

GENESIS 49-50

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 this evening, I believe it flows from what transpired in Genesis chapter 48.

Keep in mind that these words spoken to the sons of Israel were prophetic in nature or they spoke of what the future had for their descendants.

Of this chapter we are told of these words of Jacob, or I should say Israel,

Jacob, in faith and as God's covenantal instrument, looked forward to the conquest and settlement of Israel in the land of Canaan, and then beyond to a more glorious age.

God gave His people this prophecy to bear them through the dismal barrenness of their experiences and to show them that He planned all the future.

For Jacob's family, the future lay beyond the bondage of Egypt in the land of promise.

But the enjoyment of the blessings of that hope would depend on the participants' faithfulness.

So from the solemnity [somberness] of his deathbed Jacob evaluated his sons one by one, and carried his evaluation forward to the future tribes.

- John Walvoord, Roy Zuck, The Bible Knowledge Commentary – OT, p. 98

With that as our introduction, let's begin reading starting in Genesis chapter 49, beginning in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word, and we conclude the book of Genesis this evening.

GENESIS 49

VERSES 1-2

From the text it would seem that after Jacob blessed the sons of Joseph; Manasseh and Ephraim, that he called for his sons 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.

These are the dying words of this great patriarch of Israel. Thus, in a sense, it 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 anyone can live in the world.”***

And here's the thing. And this is important. 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 be blessed as you pass them on to your children and friends!

Let me give you these two examples of Godly men that I grew up with in my Christian life.

The first is J. Vernon McGee. He died back in 1988, some 35 years ago and yet, we still have his messages on our radio station, and he is still blessing people with the Word of God. I use his commentaries as well and when I first got saved, he was very easy to understand as he taught the Word of God, and I loved that about him.

Then there is Pastor Chuck Smith. He went home to be with the Lord back in 2013, some ten years. And I grew up in my Christian life listening to Pastor Chuck. And he too is on our radio station and as he teaches the Word of God it is a blessing.

Now you don't have to be a pastor or teacher to bless people. Christians can bless people by just the way they live out their Christian life! And we should bless people by what we say and what we do!

Now here in Genesis 49:2 it is kind of interesting to me. Listen to what it says and then I will expound on it. It reads like this, "**Gather together and hear, you sons of Jacob, And listen to Israel your father.**"

He uses both his names here, Jacob and Israel, why?

I believe the Holy Spirit is showing us this and this is what I think he is saying, "***Hear you sons of the flesh (Jacob) and listen to your spiritual father who is ruled by God (Israel).***"

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

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.”**

And we saw that played out for us back in Genesis chapter 48 as Joseph, through his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim received the rights of the firstborn or the double portion of the inheritance.

Now Jewish tradition tells us that Reuben repented of his sin with Bilhah, but the scars remained. We don’t know if he did or not, but his actions had consequences upon him and his descendants!

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!

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

Here we see the second and third sons of Jacob lumped together for their previous behavior.

Remember how both Simeon and Levi were involved in the slaughtering of the people of Shechem.

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 this marriage to take place and the coming together of the people of Shechem to marry the Jews 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.

Notice that it says in verse 7 of Genesis chapter 49, 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)

In verse 6 of Genesis chapter 49, 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.

Before we move on, listen to how Warren Wiersbe sums these verses up for us. He wrote, *Since it was dangerous to be “in their assembly,” God arranged that the two tribes would not be able to assemble or do anything together.*

The tribe of Simeon was eventually absorbed into the tribe of Judah (Josh. 19:1, 9), and the tribe of Levi was given forty-eight towns to live in, scattered throughout the land (chap. 21).

Indeed, the brothers were “divided in Jacob and scattered in Israel.”

- Warren Wiersbe, The Wiersbe Bible Commentary – OT, p. 137

VERSES 8-12

Judah means, **“praise”** and that is its blessing. The brothers would look with praise to Judah.

Not only did David come from the tribe of Judah but so did Jesus and thus, they look to Judah with praise for the Messiah!

And think about David, what did David love to do. David 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.”*

Remember, David 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. And again, the brothers looked with praise towards the tribe of Judah!

Jacob also speaks of Judah as a lion, maybe because royalty is associated many times with a lion, the king of the beasts you might say.

But I think it is also looking ahead to the Messiah, to Jesus, who is called in Revelation 5:5, **“ . . . the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David . . . ”**

In Micah 5:2 we read, **“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.”**

The Almighty God becoming flesh and dwelling amongst us to go to the cross of Calvary to pay in full the penalty for our sins – thus, we praise Him!

Now what is this saying here in Genesis 49:10, **“The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor a lawgiver from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes.”**?

First of all, the **“scepter”** and **“lawgiver”** spoken of here in Genesis 49:10 is speaking of authority, rulership, one who decrees.

This rulership is not to depart from Israel until **“Shiloh comes.”**

The word **“Shiloh”** is the 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*” or, “*Until he comes to whom it belongs.*” It is a Messianic term!

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!

Now here is the problem!

Around 7 A. D. the Roman government took away the right of capital 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.

Here was the problem for them. The Word of God did not fail. You see, some 70 miles to the north, in the town of Nazareth, there lived with His mother and stepfather a young Boy named Jesus. Shiloh had come before the scepter departed from Judah.

You see, Jesus was born around 4 B. C. before the death of Herod the Great.

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!

As you read Genesis 49:11 it seems to be speaking of both His first and second coming.

The first time He came riding into Jerusalem on a donkey.

The next time He comes He is coming in judgment of a Christ rejecting world and thus, His clothes are covered with **“the blood of grapes.”** We see this in Revelation 14:18-20 and Isaiah 63:1-6.

Now, up to this point Jacob has been following the birth order, that is until he prophesies over the next two sons, Zebulun and Issachar, they were not the fifth and sixth sons of Jacob.

Why the change?

It is possible that the sons of Jacob are not gathered around his bed according to birth order, but they are grouped together according to their mothers.

Look at it at how this plays out.

Jacob's first four sons born to him through Leah were: Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah.

After Judah, Jacob had two sons by Rachel's handmaid Bilhah - Dan and Naphtali.

Then Leah gave him her handmaid Zilpah and she bore him two sons - Gad and Asher.

It was then that God gave Jacob two more sons through Leah - Issachar (ninth son) and Zebulun (tenth son).

And through Rachel were born Joseph (eleventh son) and Benjamin (twelfth son).

I hope that makes sense. Not birth order but according to their mothers!

VERSE 13

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!

Not only that but the tribe of Zebulun was faithful towards King David. They provided the largest number of soldiers to David’s army than any other single tribe.

We are told in I Chronicles 12:33, “**of Zebulun there were fifty thousand who went out to battle, expert in war with all weapons of war, stouthearted men who could keep ranks.**”

Now what is this about when it says that “**. . . his border shall adjoin Sidon.**”?

This is a warning to this tribe because Sidon was a very wicked city and it became a snare, not just to Zebulun, but also to Israel!

Remember that Jezebel was a princess of that country, and she married King Ahab, King of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. And she was wicked and brought her idolatry into the land of Israel! She supported the pagan priests and locked up the priests of God!

VERSES 14-15

We see that the judge Tola was from Issachar. (Judges 10:1–2)

Not only that, but the men of Issachar fought against Sisera. (Judges 5:15)

And then there was King David who had soldiers from that tribe, and they understood the times and knew what Israel should do. (1 Chronicles 12:32)

In fact, Issachar was strong, and they were the third largest tribe according to the census taken in Numbers 26.

But they were very lazy.

You see, they had good land and yet they did not work for it or take care of it.

And, 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.

What is the point here?

Simply, 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.

And they were some of the first to go into Assyrian captivity and we see that spoken of in Genesis 49:15, which says that they had “**. . . became a band of slaves.**”

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

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.

The name “**Dan**” means “*to judge*” which again, we do have a judge coming out of this tribe.

All the potential that Samson had and yet, in the end, it is 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! (Judges 13:2)

We also see that 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)

How sad that in this tribe of Dan, they 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.”** (Also see Judges 18:30 and I Kings 12:26-30)

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.

Now as we get to Genesis 49:18 this verse 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 You 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

Besides Reuben and half the tribe of Manasseh, Gad also stayed on the east side of the Jordan River, not entering the Promise Land.

Yes, the land was very fertile, but it was not where God wanted them to be and because of their failure of obeying the Lord, they too were the first to be attacked by their enemies.

You see, 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.**”

Yes, they experienced much oppression but notice what it says in Genesis 49:19, the last part, “**. . . But he shall triumph at last.**”

This could be looking ultimately to the Kingdom Age and when we look at our own lives, it is as Spurgeon said, “*This has been the blessing of many a child of God – to fight, and apparently to lose the battle, yet to win it at the end.*” May we not forget that!

VERSE 20

Asher occupied land located 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 a good life, rich food and royal delicacies but not really a military strength, and thus the Canaanite and Phoenician inhabitants troubled them.

What was the problem for them?

The problem was that all of their abundance and material blessings robbed them of their passion for God and for fighting the battles of the Lord.

Look at what happened to them. In Judges 5:17, while Zebulun and Naphtali were laying their lives on the line fighting against Israel's enemies, the people of Asher just stayed home and enjoyed their luxuries.

How many Christians today are doing that very thing. They are not involved in the body of Christ, but they want to enjoy the benefits of the battles that the body of Christ is facing and winning. You see, we are not different!

Here's the thing. Material prosperity can become a curse instead of a blessing if we become entangled in it and allow it to pull us away from God.

Let me add one more point because we are seeing this prophecy from Moses regarding the tribe of Asher coming to pass in our days.

In Deuteronomy 33:24 we are told, "**Asher is most blessed of sons; Let him be favored by his brothers, And let him dip his foot in oil.**"

This phrase, "**let him dip his foot in oil,**" what does that mean?

Some say that it is speaking of the olive trees and thus, the pressed olives produce olive oil.

That could be, but I also believe it can be a reference to oil being found in Israel! And it is not just speculation, they have found oil in this area of Asher! In fact, they feel that in this area there may be more oil and natural gas than anywhere in the world!

There are no coincidences with God. It is what He has said, and it has come to pass!

VERSE 21

Naphtali was known for its swiftness in battle and their 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.

So we see that “. . . *He gives goodly words*” or “. . . *He gives words of beauty.*” That is our Lord!

VERSE 22-26

As we read this, please understand that this blessing was speaking of Joseph's life and then looking to his descendants!

As you look at this blessing to Joseph, make no mistake about it, it was 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.

This description of Joseph, as "**... a fruitful bough by a well ...**" speaks of his being well-watered and provided for in his deep and real relationship with God.

That is what Spurgeon also said of Joseph. He wrote, "*The main point in Joseph's character was that he was in clear and constant fellowship with God, and therefore God blessed him greatly. He lived to God, and was God's servant; he lived with God, and was God's child.*"

We also see that Joshua came from the tribe of Joseph, Ephraim in particular!

And looking down the road, that the descendants of Joseph, we see that Ephraim and Manasseh, Joseph's sons, were important tribes in Israel.

In fact, the Northern Kingdom was frequently called “**Ephraim.**” (Isa. 7:1- 2; Hosea 13:1)

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!

Now we come to the last son of Jacob and that is Benjamin, the younger brother of Joseph.

VERSE 27

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 sexually 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. (We find this in 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

Now we may not understand these blessings and how they all play out in history because I think they are focused also on the last days. Thus, we don't see the full extent of these blessings yet!

VERSES 29-33

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.

Now this is interesting to me.

Why wasn't he buried with Rachel, the wife he truly loved?

One writer put it like this. He wrote,

If a modern storyteller were inventing the final scene of Jacob's life, he would have Jacob ask to be buried by Rachel, on the road to Ephrath, and not in the gloomy cave at Machpelah. This would be touching, romantic. But Jacob does not do this! Why? It is because, although he was greatly attached to Rachel and undoubtedly still loved her, he wanted to be buried in the cave of his fathers as a testimony to the fact that his faith was the same as theirs and that the meaning of life is to be found, not in this life alone, but in eternity.

- Jim Boice

As much as he loved Rachel, he loved the Lord more and wanted to be buried with his father and grandfather!

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**

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!

You see, seventy-two days was the maximum amount of time that the Egyptians mourned, and this was done for the Pharaoh's.

That means, at this time, the Jews were not hated but respected by the Egyptians.

VERSES 4-14

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 Joseph and for 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 we see that Jacob was buried in the cave of Machpelah near Mamre, where he wanted to be buried.

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.***"

Most honorable yes, but not the most important. We see that the burial and then the resurrection of Jesus being the most important!

VERSES 15-18

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. You see, with the death of their father, they thought Joseph would take advantage of that opportunity he now had.

And look at what they do. They tell Joseph, ***“Look, dad said that after he dies that you should not hurt us. In fact, dad commanded that you don’t!”***

Now I think that was something that they came up with. I think Joseph showed them love all these years they were down in Egypt and their fear, and their response came from their own evil hearts and nothing that Joseph had said or done to them.

And when Joseph heard what they had to say to him, he 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.

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

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 His sacrifice 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.

Often, the problem we have in loving others and in freeing ourselves from bitterness we may have towards them is really a problem of not knowing who God is and trusting Him to be who He says He is. Joseph was able to do that, and we can too if we can learn to trust God and understand that the evil that some may perpetrate upon us, God will use it for good!

Let me give you this example.

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!

Let's play this evil in the life of Joseph out and see what God truly did here.

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 in Egypt.

If he is never made prime minister in Egypt, 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.

Make no mistake about it, they meant it for evil, but God meant it for good and we are grateful for God's great and wise plan.

VERSES 22-24

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!

And it is easy for us to look back and see how God brought them into the Promise Land. But for them, it was just a promise of God and they held onto that promise. May we do no less.

You see, 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! May we believe it!

VERSES 25-26

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!

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. (Exodus 13:19)

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!*”

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!

Is there evidence for Joseph down in Egypt. Let me share this with you. We are told, Between 1986 and 1988, Prof. Bietak found the remains of a monumental statue that seems to have belonged to a non-Egyptian ruler of Avaris.

Although only fragments remain, the archeologists estimate the original size of the seated figure to be 2 meters high and 1.5 meters in depth i.e., about one and a half times life size.

Over the statue’s right shoulder you can still see his “throw stick” i.e., the symbol of his rule.

On the back – remarkably, as with the Biblical Joseph – you can still see evidence that this ruler was wearing a striped garment, made up of at least three colors: black, red and white.

He was found in a tomb. The tomb was empty. This may be as a result of looting, but one can’t help but recall that the Biblical narrative explicitly tells us that when the Israelites left on the Exodus, they took Joseph’s bones with them (Exodus 13:19). In other words, in order to fit with the Biblical narrative, any tomb of Joseph in Egypt would have to be empty. . . .

- <https://bit.ly/3C6YHIp>

It is interesting and when you look at the tomb where this is found, and its location, this does seem to be the statue of Joseph! In fact, by this tomb of Joseph are eleven other tombs, for the rest of his brothers!

As we have seen in our study of Genesis, this book 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.

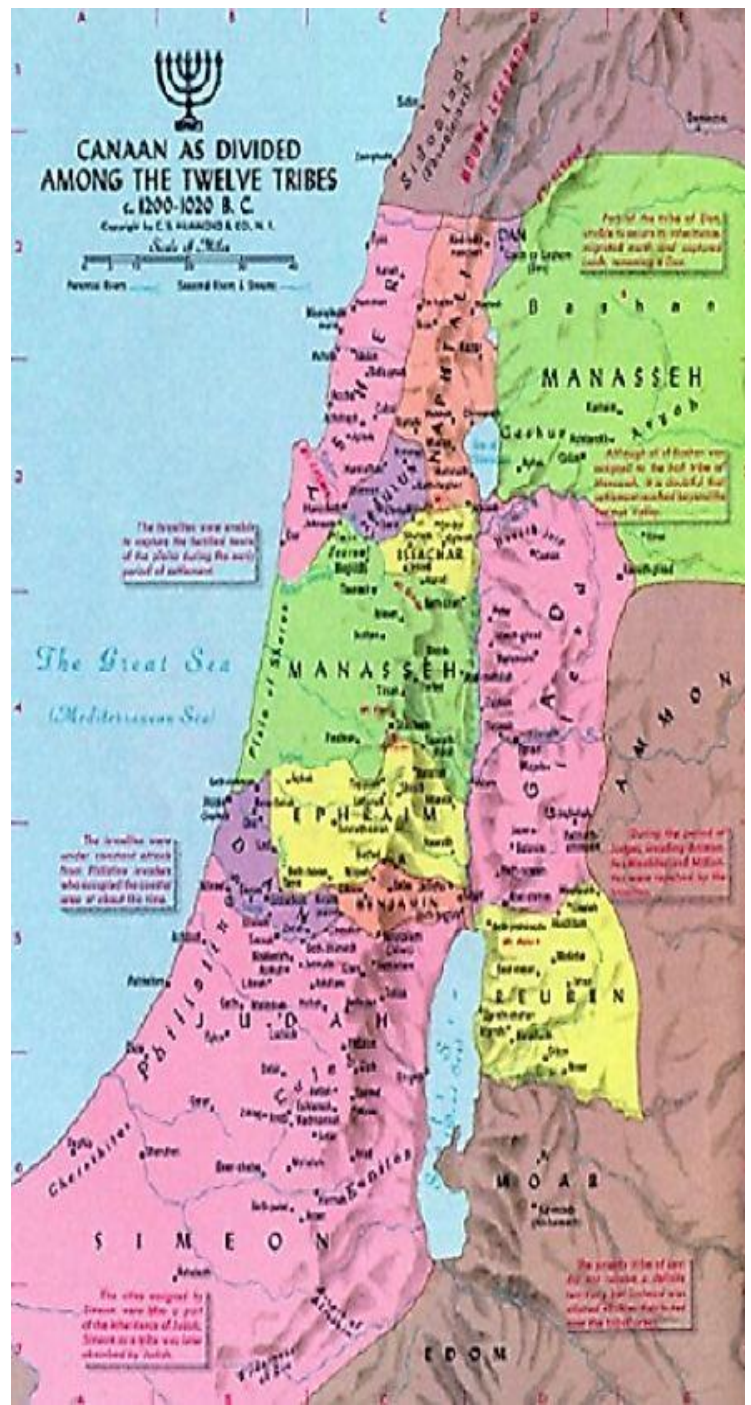
You see, God does not leave us dead and buried but gives to us hope of eternal life with Him! All the world has to offer is death, but God gives to us life, even when we don't deserve it.

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!

Tribe of Asher

Location of the 12 tribes of Israel





Picture of 12 graves including the pyramid shape tomb for Joseph

The 12 graves represent the sons of Jacob



Statue with face broken off

3D rendering of full statue



Statue's sholder showing paint fragments

Highlights show the pattern of paint fragments



Reconstruction of statue of Joseph