughes, *Genesis*. On 48:13 he notes that *right* and *left* are used seven times in combination, showing how much the arrangement mattered to Joseph. Kidner, *Genesis*. On 48:13–14 he observes that Jacob had already named the younger before the elder in 48:5, and on 48:1–22 he notes the gentle irony that this is just such a situation as the one on which Jacob exercised his guile in his youth, now with no faithless scheming or bitter aftertaste.

[164] Kidner, *Genesis*. On 48:15–16 he notes that the threefold invocation recalls God's dealings rather than naming his attributes; that to call God the one who fed or led him is to acknowledge him as shepherd, a verb that anticipates Psalm 23 and one Jacob knew literally (31:38–40); that *the angel* recalls God's visible encounters with Jacob at the turning points of his life, above all at Peniel; and that *redeemed* is the verb of the *gō'ēl*, the kinsman who protected and reclaimed (cf. Leviticus 25:25; Job 19:25). He also takes *Joseph* in 48:15 as a collective term for the two sons. That this is the first place in Scripture where God is called a shepherd is an observation on the text.

[165] The CSB margin at 48:17 gives *he was displeased*, and literally, "it was bad in his eyes." Hughes, *Genesis*. On 48:17–18 he reads *took his father's hand* as a firm grip and *Not that way, my father* as exasperation, and on 48:19–20 traces the pattern of the younger chosen over the elder from Abel and Seth through Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Ephraim. Smith, *Pentateuch*. On 48:17–20 he notes that the boys' names would be invoked when pronouncing a blessing on others.

[166] The CSB margin at 48:22 reads "Or *Shechem*, Joseph's burial place; lit *one shoulder*." Kidner, *Genesis*. On 48:22 he takes the word as a play on the place-name Shechem, which fell in Manasseh's territory at the center of the area held by the two Joseph tribes (cf. John 4:5), and judges the allusion to conquest obscure, possibly the massacre of chapter 34 or an incident otherwise unrecorded. Hughes, *Genesis*. On 48:21–22 he connects the gift with the plot Jacob bought at Shechem (33:19)

and with Joseph's burial there (Joshua 24:32). Smith, *Pentateuch*. On 48:21–22 he calls this the only reference to any war waged by Jacob. That the CSB prints *bring you back* at 28:15, 46:4, and 48:21 is an observation on the text.

[167] Kidner, *Genesis*. On 49:3–4 he calls the sudden shift to the third person a gesture of revulsion, explains the word rendered *turbulent* as suggesting wildness as much as weakness, like water quickly becoming an undisciplined torrent, and traces the tribe's later failure of leadership (Judges 5:15–16; Numbers 16:1). Hughes, *Genesis*. On 49:3–4 he notes that no prophet, judge, or king ever came from the tribe of Reuben.

[168] Kidner, *Genesis*. On 49:5–7 he calls the oracle a neglected witness to Israel's distinction between divine sentence and vendetta, and a moral judgment on a story told earlier without comment, showing that the narrator's customary detachment is restraint and not indifference. On 49:7 he traces both tribes' scattering: Simeon absorbed partly into Judah (cf. Joshua 19:2–9 with 15:26–32) and partly among the northern tribes (2 Chronicles 34:6); Levi given an honorable dispersion as Israel's priestly element (Exodus 32:26, 29; Numbers 18:20, 23; 35:2–8). He takes the difference as an instance of the openness of God's decrees (cf. Jeremiah 18:7–8).

[169] Kidner, *Genesis*. On 49:8 he notes that *praise* plays on Judah's name (29:35), and on 49:8–12 that in length and eloquence the blessing is matched only by Joseph's, which it far outdistances in its range of prophecy. Hughes, *Genesis*. On 49:8–9 he observes that Judah's brothers' descendants would bow to his descendants as they had bowed to Joseph. The verb of 49:8 is the same one used at 27:29 and in Joseph's dreams (37:7, 9–10); this link is an observation on the text.

[170] The CSB margin at 49:10 offers *until tribute comes to him*, *until Shiloh comes*, and *until he comes to Shiloh*. Kidner, *Genesis*. On 49:10 he cautions against dogmatism, notes that Shiloh is nowhere else a biblical title of the Messiah, and favors re-vocalizing the consonants to read "until he comes to whom it belongs," which he believes Ezekiel takes up in his oracle against the last king of Judah (Ezekiel 21:26–27); he calls this the best support for the messianic sense Jewish and Christian interpreters have found in the verse from the earliest times. Hughes, *Genesis*. On 49:10 he notes the near-uniform messianic reading of ancient Jewish and Christian commentators and cites the Targum Onkelos, "until the Messiah comes, whose is the kingdom." Smith, *Pentateuch*. On 49:10 he judges the messianic reading probably correct and says the prophecy strongly suggests, without directly asserting, that the Messiah would come from Judah.

[171] Kidner, *Genesis*. On 49:11–12 he calls the imagery deliberately the language of excess, vines used as hitching posts and wine as washing water, picturing the golden age of the Coming One, and notes that Jesus announced the age to come in just this imagery at Cana (John 2:1–11). Hughes, *Genesis*, on 49:11–12, follows him. The echo between the robe dipped in blood at 37:31 and the robes washed in *the blood of grapes* at 49:11 is an observation on the text and is not drawn by the commentators.

[172] Kidner, *Genesis*. In his additional note to chapter 42 he observes that from chapter 40 to the end of Genesis the name Yahweh appears only once, at 49:18. On 49:16–18 he suggests the aside may arise from a father's prayers or from the sudden memory, stirred by the word *heel* (49:17, 19), of Jacob's own name (25:26). Hughes, *Genesis*. On 49:18 he calls it both a shout of longing and of faith. On 49:14–15 both Kidner and Hughes read Issachar as a tribe willing to trade its liberty for material comfort.

[173] The verse and word counts are observations on the text. Judah's blessing (49:8–12) and Joseph's (49:22–26) run five verses each; in the Masoretic text, counting words joined by a hyphen separately, Joseph's runs sixty-two words to Judah's fifty-six, and in the CSB 132 to 126. Hughes, *Genesis*. On 49:1–2 he observes that ten of the poem's twenty-five verses concern Judah and Joseph; on 49:23–24 he takes the archers as the hostile words Joseph suffered from his brothers, from Potiphar's wife, and from those who resented his rise; and on 49:24–25 he calls the cascade of divine names unparalleled in Genesis. Kidner, *Genesis*. On 49:27 he notes that Moses was given the tender oracle on Benjamin (Deuteronomy 33:12) and doting Jacob the fierce one.

[174] Kidner, *Genesis*. On 49:31 he notes that Leah's death in Canaan is mentioned only here, though her absence from the list of emigrants in 46:8–27 implied it. Hughes, *Genesis*. On 49:29–33 he remarks that Jacob was more specific here than in his earlier burial directions. Smith, *Pentateuch*. On 49:29–33 he notes that Jacob repeated to all his sons the instructions he had given Joseph privately (47:29–31).

[175] Kidner, *Genesis*. On 49:9 he observes that the New Testament sees the Lion of the tribe of Judah displaying a finer strength than the lion's, and sets Revelation 5:5 beside 5:6. Hughes, *Genesis*. On 49:8–12 he traces the line from Judah through David to the Messiah (cf. 2 Samuel 7:12–16) and reads Judah's offer at 44:33 as a prophetic shadow of Christ's substitutionary death.