

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown

Bible Study Notes

4-29-20

Genesis 49

Jacob Blesses His Sons - Verses 1-7

¹ Then Jacob called for his sons and said: "Gather around so I can tell you what will happen to you in days to come. ² "Assemble and listen, sons of Jacob; listen to your father Israel. ³ "Reuben, you are my firstborn, my might, the first sign of my strength, excelling in honor, excelling in power. ⁴ Turbulent as the waters, you will no longer excel, for you went up onto your father's bed, onto my couch and defiled it. ⁵ "Simeon and Levi are brothers—their swords are weapons of violence. ⁶ Let me not enter their council, let me not join their assembly, for they have killed men in their anger and hamstringed oxen as they pleased. ⁷ Cursed be their anger, so fierce, and their fury, so cruel! I will scatter them in Jacob and disperse them in Israel.

49:3-7 Jacob blessed each of his sons and then made a prediction about each one's future. The way the men had lived played an important part in Jacob's blessing and prophecy. Our past also affects our present and future. By sunrise tomorrow, our actions of today will have become part of the past. Yet they will already have begun to shape the future. What actions can you choose or avoid that will positively shape your future?

49:4 The oldest son was supposed to receive a double inheritance, but Reuben lost his special honor. Unruly and untrustworthy, especially in his younger days, he had gone so far as to sleep with one of his father's concubines. Jacob could not give the birthright blessing to such a dishonorable son. (Genesis 35:21-22)

Jacob Bless Judah - Verses 8-12

⁸ "Judah, your brothers will praise you; your hand will be on the neck of your enemies; your father's sons will bow down to you. ⁹ You are a lion's cub, Judah; you return from the prey, my son. Like a lion he crouches and lies down, like a lioness—who dares to rouse him? ¹⁰ The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he to whom it belongs shall come and the obedience of the nations shall be his. ¹¹ He will tether his donkey to a vine, his colt to the choicest branch; he will wash his garments in wine, his robes in the blood of grapes. ¹² His eyes will be darker than wine, his teeth whiter than milk.

49:8-12 Judah had sold Joseph into slavery and tried to defraud his daughter-in-law Tamar. (Gen. 38). So why did Jacob grant him this blessing? God had chosen Judah to be the ancestor of Israel's line of kings (that is the meaning of "the scepter will not depart from Judah"). This may have been due to Judah's dramatic change of character (44:33-34). Judah's line would produce the promised Messiah, Jesus.

49:10 "Until he to whom it belongs shall come" may also be translated, "until Shiloh comes." What is Shiloh? The meaning of this difficult passage is disputed. Shiloh may be another name for the Messiah, because its literal meaning is "sent." Shiloh might also refer to the Tent of Meeting set up at the city of Shiloh (Joshua 18:1).

Jacob Bless Judah - Verses 13-21

¹³ "Zebulun will live by the seashore and become a haven for ships; his border will extend toward Sidon. ¹⁴ "Issachar is a rawboned donkey lying down among the sheep pens. ¹⁵ When he sees how good is his resting place and how pleasant is his land, he will bend his shoulder to the burden and submit to forced labor. ¹⁶ "Dan will provide justice for his people as one of the tribes of Israel. ¹⁷ Dan will be a snake by

the roadside, a viper along the path, that bites the horse's heels so that its rider tumbles backward. ¹⁸ "I look for your deliverance, LORD. ¹⁹ "Gad will be attacked by a band of raiders but he will attack them at their heels. ²⁰ "Asher's food will be rich; he will provide delicacies fit for a king. ²¹ "Naphtali is a doe set free that bears beautiful fawns.

49:18 In the middle of his prophecy to Dan, Jacob exclaimed, "I look for your deliverance, LORD." He was emphasizing to Dan that he would be a strong leader only if he trusted in God, not in his natural strength or ability. Those who are strong, attractive, or talented often find it easier to trust in themselves than in God who gave them their gifts. Remember to thank God for what you are and have so your trust does not become misplaced.

Jacob Bless Joseph - Verses 22-28

²² "Joseph is a fruitful vine, a fruitful vine near a spring, whose branches climb over a wall. ²³ With bitterness archers attacked him; they shot at him with hostility. ²⁴ But his bow remained steady, his strong arms stayed limber, because of the hand of the Mighty One of Jacob, because of the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel, ²⁵ because of your father's God, who helps you, because of the Almighty, who blesses you with blessings of the skies above, blessings of the deep springs below, blessings of the breast and womb. ²⁶ Your father's blessings are greater than the blessings of the ancient mountains, than the bounty of the age-old hills. Let all these rest on the head of Joseph, on the brow of the prince among his brothers. ²⁷ "Benjamin is a ravenous wolf; in the morning he devours the prey, in the evening he divides the plunder." ²⁸ All these are the twelve tribes of Israel, and this is what their father said to them when he blessed them, giving each the blessing appropriate to him.

49:22 Joseph was indeed fruitful, with some heroic descendants. Among them were Joshua, who would lead the Israelites into the Promised Land (Joshua 1:10-11); Deborah and Gideon, judges of Israel (Judges 4:4; 6:11-12); and Samuel, a great prophet (1 Samuel 3:19).

49:23-24 These verses celebrate the times God rescued Joseph when his enemies attacked him. So often we struggle by ourselves, forgetting that God is able to help us fight our battles, whether they are against people with weapons or against spiritual forces. Joseph was able to draw closer to God as adversity mounted. To trust God to rescue you shows great faith. Can you trust him when injury or persecution is directed at you? Such spiritual battles require teamwork between courageous, faithful people and a mighty God.

The Death of Jacob - Verses 29-33

²⁹ Then he gave them these instructions: "I am about to be gathered to my people. Bury me with my fathers in the cave in the field of Ephron the Hittite, ³⁰ the cave in the field of Machpelah, near Mamre in Canaan, which Abraham bought along with the field as a burial place from Ephron the Hittite. ³¹ There Abraham and his wife Sarah were buried, there Isaac and his wife Rebekah were buried, and there I buried Leah. ³² The field and the cave in it were bought from the Hittites." ³³ When Jacob had finished giving instructions to his sons, he drew his feet up into the bed, breathed his last and was gathered to his people.

49:29-33 Jacob blessed every one according to the blessings God in after-times intended to bestow upon them. He spoke about his burial-place, from a principle of faith in the promise of God, that Canaan should be the inheritance of his seed in due time. When he had finished both his blessing and his charge, and so had finished his testimony, he addressed himself to his dying work. He freely gave up his spirit into the hand of God, the Father of spirits. If God's people be our people, death will gather us to them. Under the care of the Shepherd of Israel, we shall lack nothing for body or soul. We shall remain unmoved until our work is finished; then, breathing out our souls into His hands for whose salvation we have waited, we shall depart in peace, and leave a blessing for our children after us.