

## GENESIS

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Genesis chapter 49 as we continue our study through the Word of God. In our last study we saw that Jacob is sick and he gives the double portion of the blessing to Joseph, through his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. As we move into Genesis chapter 49 I believe it flows from what transpired in Genesis chapter 48. With that said, let's begin reading in Genesis chapter 49, starting in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word and we conclude the book of Genesis.

### GENESIS 49

#### VERSES 1-2

1. It would seem that after Jacob blessed the son's of Joseph, he called for his son's to gather before him so he can bless them and tell them, "**what shall befall you in the last days.**" Jacob is telling them what their tribes will be like and what they will encounter in the last days.

2. These are the dying words of this great patriarch of Israel, it, in a sense, is his farewell speech. When Matthew Henry was dying, that great biblical commentator and scholar, he said, “A life spent in the service of God and communion with Him is the most pleasant life that any one can live in the world.” Now, not everyone is able to do this, but why wait. You see, I believe how you live out your faith will be a testimony you can leave behind for future generations to be blessed and they will as you pass them on to your children and friends!

3. Verse 2 is interesting to me. It reads, **“Gather together and hear, you sons of Jacob, And listen to Israel your father.”** In other words, I believe the Holy Spirit is showing us this. He is saying, “Hear you sons of the flesh and listen to your spiritual father who is ruled by God.” Yes, Jacob had his problems. He did wrestle with God, and he wrestled with the flesh. But here he is going to speak to his son’s prophetic words of what will become of their descendants, specifically each tribe. So let’s see what the Lord says through Israel about the 12 tribes of Israel.

VERSES 3-4

1. Reuben was the firstborn and yet, because of his immorality, he forfeited this right. In

Genesis 35:22 we are told, “**And it happened, when Israel dwelt in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine; and Israel heard about it.**”

And in I Chronicles 5:1 we are told the consequences of this incident, “**Now the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel — he was indeed the firstborn, but because he defiled his father's bed, his birthright was given to the sons of Joseph, the son of Israel, so that the genealogy is not listed according to the birthright.**”

2. Now Jewish tradition tells us that Reuben repented of his sin with Bilhah but the scars remained. Jacob tells Reuben that because of his instability, he will not “**excel**” or literally, the tribe of Reuben will not have anything special to contribute or leave to benefit anyone. Do we see this played out? You bet we do. From the tribe of Reuben there was not a single prophet, judge, king, military leader or important person that emerged. Yes, sin does leave its marks even though God forgave his sin!

3. One last point on the tribe of Reuben. When the tribes of Israel settled in the land, they decided to stay on the east side of the Jordan River, outside the Promise Land and thus, they were the first to be attacked by their enemies, (Numbers 32). They were also one of the smallest tribes, almost to the point of extinction. We see this as Moses blesses the tribes before he dies, and he said, “**Let Reuben live, and not die, Nor let his men be few.**” Deuteronomy 33:6.

VERSES 5-7

1. Here we see the second and third son's of Jacob lumped together for their previous behavior. You see, Simeon and Levi were involved in the slaughtering of the Shechemites. The reason for their actions was because Shechem, the son of Hamor raped their sister Dinah, even though he now wanted to marry her, they saw this as wrong and it was. But their plan was evil. They said they would allow it if all the men of Shechem were circumcised. They agreed to this and when they couldn't fight because of the pain of the circumcision, they slaughtered all the men of the city and plundered the city. It was a heinous act but Jacob, at that time, did nothing even though they put their entire family in jeopardy of being attacked and destroyed for this.

2. Notice that it says in verse 7 that God **“will divide them in Jacob and scattered them in Israel.”** What does that mean? Obviously they both will suffer for their actions but one is cursed more than the other. I see Simeon divided in Jacob or divided because of his fleshly actions. The tribe of Simeon shared the land with the tribe of Judah. In Joshua 19 we are told, **“The second lot came out for Simeon, for the tribe of the children of Simeon according to their families. And their inheritance was within the inheritance of the children of Judah. . . . The inheritance of the children of Simeon was included in the share of the children of Judah, for the share of the children of Judah was too much for them. Therefore the children of Simeon had their inheritance within the inheritance of that people.”** Joshua 19:1, 9.

Also, the tribe of Simeon was the smallest numerically speaking, (Numbers 26:14). You see, they started out from Egypt being the third largest tribe, (Numbers 1:23). But, only 35 years later, during the second census, 63% of the tribe perished and they become the smallest tribe, (Numbers 26:14).

Levi, it says, will be scattered in Israel, speaking of them governed by God and God's grace being extended to them. But why? Because of the faithfulness of this tribe during the golden calf incident in Exodus 32:26-29 where we are told, **“then Moses stood in the entrance of the camp, and said, ‘Whoever is on the Lord's side — come to me!’ And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together to him. And he said to them, ‘Thus says the Lord God of Israel: “Let every man put his sword on his side, and go in and out from entrance to entrance throughout the camp, and let every man kill his brother, every man his companion, and every man his neighbor.”” So the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses. And about three thousand men of the people fell that day. Then Moses said, ‘Consecrate yourselves today to the Lord, that He may bestow on you a blessing this day, for every man has opposed his son and his brother.’”**

The tribe of Levi was blessed and they became the priestly tribe and they were scattered throughout Israel. They occupied 48 cities to teach the people the things of God but they had no inheritance, the Lord was their inheritance, (Numbers 35:1-8, Joshua 13:14, 33).

3. In verse 6, because of their actions, Jacob does not want to be associated with these men. He does not want to be united with their actions. Because of their cruel behavior Jacob distances himself from them. In Proverbs 1:10-15 Solomon tells us, **“My son, if sinners entice you, Do not consent. If they say, ‘Come with us, Let us lie in wait to shed blood; Let us lurk secretly for the innocent without cause; Let us swallow them alive like Sheol, And whole, like those who go down to the Pit; We shall find all kinds of precious possessions, We shall fill our houses with spoil; Cast in your lot among us, Let us all have one purse’ — My son, do not walk in the way with them, Keep your foot from their path.”** I think that is what Jacob is talking about, to distance yourself from those who will entice you to do evil.

#### VERSES 8-12

1. Judah means, “praise” and that is its blessing. The brothers would look with praise to Judah. David is a descendant from the tribe of Judah and he loved to praise the Lord! James Hastings wrote, “The David of Israel is not simply the greatest of her kings; he is the man great in everything. He monopolizes all her institutions. He is her shepherd boy . . . He is her musician . . . He is her soldier – the conqueror of all the goliaths that would steal her peace. He is her king . . . He is her priest-substituting a broken and a contrite spirit for the blood of bulls and rams. He is her prophet . . . And he is her poet.” He was the sweet Psalmist of Israel and some 640 years after the prophecy of Jacob, when king David was on the throne, Judah was the dominant tribe and remained that way.

2. But there is even a greater than David that came from Judah. There is the Lion from the tribe of Judah, Jesus Christ who is a descendant from this tribe. We read in Micah 5:2, **“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting.”**

3. The **“scepter”** and **“lawgiver”** spoken of in verse 10 is speaking of authority, rulership, one who decrees. This rulership is not to depart from Israel until **“Shiloh comes.”** The word **“Shiloh”** is a name of a town but that is not what is spoken of here. The Septuagint translates this verse, “Until the things laid up in store come into his possession.” This can be cross referenced with Ezekiel 21:27, which says, **“Overthrown, overthrown, I will make it overthrown! It shall be no longer, Until He comes whose right it is, And I will give it to Him.”** Both are speaking of Jesus Christ. Even the Jewish Talmud, (The collection of ancient Rabbinic writings constituting the basis of religious authority for traditional Judaism), translate “Shiloh” as one of the names of the Messiah!

Around 7 A.D. the Roman government took away the right of capitol punishment for the Jews. That is why the Jewish leaders presented Christ to the Romans for they wanted Him executed and they could not do it, not legally anyway! During this time, around 7 A.D. the High Priest put on sackcloth and ashes for the scepter had departed from Israel and Shiloh had not come and they felt the Word of God had been broken. But, around this same time there was a carpenter's son named Jesus, He could have even been around 12 at this time and in the Temple teaching. Thus, Shiloh had come before the scepter had departed from Israel. Jesus was born around 4 B.C. before the death of Herod the Great.

You see, in Numbers 24:17 we read, **“I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near; A Star shall come out of Jacob; A Scepter shall rise out of Israel, And batter the brow of Moab, And destroy all the sons of tumult.”** Again, this is speaking of Jesus. If Shiloh had not come before the scepter had departed, then He would never come! But He has come from the tribe of Judah and so we too can offer our praise!

### VERSE 13

1. Zebulun settled in the northern portion of Israel, between the Mediterranean Sea and the Sea of Galilee. That phrase, **“Shall dwell by the haven of the sea”** can be rendered, “Looking towards the sea.” Thus, both to the east and the west, Zebulun did look towards the sea!

VERSES 14-15

1. Issachar was strong and they were the third largest tribe, but they were very lazy. They had the good land and yet they did not work for it or take care of it. Because of the rich and fertile land it attracted marauders. Also, “**Lying down between two burdens**” or “**sheepfolds**” was a place where the manure was flung. The strong ass bedded down on the dung heap because it was warm. Therefore a person who is willing to wallow in filth for his own comfort is what is being implied in this verse. Leupold puts it like this, “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.”

VERSES 16-18

1. The tribe of Dan introduced idolatry into the land of Israel. We read in Judges 18:30-31, “**Then the children of Dan set up for themselves the carved image; and Jonathan the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land. So they set up for themselves Micah's carved image which he made, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh.**”

Jeroboam set up one of his idolatrous gold calves in Dan, (I Kings 12:26-30).

And later on Dan became the center of idol worship. And in Amos 8:14 God gives the tribe of Dan a rebuke, **“Those who swear by the sin of Samaria, Who say, ‘As your god lives, O Dan!’ And, ‘As the way of Beersheba lives!’ They shall fall and never rise again.”** It could be why Dan is not a tribe that is sealed in the book of Revelation, (Revelation 7:1-8). But God’s mercy is great and in Ezekiel chapter 48, during the Millennial Kingdom, Dan is given an inheritance in the land.

2. We do see a judge come out of Dan, and his name was Samson and we are told that in his death he killed more Philistines than in his life. A sad story of how the lust of the flesh, sexual sin destroyed the ministry of this man. God wanted to use him greatly but it didn’t happen!

3. Verse 18 almost seems out of place but maybe as he was speaking of the viper or the snake it reminded him of what transpired in the Garden of Eden. How the serpent brought sin and death into the world. How the serpent will bite the heel of the Promised Seed but he knows that the Deliverer would crush the serpent’s head! The word **“salvation”** is the Hebrew word, YESHUWAH, which is none other than the name of Jesus! “I have waited for Your Jesus, O LORD!” As Jacob is so close to death, who does he look to, who does he call upon? He called out for JESUS!

VERSE 19

1. Besides Reuben and half the tribe of Manasseh, Gad also stayed on the east side of the Jordan River, not entering the Promise Land. Because of this they too were the first to be attacked by their enemies. Their land was at the edge of the kingdom of the Amorites and Moabites. Because of the constant exposure to hostile enemies, Gad was known as having fierce warriors as I Chronicles 12:8 tells us, **“Some Gadites joined David at the stronghold in the wilderness, mighty men of valor, men trained for battle, who could handle shield and spear, whose faces were like the faces of lions, and were as swift as gazelles on the mountains.”**

VERSE 20

1. Asher occupied land in the rich northern seacoast, north of Mount Carmel all the way to Tyre and Sidon, (Joshua 19:24-31). A land that was known for its vast olive groves, they enjoyed the good life, rich food and royal delicacies but not really a military strength, and thus the Canaanite and Phoenician inhabitants troubled them.

VERSE 21

1. Naphtali was known for its swiftness and good speech. This can be seen in the victory song of Deborah and Barak as they defeated the Canaanites in Judges 5:1-31. And the Good News did come from this area as we see the ministry of Jesus focused in this area, **“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: ‘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.’ From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.’”** Matthew 4:12-17.

VERSE 22-26

1. Joseph gets a great blessing. Yes his life was hard, but God blessed him mightily. Even in the pit where his brothers threw him in and they fired their fiery darts at him, God was there strengthening him. We also see here that Jacob speaks of God as a Shepherd and a Stone, the God who will nourish and protect us. And it was through Joseph being in Egypt that the nation of Israel would grow and in particular the tribe of Judah from which the Messiah would come from. The Shepherd would not come from Joseph but would be sustained through him you might say. Joshua also came from the tribe of Joseph, Ephraim in particular!

2. Back in Genesis 31:53 Jacob spoke of God like this, “**The God of Abraham**” and “**The fear of his father Isaac.**” But now he speaks of God as, “**the Mighty God of Jacob,**” “**the Shepherd,**” “**the Stone of Israel,**” “**the God of your father,**” and “**the Almighty.**” You see, now Jacob knows God and he can relate to God out of that experience. It is not someone else’s God, but it is His God!

#### VERSE 27

1. The tribe of Benjamin was known as great fighters, very strong and successful in warfare. But, at the same time they were very cruel. You can see the cruelty of this tribe in Judges 19 and 20 and how they sexual abuse and murder this man’s wife, not a pretty story at all. Now, two of the more prominent people who came from this tribe were King Saul, (I Samuel 9:1, 14:47-52). And also Paul the apostle came from this tribe, (Philippians 3:5, Romans 11:1). The tribe of Benjamin occupied kind of a buffer zone between the two dominant tribes, Judah and Ephraim, (Joshua 18:11-28). And, when the nation was divided, it was only the tribe of Benjamin who sided with the Southern Kingdom of Judah; all the rest went with the Northern Kingdom of Israel.

#### VERSE 28

1. Now I don’t believe we see the full extent of this blessing for the last days, but we may as they are fulfilled.

VERSES 29-33

1. Jacob finishes his blessings upon his son's and then concludes by telling them not to bury him in the world, in Egypt! He wants them to take him back to the place of promise; he wants to be buried in the cave that is in the field of Machpelah! And when he is finished he drew up his feet and died.

2. Charles Spurgeon said this about Jacob; "He who had journeyed with unwearied foot fully many a mile was now obliged to gather up his feet into the bed to die. His life had been eventful in the highest degree, but the dread event now came upon him, which is common to us all. He had deceived his blind father in his youth, but no craftiness of Jacob could deceive the grave. He had fled from Esau, his angry brother, but a swifter and surer foot was now in pursuit, from which there was no escape. He had slept with a stone for his pillow and had seen heaven opened, but he was to find that it was only to be entered by the ordinary gate. He had wrestled with the angel at the brook Jabbok, and he had prevailed; at this time he was to wrestle with an angel against whom there was no prevalence. He had dwelt in Canaan in tents, in the midst of enemies, and the Lord had said, 'Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm,' and therefore he had been secure in the midst of a thousand ills; but now he must fall by the hand of the last enemy and feel the great avenger's sword."

For us as Christians, we know that to be absent from this body is to be present with the Lord. Death for the Christian is moving day where our spirit and soul will move out of these tents that are worn and torn and receive a mansion to dwell in that will never fade away! For Jacob, he waited in Abraham's bosom in Hades until the Messiah came and freed them, released those captives who died in the faith and they too are with the Lord. (Luke 16:19-31).

## **GENESIS 50**

### **VERSES 1-3**

1. The forty days that was required to embalm Jacob was used to remove most of the vital organs, dehydrating the body and wrapping the body tightly. Jacob was mummified. And it is amazing to me to see Egyptians mourn for him for seventy days! Seventy-two days was the maximum amount of time that the Egyptians mourned. So it seems at this time the Jews were not hated but respected by the Egyptians.

VERSES 4-14

1. As Joseph and his family go to bury Jacob in the cave of Machpelah all of Pharaoh's servants and the elders in the land of Egypt went with them to show their respect towards Jacob. In fact, the mourning was so overwhelming that the people of the land, the Canaanites saw it and called the place ABEL MIZRAIM or the mourning of Egypt. And so Jacob was buried in the cave of Machpelah near Mamre. Of this burial, Leupold makes these comments, "Luther remarks that there is no burial recorded in the Scriptures quite as honorable as this or with such wealth of detail."

VERSES 15-18

1. After the death of Jacob the brothers of Joseph get a little nervous. They think that it is payback time for Joseph. That he will get revenge for what was done to him years before now that their father had died. So they tell Joseph, "Look, dad said that after he dies that you should not hurt us. In fact, dad commanded that you don't!" Joseph could not believe what he was hearing and he just broke down and wept. All these years he has taken care of them, provided for them and now they don't trust him. It was too much for him and he let his emotions just flow.

2. Now before we are too hard on the brothers of Joseph, hasn't God forgiven us of all our sins, given us all the spiritual blessings, adopted us into the family of God in and through Christ? Of course He has, of course we have received these things in Christ. Then why do we doubt God's love for us?

VERSES 19-21

1. Joseph tells them that they meant it for evil but God meant it for good. What a beautiful example of Jesus Christ and the cross of Calvary. The Jews, the Romans, the people were crying for Christ to be crucified, they meant it for evil! They wanted to destroy this man called Jesus. But God meant it for good for without it man could not be restored into fellowship with God. Yes the enemy cries out in victory over its evil plans but God takes that evil and turns it into good. What a great lesson for us to learn and apply to our lives. And we see Joseph, that he fully forgave his brothers for what they did to him.

2. There was an old minister who had a unique gift to minister to the distressed and discouraged. In his Bible, he carried an old bookmark woven of silk threads into a motto. The back of it, where the threads were knotted and tied, was a hopeless tangle. He would take the bookmark out and show the troubled person this side of the bookmark and ask them to make sense of it. They never could. Then the pastor would turn it over, and on the front were white letters against a solid background saying, "God is love." When events in our life seem tangled and meaningless, it is because we can see only one side of the tapestry. May we not forget that!

3. As we have seen, if Joseph's brothers never sell him to the Midianites, then Joseph never goes to Egypt. If Joseph never goes to Egypt, he never is sold to Potiphar. If he is never sold to Potiphar, Potiphar's wife never falsely accuses him of rape. If Potiphar's wife never falsely accuses him of rape, then he is never put in prison. If he is never put in prison, he never meets the baker and butler of Pharaoh. If he never meets the baker and butler of Pharaoh, he never interprets their dreams. If he never interprets their dreams, he never gets to interpret Pharaoh's dream. If he never gets to interpret Pharaoh's dream, he never is made prime minister. If he is never made prime minister, he never wisely administrates for the severe famine coming upon the region. If he never wisely administrates for the severe famine coming upon the region, then his family back in Canaan perishes from the famine. If his family back in Canaan perishes from the famine, then the Messiah can't come forth from a dead family. If the Messiah can't come forth, then Jesus never came. If Jesus never came, then you are dead in your sins and without hope in this world. We are grateful for God's great and wise plan.

#### VERSES 22-24

1. Joseph lived a good, long life. He was very fruitful, but now his days upon this earth are drawing to a close. Thus, he gives these words of encouragement to his brethren. Yes, they were in Egypt but God would bring them out one day and bring them back into the Promise Land, the land of Canaan! Folks this is not our home; we are pilgrims and strangers, just passing through, for our home is in heaven. And one day the Lord will take us home – it is His words of encouragement to us!

VERSES 25-26

1. Joseph, like his father Jacob, instructs his family to not leave his bones down in Egypt but when God brings them out of this land that they should take his bones with them.

Because of the faith of Joseph he is listed in that great hall of faith that is found in Hebrews chapter 11. We read of Joseph, **“By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave instructions concerning his bones.”** The Amplified Bible tells us, **“[actuated] by faith Joseph, when nearing the end of his life, referred to [the promise of God for] the departure of the Israelites out of Egypt and gave instructions concerning the burial of his own bones. [Gen 50:24,25; Ex 13:19.]”** And The Living Bible puts it like this, **“And it was by faith that Joseph, as he neared the end of his life, confidently spoke of God bringing the people of Israel out of Egypt; and he was so sure of it that he made them promise to carry his bones with them when they left!”** Joseph believed that the Jews would be removed from Egypt and taken into the Promise Land. That is faith!

2. Now it seems that Joseph was never buried in a tomb or in the ground but his coffin laid above ground for the 400 years or so until he was taken back to Canaan. But why? You see, this coffin of Joseph’s was a witness to the children of Israel regarding the promise of God to them. When their children would ask them about this coffin and the bones of Joseph they would tell them, “Because the great man Joseph did not want to be buried in Egypt, but in the Promise Land that God will one day lead us to!”

3. Did the children of Israel take the bones of Joseph with them when they left Egypt?

Did they remember? You bet they did! In Exodus 13:19 we are told, “**And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for he had placed the children of Israel under solemn oath, saying, ‘God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here with you.’**” And in Joshua 24:32 we find out where Joseph was buried, “**The bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel had brought up out of Egypt, they buried at Shechem, in the plot of ground which Jacob had bought from the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for one hundred pieces of silver, and which had become an inheritance of the children of Joseph.**” What a witness Joseph left behind and the children of Israel followed!

4. The book of Genesis opened up with God’s perfect creation and it is closing with a coffin in Egypt! As we conclude the book of Genesis tonight we have gone through some 2300 years since creation and from Genesis 1:1 we have seen the hand of God as He is a God who is active in His creation and it shows us His love towards His people. He loves us so much that we see the plan of salvation begin in Genesis 3:15 and continue on through Revelation 22:21. You see, God does not leave us dead and buried but gives to us hope of eternal life with Him! All the world has to offer is death, but God gives to us life, even when we don’t deserve it. Thus, don’t let the world try to negate what God has done in Genesis onward, hold onto the truths of God that we find in the Word of God. And remember, if you understand and believe Genesis 1:1, “**In the beginning God**” then nothing else is impossible!



Tribal Distribution of Israel