

Pentwater Bible Church

Jacob Prophecies Over His Sons - Part II

Genesis Message Eighty - Seven

Genesis 49: 13-21



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Jacob Blesses His Sons-Harry Anderson

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JACOB PROPHECIES OVER HIS SONS PART II

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Review:

ISRAEL'S PROPHECY OVER HIS SONS PART I



TWELVE TRIBES OF ISRAEL LAND ALLOTMENT

THE ASSEMBLY

Genesis 49: 1-2

Jacob assembled his sons together as he lay on his deathbed to confer upon each of them their prophetic futures. He being driven by God's Spirit would relate to each of them. This was not going to be any ordinary conversation. The order in which he presents their individual prophecies is different than the list that was given in Genesis 30-31. The term Latter Days makes reference to an end time period for each of the twelve tribes. This prophesied outcome of each tribe will have its final fulfillment in the Messianic Kingdom, which will follow the Great Tribulation. This prophecy that Jacob gave here is similar to the one Moses gave in Deuteronomy 33. The term Latter Days is found thirteen times in the Old Testament (Genesis 49:1; Numbers 24:14; Deuteronomy 4:30, 31:29; Isaiah 2:2; Jeremiah 23:20, 30:24, 48:47, 49:39; Ezekiel 38:16; Hosea 3:5; Micah 4:1; Daniel 10:14). It is used here in reference to the full measure of their near and far distant prophetic future. Rabbinic tradition tells us that Jacob wanted to tell them *when* the Messiah would come. Then just as suddenly as he started to prophecy the Shechinah Glory left him so he did not have the deity expressing Himself through him and he altered the prophecies. Scripture does not support the rabbinic teachings. What they show us is that the Jews did expect their Messiah and knew His prophetic appearance was given in these prophecies that Jacob gave to his sons.

Nevertheless God's Spirit did come upon Jacob to allow him to prophecy accurately regarding future developments of the nation Israel through the twelve tribes. The blessing gives, in short poetic form through expressions of word pictures giving general outlines of the sons prophetic character, in which they receive the historical development of the tribes in the future. It also expresses an unmistakable genuineness of each of their individual characters. Prophetically the individual's character becomes the nature of the tribe and then of the nation Israel.

Therefore the Holy Spirit of God revealed to the dying Israel the future development of the tribes and assigned each of them position and importance in the nation into which they were to expand up to and including the last days, and not merely at some future time.

REUBEN'S BLESSING

Genesis 49: 3-4

Reuben was indeed Jacob's first born from Leah. As such he had inheritance rights. He was preeminent of the twelve sons. He should have had a double portion of any inheritance including a high place in the conveyance of the Abrahamic Covenant. He should have had the Messiah come through his line. But he lost it. In Jacob's poetic word pictures he calls him a unstable as, "*Boiling over as water.*") Considering the characteristics of water boiling over and matching it to Reuben's personality we see him as very passionate but lacking self-control. He was a man of unstable emotions. So instead of a blessing he actually receives a curse. What he should have received was divided between two other sons. Joseph became the first born in his stead and the double portion came unto Ephraim and Manasseh his sons. The preeminence went to Judah.

Jacob then gave the reason for Reuben's loss. Israel said, "*Because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; Then defiledst thou it: he went up to my couch.*" Reuben had

sexual intercourse with his father's concubine (Genesis 35:22) Bilhah. Not only was it adultery but it was incest too. Reuben and the tribe that would come from him would not have anything of importance to contribute in the future of Israel.

The tribe of Reuben never provided a leader of any kind for the nation (Judge, prophet, etc.). In the future trip to the Promised Land after the Exodus wandering was through they were the first to ask for a place to settle. They did not want to cross the Jordan with the others (Numbers 32). They assisted in the building of an unauthorized place of worship (Joshua 22:10-34) During the wars with the Canaanites during Deborah's time they failed to assist the military efforts (Judges 5:15-16). Ruben's performance has always been dismal. His numbers in the various censuses continually decreased. Moses had to intervene with God for him as told in Deuteronomy 33:6 so the tribe did not disappear altogether.

SIMEON AND LEVI'S BLESSING

Genesis 49: 5-7

The two sons of Leah Simeon and Levi were inseparable as close companions and full brothers. However, Jacob spares no time expressing their character, which he calls "*Weapons of violence are their swords.*" Whereas Reuben had lust and weakness, these two had outright anger and cruelty. It was their hot tempers that caused them to kill all the men in the village of Shechem after the rape incident with Dinah their sister. There was no legitimate justification for that act. It was pure vengeance. Jacob disassociated himself from their actions. He said that "*in their anger they slew a man, And in their self-will they hocked an ox.*" They killed men and destroyed property. The hocking of an ox in this Bible version means to hamstring it or cut the hamstring. These are a powerful group of muscles at the back of the thigh, which are larger tendons at the back of the hock in the hind leg of an animal. The hamstring bends the knee and helps to straighten the hip. When these are cut then the animal is crippled and can't work or even eat. In short they must be killed. As a result of these destructive behaviors Israel said, "*I will divide them in Jacob, And scatter them in Israel.*" In terms of their inheritance of the Land neither got their own separate property. Simeon was living within the tribal land of Judah and Levi was scattered in forty-eight different Levitical cities (Numbers 18:20-24, 35:1-8; Deuteronomy 10:9; Joshua 14:4, 21:1-42). The Simeonites were always bad. The Levites largely redeemed themselves by their stand against idolatry in Moses day Exodus 32:26). Moses was a Levi and they became the priestly line. The prophecy said they would be scattered and not have any land of their own. This happened.

JUDAH'S BLESSING

Genesis 49: 8-12

Israel starts out this prophecy with the praise Judah will receive from his brethren. No longer is Israel giving bleak prophecies. Judah is going to receive praise and interestingly that is what his name means in Hebrew; praise. This was pure blessing. The blessing was of inalienable supremacy and power. Israel said, "*Judah thou, thee will thy brethren praise! thy hand in the neck of thy foes! to thee will thy father's sons bow down!*" He had already demonstrated his superior character by not going along with his

brothers to kill Joseph and then pleading with Joseph to save Benjamin. He offered himself in place of Benjamin for surety. Judah will succeed in was affirmed in other Scriptures (II Samuel 22:4; Psalm 18:40). He also gained preeminence over the other tribes. In Numbers 2:9 in the wilderness wanderings Judah *set forth first*; In Numbers 10:14 he headed the march though the wilderness. In I Chronicles 5:2 Judah prevailed above his brethren. In Judges 1:1-2 Judah is chosen by God to go up first against the Canaanites. Judah's tribe was loyal to the house of David at the time of the revolt of the ten tribes (I Kings 12:20); Led the division of Israel in their journeys (Numbers 10:14); were commissioned by God to lead the conquest of the promised land (Judges 1:1-3; 4-21 and the tribe of Judah made David King (II Samuel 2:1-11, 5:4-5).

Judah received a massive amount of power in four phrases:

1. Lion's whelp emphasizes power, vigor and nobility
2. From the prey he has gone up emphasizes his success in killing his prey
3. Stooping down as a crouched lion means he is ready to pounce
4. As a lioness who will rouse him? This means he is pictured as a strong lion.
5. Judah is therefore pictured as the Lion of the Tribe of Judah. In Numbers 24:9 Balaam uses the same illustration for Israel.

CHARTS INDICATING THE POWER AND POSITION OF JUDAH IN THE CAMP AROUND THE TABERNACLE

Jacob said to Judah that, "*The sceptre shall not depart from Judah.*" The sceptre is a clear indication of power, which only a monarch has. It indicates a right to rule.

As the prophecy moves on it says, "*Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet.*" Messiah's theocratic rule will not end and He will have theocratic administration. The judicial (civil) rule will go until, "*Until Shiloh come.*" Shiloh is a prophetic name for the Messiah. Its specific rendering is "whose it is." The civil or judicial rule by Judah will continue until the Messiah comes. The theocratic rule will go on forever.

The term "scepter" also refers to their tribal identity and the right to apply and enforce Mosaic Laws and adjudicate capital offenses. It is significant that even during their 70-year Babylonian captivity (606-537 B.C.) the tribes retained their tribal identity [Josh MacDowell, *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*, pp. 108-168.] They retained their own logistics, judges, etc. (~~Ezekiel 1:5,8~~) The term "Shiloh" was understood by the early rabbis and Talmudic authorities as referring to the Messiah. (Targum Onkelos, Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, and Targum Yerushalmi, *The Messiah: An Aramaic Interpretation*; The Messianic Exegesis of the Targum, Samson H. Levy, Hebrew Union College Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati, 1974.)

In A.D. 6-7, King Herod's son and successor, Herod Archelaus, was dethroned and banished to Vienna, a city in Gaul. Archelaus was the second son of Herod the Great. After the death of Herod, Caesar Augustus had placed Archelaus over Judea as "Entharch". Broadly rejected, he was removed in A.D. 6-7. A Roman procurator named Caponius replaced him. The legal power of the Sanhedrin was immediately restricted and the adjudication of capital cases was lost. This was normal Roman policy (Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, 2:8). The sceptre had departed from Judah but Shiloh had come. Jesus was in the world and growing up in Nazareth.

The prophecy says, “*Binding his foal unto the vine, And his ass’s colt unto the choice vine;*” which is an illustration of these vines being so strong that if the foal moves his head he will normally pull out the vines holding him. This is another illustration of him being so strong that even a strong colt could not break the vine and choice vine in an indication of abundance. The Messianic aspect of this is that when Messiah is presented He will be riding on an ass.

Next the prophecy says, “*He hath washed his garments in wine, And his vesture in the blood of grapes.*” This is directly from Isaiah 63:1-6 and revelation 14:17-20. It closes with, “*His eyes shall be red with wine, And his teeth white with milk.*” This indicates abundance. It does not indicate intoxication abundance just simple abundance. Jesus is All in All.

Today’s Lesson:

ZEBULUN

Genesis 49: 13

¹³Zebulun shall dwell at the haven of the sea; And he shall be for a haven of ships; And his border shall be upon Sidon (ASV 1901).

Jacob gives Zebulun the territory, which will have access to shipping. The territory he received in the allotment in Joshua 19:10-16 did not border on the sea. In fact he was landlocked between Asher Naphtali Issachar and Manasseh. He was close to the Phoenician city of Sidon, which was a major shipping port. Ezekiel chapter forty-eight describes the territory that the twelve sons will receive in the Millennial Kingdom. Zebulun is specified in verse twenty-eight. It does not give his borders there. The prophecy must be fulfilled then because it was not fulfilled in the Old Testament.

Other factors in the history of this tribe include:

1. His men risked their lives for Israel’s independence (Judges 5:18).
2. Elon the Judge came from this tribe (Judges 12:11-12).
3. They strongly supported David (I Chronicles 12:33; 12:40).
4. His territory was in the Galilean region and was a major area of Jesus’ ministry and He was raised in Nazareth, which is within Zebulun’s territory. (Isaiah 9:1; Matthew 4:15-16).

ISSACHAR

Genesis 49:14-15

¹⁴Issachar is a strong ass, Couching down between the sheepfolds: ¹⁵And he saw a resting-place that it was good, And the land that it was pleasant; And

he bowed his shoulder to bear, And became a servant under task work (ASV 1901).

This is a sort of cryptic prophecy. It does state two characteristics. First Issachar is said to be a strong ass and second he is crouching down between the sheepfolds. The strong ass is a reference to his connection to agriculture and not to political rank. In Numbers 26:25 his tribe numbered 64,300. Later in I Chronicles they counted out at 87,000. Issachar who is also characterized as crouching represents a lazy side to this tribe. They were not very ambitious. The prophecy *And he saw a resting-place that it was good*, characterizes his as not being to active and having an easy life. Some have characterized him as having ease at the cost of liberty. The figure also indicated that Issachar would become a robust, powerful race of men, and receive a pleasant inheritance which would lead to comfort and repose. He did live in the Jezreel Valley, which is agriculturally rich. It will also be a site during the final battle in the Great Tribulation.

He preferred to be a laborer instead of a leader since he was quite strong physically. He was willing to trade his liberty for material possessions. He did submit to the corrupt Canaanites. Moses drew a connection between Issachar's wealth and the Mediterranean (Deuteronomy 33:18-19). In Judges 5:15 with much prodding from Barak they joined in the war. In Judges 10:1-2 they did produce one Judge, Tola. Finally we see in I Chronicles 12:32 they are identified as David's supporters.

DAN

Genesis 49: 16-18

¹⁶Dan shall judge his people, As one of the tribes of Israel. ¹⁷Dan shall be a serpent in the way, An adder in the path, That biteth the horse's heels, So that his rider falleth backward. ¹⁸I have waited for thy salvation, O Jehovah (ASV 1901).

Jacob immediately characterizes Dan as "judging his people." We see this getting fulfilled in Samson who came from this tribe (Judges 13-16). He was frequently list last and does not make the list of the worldwide evangelist team during the Great Tribulation. Two sections of Scripture refer to him as being last (Numbers 10:25; Joshua 19:40-48). Even though they are not selected to participated in the greatest evangelistic outreach the world will have ever known he is not forgotten. This tribe is included in the Messianic Kingdom (Ezekiel 48:1-2,32). The prophecy goes on to describe his fighting strategies of *a serpent in the way, An adder in the path, That biteth the horse's heels, So that his rider falleth backward*. His war strategies have been realized in Sampson Judges (18:1-31). Finally the prophecy ends with Dan's salvation. This is the first use of the word salvation in the Bible It is used seventy-eight times in the Old Testament. It is *יְשׁוּעָה* *yeshua* in Hebrew or Jesus in English.

GAD

Genesis 49:19

¹⁹*Gad, a troop shall press upon him; But he shall press upon their heel (ASV 1901).*

The main point of this one verse is that raiders will raid God and he will retaliate. The Hebrew word for troop is a marauding band. So this is what will press on him. The blessing, which is formed out of the name *Gad*, contains no special prophecies to identifiable historical events so we can track them. Moses identified his fighting ability in Deuteronomy 33:20.1 Chron. 5:18 proves that the Gadites displayed the bravery promised them by Jacob. In 1 Chron. 12:8–15, where the Gadites who come to David are compared to lions, and their swiftness to that of roes. Members of his tribe supported David.

ASHER

Genesis 49:20

²⁰*Out of Asher his bread shall be fat, And he shall yield royal dainties (ASV 1901).*

This prophecy means he will have a very fruitful soil. He also will desire to have rich food. Asher received as his inheritance the lowlands of Carmel on the Mediterranean as far as the territory of Tyre, one of the most fertile parts of Canaan, abounding in wheat and oil, with which Solomon supplied and household of king Hiram (1 Kings 5:11).

Other verses in the Old Testament indicate that he will dip his foot in oil (Deuteronomy 33:24). Specifically this was Moses prophecy of the outcome of the future for Asher. Some interpret this to be olive oil in keeping with the food prophecy from Jacob. Still others sense that it refers to petroleum oil. In which case there has been much exploration for oil in Asher's territory by several oil exploration companies such as Zion. Today some Christian geologists and oilmen are using these verses as a sort of treasure map to look for petroleum.

Israel, like the rest of the industrialized world, is dependent on a steady flow of oil from reliable sources. After capturing the Sinai Peninsula in 1967, Israeli petroleum explorers discovered and developed the Alma Oil Fields on the western side of the Sinai Peninsula. For a while these wells provided Israel with a reliable source of oil. Israel "lost" the oil fields in the negotiations for peace with Egypt in 1979. Today, Israel does not have a steady, reliable supply of oil.

Offshore of Israel's northern port city of Haifa, rigs are working to tap the first major fossil-fuel reserve ever found in Israel's territory, a store on which it hopes to build a far more independent energy future.

The Tamar natural gas field was discovered in 2009 some 50 miles (80 kilometers) off Haifa's coast in the Mediterranean Sea. In each oil well there is natural gas. It is the propellant, which drives the oil to the surface. These finds have been natural gas alone. Tamar is large enough to meet all of Israel's natural gas requirements for 20 to 30 years, the experts say. Interestingly the find has been just off the coast of the land allotment to Asher. We know that the coming allied invasion led by the Russians and

including the Muslim nations will be driven to seek a spoil (Ezekiel 38: 12). If Israel develops a significant amount of natural resources this just might be the attraction for Gog to attack.



NAPHTALI

Genesis 49:21

²¹*Naphtali is a hind let loose: He giveth goodly words (ASV 1901).*

Jacob just made two very simple statements. Naphtali is described as a deer with free movement and he gives godly speech. Both of these prophecies indicate a refinement and a gift of speech. We see this in Judges 5:1-31 within the song of Deborah and Barak.

NEXT WEEK: JACOB BLESSES & PROPHECIES OVER HIS SONS PART III

Please call or e-mail with any questions or comments

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