
Genesis 49:1-15

INTRODUCTION

We pick up tonight in the middle of scene.

Jacob believes he is ready to die and he calls for Joseph and his 2 sons - Ephraim and Manasseh.

Jacob takes these 2 sons of Joseph as his own - and they will be numbered with the tribes of Israel.

He is blind - yet the Lord guides his hands as he pronounces his blessing upon them - He is filled with the Spirit in this important moment.

By the leading of the Lord Jacob pronounces the blessing of the first born on the younger son

CHAPTER 49

{1} And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days. {2} Gather yourselves together, and hear, ye sons of Jacob; and hearken unto Israel your father.

Jacob has GREAT privilege here in the Scriptures

REMEMBER - Abraham passed from the scene and we don't get many details of his death.

But in Abraham the Messianic stream was NARROWED - Ishmael was cut off and the Messianic line moved to Isaac.

In Isaac's life the stream was narrowed - Esau was separated from the Messianic line and the blessing came to Jacob.

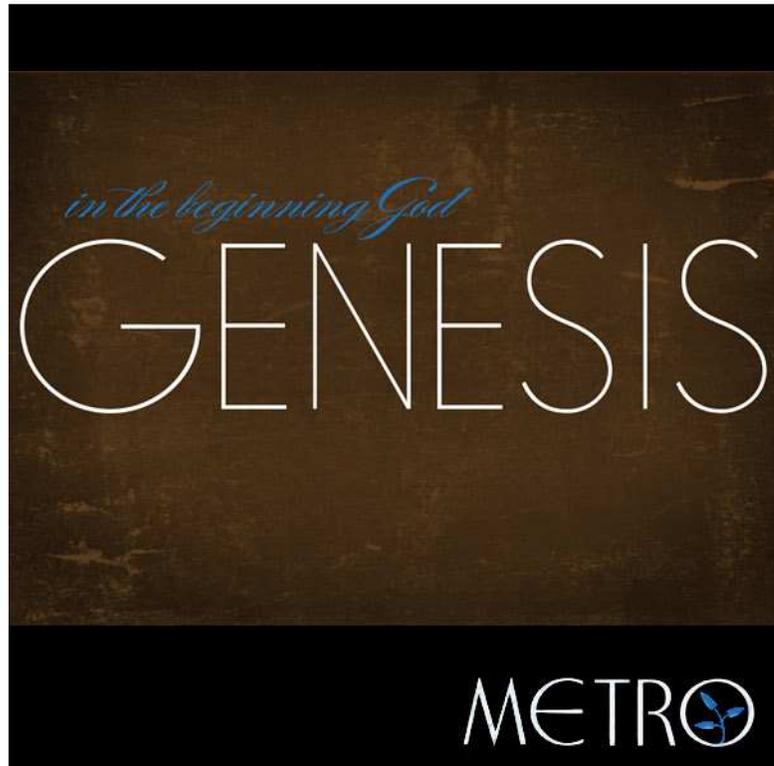
BUT NOW IN JACOB the Messianic stream is WIDENING - to the twelve of his sons.

He calls them to himself to PROPHECY concerning them.
HEAR, YE SONS OF JACOB; AND HEARKEN UNTO ISRAEL YOUR FATHER.

Here again we see the TWO NAMES of this man used.

The name Jacob spoke of his natural strength - which in reality was his greatest spiritual weakness a reference to the flesh...the natural man.

The name Israel is a reference to the life lived after the Spirit...the life RULED BY GOD.



Hear, ye sons of Jacob - tells us that Jacob realized that his sons bore his fallen Adamic nature - that nature prone to unbelief and self-seeking - But his ADVICE comes to them from *Israel you father*.

CRUCIAL INSIGHT:

This is without a doubt the HIGHEST POINT in this man's life.

Hebrews 11 tells us this.

Hebrews 11 is the "Hall of Faith" - it sets forth for us for us INDIVIDUALS and INSTANCES of epic faith in the Old Testament!

Heb. 11:21 By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff.

NOTE WELL:

The HIGHEST manifestation of FAITH in this man is in his passing - God's longsuffering.

And as we have seen so well - this is a man we can so readily relate to.

He is a man who LONGED for the HIGHER things - the HEAVENLY things - but he always got his own hands involved.

He believed in God but he always seemed to think that God need his help.

He believed God but he saw himself as God's little helper!

On one side there was great faith - On the other side there was great mistrust.

AGAIN - We have little or no detail on the death of Abraham and Isaac - but tremendous detail in Jacob's passing.

KEY INSIGHT:

I BELIEVE that this is because at THIS MOMENT he can't lend any of his own energies to this moment.

So this is the moment in which his life MOST gives glory to God!

EXAMPLE:

I have seen saints give God such glory in their death
(ELDON STARKEY - RICHELLE)

There are believers who have struggled in their death - experienced prolonged suffering and illness.

They came to the point of questioning the ways and the wisdom of God.

I DON'T have the answers as to WHY God allowed things to happen they way the do - but I KNOW that the EVIDENCE for His love for us far outweighs the questions I might have.

{3} Reuben, thou art my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power: {4} Unstable (or boiling) as water, thou shalt not excel; because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; then defiledst thou it: he went up to my couch.

It is very interesting to see what Jacob has to say about each of these men.

And in each case Jacob reflects upon their PERSONAL lives and PROJECTS it onto the future of each TRIBE collectively.

Moses reiterates the same things about these tribes in DEUT. 33.

Most remarkably - when we get to the Book of Joshua and they draw lots for the land they fall out EXACTLY as Jacob said that they would!!

He says to Reuben that the future of his family - his tribe - will reflect the life of Reuben - THEY WON'T EXCEL

Reuben, Gad and half the tribe of Manasseh will NOT cross over Jordan.

They settle on the East side of Jordan - and they are the first to fall when the Assyrians invade.

KEY OBSERVATION:

Reuben - the first born - SHOULD HAVE been great he NEVER did excel.

KEY QUESTION:

What was his demise - the cause of his instability?

ANSWER:

He was given over to LUST

KEY INSIGHT:

Strong's Hebrew dictionary defines *UNSTABLE* as froth (figuratively, lust)

KEY APPLICATION:

I challenge you this evening - if you have a problem with lust - it will be your demise unless some decisions are made!!

If you have ANY pornography in the house YOU have to make the decision to get it out.

YOU have to decide to not walk past any magazine racks where there is pornography.

THERE ARE people that are tortured by pornography.

There is a pastor I know of who when he travels will not go into his hotel room until the TV is REMOVED from the room because he knows his own struggles and won't even attempt to face the temptation.

CURRENT APPLICATION:

I believe that the Church today MANY believers are not excelling for this very reason.

Amongst professing believers sexual sin is taken so lightly.
Too many Christians DIMINISH the sinfulness of sexual immorality.

NOTE WELL: There is a PROCESS involved whereby people DECEIVE THEMSELVES.

They flirt with the sin - and don't call it sin.

They finally get to the point that when they commit the sin and say that it's O.K. with God

[1 John 1:8](#); If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

THAT is duplicity - doublemindedness.

Those are LIVING in sin you actually begin to believe the lie

IF you fall into sexual sin - how much will you excel after that?

Is there RESTORATION if you have fallen into sexual sin? YES!

To what degree? I don't know.

Will we ever be what we used to be in the Lord? I don't know.

QUOTE:

Alan Redpath - Speaking of David after his sin with Bathsheba "He was like a bird with his wings clipped. He would fly again but never as high."

When we look at the life of David we have to ask - How great a man might he HAVE been had he not fallen into sin.

Reuben NEVER excelled because he wa given over to sexual desire.

{5} Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. {6} O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united: for in their anger they slew a man, and in their selfwill they digged down a wall. {7} Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.

Simeon and Levi

Here we see two of the brothers that seemed have paired off and become close

But the things that BOUND them together are NOT good things.
Their TEMPER and SELF-WILL was the common ground of their closeness

The old saying: "Water seeks it's own level"

You will see people of the same bent seeming to be drawn to each other.

EXAMPLE:

H.S. Camps - Within HOURS you would see the carnal ones finding the carnal company.

And vice-versa.

KEY INSIGHT:

Their Self-will and anger would lead to their own loss
ALL of us have anger - God has given to us the capacity to emote anger.

Anger is a NECESSARY part of love.

God is ANGRY at sin.

Jesus expressed anger at the hypocrisy in the Temple.

There are some things we should have anger towards.

If someone was harming my wife or kids and I wasn't angry - something would be wrong with me.

The problem with anger is what we do with it - punch holes in sheet rock.

KEY INSIGHT:

To be GIVEN to wrath in a selfish way is WRONG.

[Ecc. 7:9](#); Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools.

Oh how many lives have been pulled down by anger that has found a residence in a man or woman's heart.

They have lost the things nearest and dearest to themselves.

It is no wonder that Paul said:

[Eph. 4:31](#) Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

[Col. 3:8](#) But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice

NOTE WELL: It is interesting to note that when the tribes of these two men came into the land Simeon would be absorbed into Judah and Levi ends up without inheritance in the land.

{8} Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise:

Judah's name actually means praise.

This son is the SHINING HOPE of the nation of Israel for out his tribe will come the Messiah

thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee.

KEY INSIGHT:

So he is now prophesying that from the tribe of Judah will come the KING of Israel.

INTERESTING:

Moses will come to power - but through the tribe of Levi.

Joshua will come to power - but through the tribe of Ephraim.

Gideon will come to power - but through the tribe of Manasseh.

Samson is from Dan.

Samuel from Ephraim.

Saul from Benjamin.

It will be 640 years before David comes to the throne - and he is from the tribe of Judah. And from him come the succession of kings from the tribe of Judah.

{9} Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?

Of course we find in the Book of Revelation that Jesus is called THE LION OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH

{10} The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.

It is interesting that about the year six AD, the Roman government took from the nation of Israel the right of capital punishment.

Remember when they brought Jesus to Pilate, and Pilate said, "You have your law, go ahead and judge Him by your law." They said, "It is not lawful for us to put a man to death," signifying that the sentence that they wanted for Jesus was death.

They could not condemn a man to death, for that power had been stripped by the Roman government about six AD.

KEY INSIGHT:

When that power was stripped from them, the high priest went through the streets wailing and declaring that God's word had failed because the scepter had departed from Israel and Shiloh had not yet come.

Little did they know that in Nazareth, the Messiah, a lad at that time, was growing up.

In 70 AD, the Israel was scattered amongst the nations and there was no longer a lawgiver **which means that the Messiah had to come some time before 70 AD** or, indeed, the word of God did fail.

KEY INSIGHT:

If Jesus is not the promised Messiah of Israel, there is none **AND** - There is to be none.

Because here God's word plainly declares that the scepter will not depart from Judah nor a lawgiver from between his feet until the Messiah, the Shiloh, the peace has come.

"...*Unto Him shall the gathering of the people be,*" and that, of course, is a prophecy that was repeated by Isaiah in the 9th chapter when he says,

Isa. 9:6-7; For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

"...*Until Shiloh come,*"

Shiloh from the Hebrew word for PEACE = Shalom.

This prophecy was fulfilled in that SHILOH speaks of Jesus the *PRINCE OF PEACE*.

Remember how Jesus, when He came into Jerusalem the Sunday before His crucifixion **WEPT** - *If you had only known those things that belonged to thy PEACE in this thy day.*

{11} Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes: {12} His eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk.

KEY INSIGHT:

Here Jacob says exactly what Isaiah did.

Is. 63:1 Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. {2} Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? {3} I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment.

It speaks of the second coming of Jesus after the great tribulation period - as seen in Revelation 19.

{13} Zebulun shall dwell at the haven of the sea; and he shall be for an haven of ships; and his border shall be unto Zidon.

Zebulun - Given the area in the NORTH of the Promised land that is now known as Lebanon - 3 miles from the sea - Asher stood between Zebulun and the sea

{14} Issachar is a strong ass couching down between two burdens: {15} And he saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant; and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute.

COUCHING DOWN BETWEEN TWO BURDENS

When they came into the land this tribe settled between the mountains in Ezdralon - the valley of Meggido.

VERY INTERESTING:

The RSV reads - couching between two sheepfolds.

KEY INSIGHT:

THIS is NOT a pretty picture - Between the sheepfolds is where the shepherds would throw the dung.

The picture is that of a strong beast of burden lying down on the warmth of the dunghill - Willing to wallow in filth for the sake of comfort.

KEY APPLICATION:

There are those who live in moral filth for the sake of personal comfort - gain or pleasure.

AND HE SAW THAT REST WAS GOOD

Isaachar's tribe would be known for it's strength but also for it's laziness.

KEY POINT #1 -

Laziness is a TRAP for the child of God.

KEY APPLICATION:

We live in a time and in a culture that is obsessed with leisure.

In Europe the average worker gets SIX weeks paid vacation.

In our country Amusement parks are a multi-billion dollar industry

AMUSEMENT - Prefix a = without / Muse = thought

Amusement parks are places where people spend money to go to have *PLEASURE WITHOUT THINKING*.

KEY POINT #2 -

We must be careful to avoid the advice of those who warn against overdoing it when it comes to the Kingdom of God.

LABOR - Physically and spiritually has always been at the heart of the Kingdom of God

[1 Cor. 3:9](#) For we are labourers together with God

Paul and his co-workers knew nothing of ease in the work of God

[2 Ths. 3:8](#) Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you:

[Col. 4:12](#) Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.

BOWED HIS SHOULDER TO BEAR, AND BECAME A SERVANT UNTO TRIBUTE.

RSV = a slave at forced labor

There are many people today who have become SLAVES to sin because of that moment in their lives when they chose the warmth of the moral manure pile for a little comfort.

How we need to WORK while it is still day.

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