

GENESIS 49: JACOB BLESSES HIS SONS

I. CHAPTER OUTLINE

- A. Jacob introduces his blessing for his family – v. 1-2
- B. Jacob pronounces blessings on his sons – v. 3-27
 - i. Reuben – v. 3-4
 - ii. Simeon and Levi – v. 5-7
 - iii. Judah – v. 8-12
 - iv. Zebulun – v. 13
 - v. Issachar – v. 14-15
 - vi. Dan – v. 16-18
 - vii. Gad – v. 19
 - viii. Asher – v. 20
 - ix. Naphtali – v. 21
 - x. Joseph – v. 22-26
 - xi. Benjamin – v. 27
- C. The blessing is completed – v. 28
- D. Jacob gives instructions for his burial – v. 29-32
- E. Jacob dies – v. 33

II. INTRODUCTION

- A. Do you ever wish you could know the future?
 - i. At least some of it, so you can be prepared for what will happen?
 - ii. What would you do with that knowledge?
- B. Jacob, through the Spirit, is going to tell his sons what will happen in the future
 - i. This was meant to both rebuke and encourage them
 - ii. As well as give insight into the fulfillment of Abraham's covenant
- C. How will they respond? How will their descendants respond?
 - i. How will we respond?

III. THEN – V. 1

- A. After Jacob had finished blessing Ephraim and Manasseh

IV. THAT I MAY TELL YOU WHAT SHALL HAPPEN – V.1

- A. First time a person has intentionally given a prophecy in the Bible

V. IN DAYS TO COME – V. 1

- A. Or, in the last days
 - i. Jacob was speaking of God’s plan for future Israel
 - ii. Many of these blessings won’t come to pass until a future time
 - a. So they may seem unclear now
 - iii. According to Nachmanides, this phrase refers to the time of the Messiah
 - a. Apocalyptic in nature
 - i. Refers to when Messiah will destroy the nations who oppose him
 - ii. And eradicate wickedness on the earth
 - b. This is the consensus among Jewish scholars according to Ramban
 - c. So we must read this blessing with this in mind
- B. Jewish legend
 - i. Jacob was about to speak the “great secret concerning the end of time”
 - ii. But then God suddenly arrived and left just as quickly
 - iii. Taking the mysteries with him¹

VI. YOU ARE MY FIRSTBORN – V. 3

- A. Jacob first describes what Reuben should have been
 - i. My might
 - a. A mighty and powerful man
 - ii. The firstfruits of my strength
 - a. The first one to show the strength of his father’s family
 - iii. Preeminent in dignity
 - a. The most dignified one of the family
 - iv. Preeminent in power
 - a. The most powerful one in the family

VII. UNSTABLE AS WATER – V. 4

- A. What strength he has is now turbulent and destructive²
 - i. Dathan and Abiram were Reubenites and leaders in Kohath’s rebellion

¹ Guzik, D. (2018). *Genesis 49 - The Blessing of the Sons of Jacob*. Enduring Word. Retrieved March 23, 2024, from <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/genesis-49/>

² Wiersbe, W. W. (2010). *Be Authentic: Exhibiting Real Faith in the Real World: OT Commentary, Genesis 25-50*. David C. Cook.

- a. Numbers 16:1-2 **Now Korah the son of Izhar, son of Kohath, son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men. And they rose up before Moses, with a number of the people of Israel, 250 chiefs of the congregation, chosen from the assembly, well-known men.**
- B. His strength is now weakness
 - i. The tribal population would decline between the exodus and entering Canaan
 - a. Numbers 1:20-21 **The people of Reuben, Israel's firstborn, their generations, by their clans, by their fathers' houses, according to the number of names, head by head, every male from twenty years old and upward, all who were able to go to war: those listed of the tribe of Reuben were 46,500.**
 - b. Numbers 26:7 **These are the clans of the Reubenites, and those listed were 43,730.**
 - ii. They didn't come to Deborah's aid when she requested it
 - a. Judges 5:15-16 **... the princes of Issachar came with Deborah, and Issachar faithful to Barak; into the valley they rushed at his heels. Among the clans of Reuben there were great searchings of heart. Why did you sit still among the sheepfolds, to hear the whistling for the flocks? Among the clans of Reuben there were great searchings of heart.**
- C. Instability of character is given as the reason he will not inherit the birthright
 - i. He was unable to control his lust for power
 - a. And therefore will not be chosen to lead his people
 - ii. We must be careful we don't disqualify ourselves from what God has for us
 - a. Self-control is a fruit of the spirit
 - i. Galatians 5:19-23 **Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.**

VIII. YOU SHALL NOT HAVE PREEMINENCE – V. 4

- A. Reuben had preeminence in the family as the firstborn
 - i. But this would no longer be the case

IX. YOU DEFILED IT – V. 4

- A. Reuben slept with his father's wife in order to make a power grab
 - i. Genesis 35:22 ***While Israel lived in that land, Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine. And Israel heard of it.***

X. SIMEON AND LEVI ARE BROTHERS – V. 5

- A. In blood and in deed

XI. WEAPONS OF VIOLENCE – V. 5

- A. Simeon and Levi were responsible for destroying the town of Shechem
 - i. Genesis 34:25-27 ***On the third day, when they were sore, two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brothers, took their swords and came against the city while it felt secure and killed all the males. They killed Hamor and his son Shechem with the sword and took Dinah out of Shechem's house and went away. The sons of Jacob came upon the slain and plundered the city, because they had defiled their sister.***

XII. LET MY SOUL COME NOT INTO THEIR COUNCIL – V. 6

- A. Jacob was not happy with their actions
 - i. Genesis 34:30 ***Then Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, "You have brought trouble on me by making me stink to the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites and the Perizzites. My numbers are few, and if they gather themselves against me and attack me, I shall be destroyed, both I and my household."***
- B. We must have the same aversion to wickedness
 - i. Psalm 1:1-2 ***Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.***

XIII. IN THEIR WILLFULNESS – V. 6

- A. Their hearts were set on murder
 - i. There was nothing anyone could do to convince them not to do it

XIV. THEY HAMSTRUNG OXEN – V. 6

- A. They cut the animals' tendons so they would be useless³
 - i. This was not an act of necessity but of cruelty

XV. CURSED BE THEIR ANGER – V. 7

³ Armstrong, S. (2013, July 14). Genesis 2011 - Lesson 49. Verse By Verse Ministries. Retrieved March 24, 2024, from https://versebyverseministry.org/lessons/genesis_2011_lesson_49

- A. Their anger was the real problem
 - i. Matthew 5:21-22 ***"You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.' But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire."***
- B. Therefore Jacob cursed the anger, not the men

XVI. DIVIDE THEM – V. 7

- A. Levi would be divided as a tribe among the rest as priests
 - i. Deuteronomy 18:2 ***"The Levitical priests, all the tribe of Levi, shall have no portion or inheritance with Israel. They shall eat the LORD's food offerings as their inheritance. They shall have no inheritance among their brothers; the LORD is their inheritance, as he promised them."***
- B. But they would be redeemed when they stood with Moses during the golden calf incident
 - i. Exodus 32:25-28 ***And when Moses saw that the people had broken loose (for Aaron had let them break loose, to the derision of their enemies), then Moses stood in the gate of the camp and said, "Who is on the LORD's side? Come to me." And all the sons of Levi gathered around him. And he said to them, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel, 'Put your sword on your side each of you, and go to and fro from gate to gate throughout the camp, and each of you kill his brother and his companion and his neighbor.'" And the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses. And that day about three thousand men of the people fell.***

XVII. SCATTER THEM – V. 7

- A. Simeon would be scattered in the Kingdom of Judah
 - i. Joshua 19:9 ***The inheritance of the people of Simeon formed part of the territory of the people of Judah. Because the portion of the people of Judah was too large for them, the people of Simeon obtained an inheritance in the midst of their inheritance.***
 - ii. They mostly disappear after the conquest of Canaan

XVIII. JUDAH – V. 8

- A. Jacob didn't say anything about Judah's sin
 - i. Even though it was significant
 - a. He sold Joseph into slavery
 - b. He withheld a husband and children from his daughter-in-law Tamar

- c. He committed incest
- ii. He likely recognized Judah was repentant of his sin⁴

XIX. SHALL PRAISE YOU – V. 8

- A. Judah means “praise”
- B. In other words, it’s you whom your brothers will praise
 - i. Because your older brothers were unfit for leadership

XX. ON THE NECK OF YOUR ENEMIES – V. 8

- A. He will be victorious in battle
 - i. He will return to praise from his brothers

XXI. SHALL BOW DOWN BEFORE YOU – V. 8

- A. Similar to what Joseph saw in his dreams
 - i. But now it would be Judah who would hold that position
- B. Similar to the blessing Jacob received from Isaac
 - i. Genesis 27:29 ***Let peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you. Be lord over your brothers, and may your mother's sons bow down to you. Cursed be everyone who curses you, and blessed be everyone who blesses you!”***
- C. Judah did not receive the birthright but he was chosen to be the royal tribe
 - i. 1 Chronicles 5:1-2 ***The sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel (for he was the firstborn, but because he defiled his father's couch, his birthright was given to the sons of Joseph the son of Israel, so that he could not be enrolled as the oldest son; though Judah became strong among his brothers and a chief came from him, yet the birthright belonged to Joseph)***
 - ii. Psalm 78:67-68 ***He rejected the tent of Joseph; he did not choose the tribe of Ephraim, but he chose the tribe of Judah, Mount Zion, which he loves.***

XXII. LION’S CUB – V. 9

- A. The king of all the animals

XXIII. HE STOOPED DOWN – V. 9

- A. As a lion crouches to go to sleep

XXIV. WHO DARES ROUSE HIM – V. 9

- A. Judah is portrayed as a lion cub who had just finished a successful hunt

⁴ Wiersbe

- i. He is now laying down to rest
- ii. Anyone who would try to wake him up would be in danger
- B. Expresses how dangerous of a warrior Judah will be⁵

XXV. THE SCEPTER SHALL NOT DEPART – V. 10

- A. The kings of Israel and Judah would come from Judah's line

XXVI. UNTIL TRIBUTE COMES TO HIM – V. 10

- A. Or, until he comes to whom it belongs
 - i. The kings of Judah would rule until the rightful ruler would come to claim the throne
 - ii. That ruler would never give up the throne
- B. Hebrew *until Shiloh comes*
 - i. Means "one to whom it belongs"⁶
- C. "Tribute" comes from a revocalization of the word⁷
 - i. Some translators treat the word as a noun rather than referring to a person

XXVII. THE OBEDIENCE OF THE PEOPLES – V. 10

- A. Or, the nations
 - i. The coming king would be obeyed by more than just Israel
 - ii. He would be obeyed by the nations

XXVIII. CHOICE VINE – V. 11

- A. The reign of this coming king would be marked by prosperity and abundance
- B. The vine would be so plentiful they would be used for common tasks⁸
 - i. Like tethering animals

XXIX. WASHED HIS GARMENTS IN WINE – V. 11

- A. Wine will be as common as water used for washing⁹

XXX. DARKER THAN WINE – V. 12

- A. Redness of eyes was associated with excess wine
 - i. Proverbs 23:29-30 ***Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has complaining? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? Those who tarry long over wine; those who go to try mixed wine.***

⁵ Sailhamer, J. H. (2008). *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (T. Longman & D. E. Garland, Eds.; Revised Edition). Zondervan.

⁶ Sailhamer

⁷ Sailhamer

⁸ Sailhamer

⁹ Sailhamer

- ii. Continues the picture of abundance from the previous verse
 - a. Not that the coming king would be given to drunkenness

XXXI. TEETH WHITER THAN MILK – V. 12

- A. Milk was a symbol of wealth and abundance
 - i. Leviticus 20:24 ***But I have said to you, “You shall inherit their land, and I will give it to you to possess, a land flowing with milk and honey.” I am the LORD your God, who has separated you from the peoples.***

XXXII. JACOB’S BLESSING ON THE REMAINING BROTHERS – V. 13-27

- A. They are much more brief than the previous four
 - i. With the exception of Joseph
- B. They are mostly wordplays on the brothers’ names
- C. They all provide an image of prosperity
 - i. They show what the ultimate end of Israel will be when the king establishes his rule

XXXIII. ZEBULUN SHALL DWELL – V. 13

- A. Zebulun means “lofty abode”
- B. In other words, the abode shall abide¹⁰

XXXIV. AT THE SHORE OF THE SEA – V. 13

- A. Zebulun’s allotment didn’t reach the sea
 - i. Joshua 19:10-16 ***The third lot came up for the people of Zebulun, according to their clans. And the territory of their inheritance reached as far as Sarid. Then their boundary goes up westward and on to Mareal and touches Dabbesheth, then the brook that is east of Jokneam. From Sarid it goes in the other direction eastward toward the sunrise to the boundary of Chisloth-tabor. From there it goes to Daberath, then up to Japhia. From there it passes along on the east toward the sunrise to Gath-hepher, to Eth-kazin, and going on to Rimmon it bends toward Neah, then on the north the boundary turns about to Hannathon, and it ends at the Valley of Iphtahel; and Kattath, Nahalal, Shimron, Idalah, and Bethlehem—twelve cities with their villages. This is the inheritance of the people of Zebulun, according to their clans—these cities with their villages.***

XXXV. SIDON – V. 13

¹⁰ Sailhamer

- A. Most powerful city in ancient Phoenicia
 - i. On the sea and well north of Zebulun
- B. In modern day Lebanon¹¹

XXXVI. STRONG DONKEY – V. 14

- A. Kings rode on donkeys in those days
 - i. Issachar would bear and support kings
 - a. They knew how to support David in his transition to king
 - i. 1 Chronicles 12:32 ***Of Issachar, men who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do, 200 chiefs, and all their kinsmen under their command.***

XXXVII. BETWEEN THE SHEEPFOLDS – V. 14

- A. Or, between its saddlebags

XXXVIII. HE SAW THAT A RESTING PLACE WAS GOOD – V. 15

- A. Refers to the future rest coming for Israel
 - i. Similar to Noah
 - a. Genesis 5:29 ***When Lamech had lived 182 years, he fathered a son and called his name Noah, saying, “Out of the ground that the LORD has cursed, this one shall bring us relief from our work and from the painful toil of our hands.”***
 - b. By extension, mankind
- B. Similar phrase as when God created the earth
 - i. Genesis 1:12 ***The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.***
 - ii. Reminds the reader that God’s purpose for the earth is good¹²
 - a. One day the earth will be restored to this good purpose

XXXIX. BECAME A SERVANT – V. 15

- A. They would be a hardworking people

XL. DAN SHALL JUDGE – V. 16

- A. Dan means “judge”

¹¹ Mark, J. J. (2009, September 2). *Sidon*. World History Encyclopedia. Retrieved March 23, 2024, from <https://www.worldhistory.org/sidon/#:~:text=Definition&text=Sidon%20is%20the%20Greek%20name,25%20miles%20south%20of%20Beirut>).

¹² Sailhamer

XLI. DAN SHALL BE A SERPENT – V. 17

- A. Serpent is usually negative in Scripture but not always
 - i. Matthew 10:16 ***“Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.”***
 - a. When going into the world, use wisdom and go where you are welcome¹³
- B. Dan would be the source of much idolatry in Israel
 - i. They struck Laish like a serpent and set up an idol there
 - a. Judges 18:27-30 ***But the people of Dan took what Micah had made, and the priest who belonged to him, and they came to Laish, to a people quiet and unsuspecting, and struck them with the edge of the sword and burned the city with fire. And there was no deliverer because it was far from Sidon, and they had no dealings with anyone. It was in the valley that belongs to Beth-rehob. Then they rebuilt the city and lived in it. And they named the city Dan, after the name of Dan their ancestor, who was born to Israel; but the name of the city was Laish at the first. And the people of Dan set up the carved image for themselves, and Jonathan the son of Gershom, son of Moses, and his sons were priests to the tribe of the Danites until the day of the captivity of the land.***
 - ii. Jeroboam set up one of the golden calves there
 - a. 1 Kings 12:26-30 ***And Jeroboam said in his heart, “Now the kingdom will turn back to the house of David. If this people go up to offer sacrifices in the temple of the LORD at Jerusalem, then the heart of this people will turn again to their lord, to Rehoboam king of Judah, and they will kill me and return to Rehoboam king of Judah.” So the king took counsel and made two calves of gold. And he said to the people, “You have gone up to Jerusalem long enough. Behold your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt.” And he set one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan. Then this thing became a sin, for the people went as far as Dan to be before one.***

XLII. BITES THE HORSE’S HEELS – V. 17

- A. Provides an image of swift and silent justice

¹³ Lucey, C. (2022, May 12). What Does it Mean to Be 'Wise as Serpents and Innocent as Doves'? Christianity.com. Retrieved March 23, 2024, from <https://www.christianity.com/wiki/bible/what-does-it-mean-to-be-wise-as-serpents-and-innocent-as-doves.html>

XLIII. I WAIT FOR YOUR SALVATION – V. 18

- A. Dan's wise judgment will bring deliverance
- B. Or, Dan will need to wait until God's Salvation comes to judge his people
 - i. Hebrew yeshuwa
 - ii. Dan is not found in the list of tribes in Revelation
 - a. But he is listed as one of the tribes to receive land in the age to come
 - i. Ezekiel 48:1 ***"These are the names of the tribes: Beginning at the northern extreme, beside the way of Hethlon to Lebo-hamath, as far as Hazar-enan (which is on the northern border of Damascus over against Hamath), and extending from the east side to the west, Dan, one portion."***

XLIV. RAIDERS SHALL RAID GAD – V. 19

- A. Gad sounds like the word for "raiders"
- B. Moses compared them to fierce lions
 - i. Deuteronomy 33:20 ***And of Gad he said, "Blessed be he who enlarges Gad! Gad crouches like a lion; he tears off arm and scalp."***

XLV. HE SHALL RAID AT THEIR HEELS – V. 19

- A. Gad will chase his attackers away
 - i. He will plunder those who plunder him

XLVI. ROYAL DELICACIES – V. 20

- A. Asher will live in prosperity and plenty
- B. He will live like a king

XLVII. BEARS BEAUTIFUL FAWNS – V. 21

- A. Image of fruitfulness with no restrictions
- B. Or, he gives beautiful words
 - i. Wise and well spoken words

XLVIII. FRUITFUL BOUGH – V. 22

- A. Reference to Joseph's son Ephraim
 - i. Genesis 41:52 ***The name of the second he called Ephraim, "For God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction."***
- B. Or, a wild donkey
 - i. Like Ishmael who was always at odds with his brothers

- a. Genesis 16:11-12 ***And the angel of the LORD said to her, “Behold, you are pregnant and shall bear a son. You shall call his name Ishmael, because the LORD has listened to your affliction. He shall be a wild donkey of a man, his hand against everyone and everyone's hand against him, and he shall dwell over against all his kinsmen.”***
- ii. Very few commentators considered this a valid translation
 - a. Possible play on words

XLIX. BITTERLY ATTACKED HIM – V. 23

- A. He was hated by his brothers
- B. Sold into slavery
- C. Falsely accused of infidelity
- D. Thrown into prison
- E. Forgotten by the cupbearer for two years

L. HIS BOW REMAINED UNMOVED – V. 24

- A. He didn't need to retaliate because he had the Holy Spirit
 - i. Genesis 41:38 ***And Pharaoh said to his servants, “Can we find a man like this, in whom is the Spirit of God?”***

LI. MIGHTY ONE OF JACOB – V. 24

- A. Joseph was protected by the same God who protected Jacob
- B. God protected Jacob to protect his covenant with Abraham

LII. FROM THERE IS THE SHEPHERD – V. 24

- A. Jacob was the first one to compare God to a Good Shepherd
 - i. Genesis 48:15 ***And he blessed Joseph and said, “The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been my shepherd all my life long to this day...”***

LIII. THE STONE OF ISRAEL – V. 24

- A. Common name for God in the Old Testament
 - i. 1 Samuel 2:2 ***“There is none holy like the LORD: for there is none besides you; there is no rock like our God.”***

LIV. BLESS YOU – V. 25

- A. Jacob gives Joseph three blessings in verse 25
 - i. Of heaven above – v. 25
 - a. Rain, sunshine, etc.

- ii. Of the deep that crouches beneath – v. 25
 - a. Provision for agriculture, water, springs and rivers
 - b. Both call to mind the creation story
 - i. Genesis 1:2 ***The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.***
 - ii. Genesis 1:6-8 ***And God said, “Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.” And God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so. And God called the expanse Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.***
- iii. Of the breasts and of the womb – v. 25
 - a. Fertility and offspring

LV. SET APART – V. 26

- A. As in, a Nazirite consecrated to God
 - i. Numbers 6:1-5 ***And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, When either a man or a woman makes a special vow, the vow of a Nazirite, to separate himself to the LORD, he shall separate himself from wine and strong drink. He shall drink no vinegar made from wine or strong drink and shall not drink any juice of grapes or eat grapes, fresh or dried. All the days of his separation he shall eat nothing that is produced by the grapevine, not even the seeds or the skins. “All the days of his vow of separation, no razor shall touch his head. Until the time is completed for which he separates himself to the LORD, he shall be holy. He shall let the locks of hair of his head grow long.***

LVI. DEVOURING THE PREY – V. 27

- A. Benjamin is given similar imagery to Judah
 - i. Both are a conquering animal

LVII. DIVIDING THE SPOIL – V. 27

- A. Gives the image of a quick and decisive victory¹⁴
 - i. Conquer in the morning, divide spoil in the evening
- B. Israel will plunder their enemies when Jesus returns

¹⁴ Sailhamer

- i. Ezekiel 39:1-10 *“And you, son of man, prophesy against Gog and say, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I am against you, O Gog, chief prince of Meshech and Tubal. And I will turn you about and drive you forward, and bring you up from the uttermost parts of the north, and lead you against the mountains of Israel. Then I will strike your bow from your left hand, and will make your arrows drop out of your right hand. You shall fall on the mountains of Israel, you and all your hordes and the peoples who are with you. I will give you to birds of prey of every sort and to the beasts of the field to be devoured. You shall fall in the open field, for I have spoken, declares the Lord GOD. I will send fire on Magog and on those who dwell securely in the coastlands, and they shall know that I am the LORD. “And my holy name I will make known in the midst of my people Israel, and I will not let my holy name be profaned anymore. And the nations shall know that I am the LORD, the Holy One in Israel. Behold, it is coming and it will be brought about, declares the Lord GOD. That is the day of which I have spoken. “Then those who dwell in the cities of Israel will go out and make fires of the weapons and burn them, shields and bucklers, bow and arrows, clubs and spears; and they will make fires of them for seven years, so that they will not need to take wood out of the field or cut down any out of the forests, for they will make their fires of the weapons. They will seize the spoil of those who despoiled them, and plunder those who plundered them, declares the Lord GOD.”*

LVIII. HE BLESSED THEM – V. 28

- A. This word is repeated three times in this verse
- i. Shows that God’s purposes are completed in this blessing
- ii. Ties the blessing to the very beginning
- a. Genesis 1:28 ***And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”***
- b. While also looking to the future¹⁵
- B. These blessings would have encouraged them in Egypt and in the wilderness¹⁶

LIX. THERE THEY BURIED – V. 31

- A. All the major figures in the Genesis narrative are buried there

¹⁵ Sailhamer

¹⁶ Wiersbe

- i. This burial has been an expression of faith in the resurrection
- ii. Jacob is expressing the same faith

LX. THERE I BURIED LEAH – V. 31

- A. Leah will finally get her wish
 - i. To be with her husband without any competition from her sister¹⁷

LXI. BREATHED HIS LAST – V. 33

- A. The author of Hebrews tells us he had his staff with him when he died
 - i. Hebrews 11:21 ***By faith Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, bowing in worship over the head of his staff.***
 - ii. Just like he had his staff when he crossed the Jordan
 - a. Genesis 32:10 ***I am not worthy of the least of all the deeds of steadfast love and all the faithfulness that you have shown to your servant, for with only my staff I crossed this Jordan, and now I have become two camps.***
 - iii. Now he has his staff as he crosses from life over to death¹⁸
 - a. I imagine Jacob will be resurrected out of that cave of Machpelah one day
 - i. Still holding on to his staff with Leah by his side
 - ii. Still with a limp from his wrestle with God
 - a. Just like Jesus still bears the scars of his death
 - b. As a reminder of the story of his redemption

LXII. POINTS TO JESUS

- A. The phrase “in days to come” or “in the last days” precedes a prophecy about a king
 - i. This phrase is repeated before two other blessings in the Torah
 - a. Numbers 24:12-14 ***And Balaam said to Balak, “Did I not tell your messengers whom you sent to me, ‘If Balak should give me his house full of silver and gold, I would not be able to go beyond the word of the LORD, to do either good or bad of my own will. What the LORD speaks, that will I speak’? And now, behold, I am going to my people. Come, I will let you know what this people will do to your people in the latter days.”***
 - b. Deuteronomy 31:25-29 ***Moses commanded the Levites who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, “Take this Book of the Law and put it by the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there for a witness against you.***

¹⁷ Armstrong

¹⁸ Wiersbe

For I know how rebellious and stubborn you are. Behold, even today while I am yet alive with you, you have been rebellious against the LORD. How much more after my death! Assemble to me all the elders of your tribes and your officers, that I may speak these words in their ears and call heaven and earth to witness against them. For I know that after my death you will surely act corruptly and turn aside from the way that I have commanded you. And in the days to come evil will befall you, because you will do what is evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking him to anger through the work of your hands.”

- ii. Both times they precede similar prophecies of a coming king
 - a. Numbers 24:17-19 *“I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near: a star shall come out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel; it shall crush the forehead of Moab and break down all the sons of Sheth. Edom shall be dispossessed; Seir also, his enemies, shall be dispossessed. Israel is doing valiantly. And one from Jacob shall exercise dominion and destroy the survivors of cities!”*
 - b. Deuteronomy 33:5 *“Thus the LORD became king in Jeshurun, when the heads of the people were gathered, all the tribes of Israel together.”*
- iii. Just like the prophecy in verse 10
 - a. These prophecies speak of a conquering king
 - i. All nations will worship and obey him
 - ii. This is not just a man on a cross but a king who has overcome
- B. Jesus will return as a Warrior-King
 - i. Isaiah 42:13-16 *The LORD goes out like a mighty man, like a man of war he stirs up his zeal; he cries out, he shouts aloud, he shows himself mighty against his foes. For a long time I have held my peace; I have kept still and restrained myself; now I will cry out like a woman in labor; I will gasp and pant. I will lay waste mountains and hills, and dry up all their vegetation; I will turn the rivers into islands, and dry up the pools. And I will lead the blind in a way that they do not know, in paths that they have not known I will guide them. I will turn the darkness before them into light, the rough places into level ground. These are the things I do, and I do not forsake them.*
 - ii. Zechariah 14:1-9 *Behold, a day is coming for the LORD, when the spoil taken from you will be divided in your midst. For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken and the houses plundered and the women raped. Half*

of the city shall go out into exile, but the rest of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then the LORD will go out and fight against those nations as when he fights on a day of battle. On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives that lies before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley, so that one half of the Mount shall move northward, and the other half southward. And you shall flee to the valley of my mountains, for the valley of the mountains shall reach to Azal. And you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD my God will come, and all the holy ones with him. On that day there shall be no light, cold, or frost. And there shall be a unique day, which is known to the LORD, neither day nor night, but at evening time there shall be light. On that day living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem, half of them to the eastern sea and half of them to the western sea. It shall continue in summer as in winter. And the LORD will be king over all the earth. On that day the LORD will be one and his name one.

- iii. *Revelation 19:11-16 Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.*

C. Balaam tied the Warrior-King of the tribe of Judah to Abraham's blessing

- i. *Numbers 24:9 He crouched, he lay down like a lion and like a lioness; who will rouse him up? Blessed are those who bless you, and cursed are those who curse you."*
- ii. The Warrior-King would be the one to bless the nations
 - a. *Genesis 12:3 I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."*

D. Jesus would come riding on a donkey

- i. *Matthew 21:9 Now when they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, "Go into the village in*

front of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord needs them,' and he will send them at once." This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying, "Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.'" The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them. They brought the donkey and the colt and put on them their cloaks, and he sat on them. Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. And the crowds that went before him and that followed him were shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!"

- E. Jesus will be worshipped and obeyed by all nations
 - i. Psalm 2:8 *Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession.*
 - ii. Daniel 7:13-14 *"I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed."*
 - iii. Revelation 5:5-10 *And one of the elders said to me, "Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals." And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. And he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne. And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth."*
- F. Jesus will restore the earth to the conditions in the Garden of Eden

- i. Revelation 22:1-5 ***Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.***
- G. The names of God will one day refer to Jesus as well
 - i. A lion – v. 5
 - a. Revelation 5:5 ***And one of the elders said to me, “Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.”***
 - ii. Shiloh – v. 10
 - a. Not every translation treats this as a name
 - b. But ancient rabbis and Jewish scholars considered it to be a Messianic name¹⁹
 - iii. Your salvation – v. 18
 - a. Hebrew yeshuah
 - b. Isaiah 25:6-9 ***On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined. And he will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken. It will be said on that day, “Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us. This is the LORD; we have waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”***
 - iv. Fruitful Bough – v. 22
 - a. Jesus is the Branch
 - i. Isaiah 4:2 ***In that day the branch of the LORD shall be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land shall be the pride and honor of the survivors of Israel.***

¹⁹ Guzik

- ii. Jeremiah 33:15 ***In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David, and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.***
 - iii. Zechariah 6:12 ***And say to him, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, "Behold, the man whose name is the Branch: for he shall branch out from his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD."***
- v. Mighty One of Jacob – v. 24
 - a. Jesus will dwell and rule in Jerusalem to keep the covenant with Abraham forever
 - i. Psalm 132:1-5 ***Remember, O LORD, in David's favor, all the hardships he endured, how he swore to the LORD and vowed to the Mighty One of Jacob, "I will not enter my house or get into my bed, I will not give sleep to my eyes or slumber to my eyelids, until I find a place for the LORD, a dwelling place for the Mighty One of Jacob."***
 - ii. Psalm 132:13-18 ***For the LORD has chosen Zion; he has desired it for his dwelling place: "This is my resting place forever; here I will dwell, for I have desired it. I will abundantly bless her provisions; I will satisfy her poor with bread. Her priests I will clothe with salvation, and her saints will shout for joy. There I will make a horn to sprout for David; I have prepared a lamp for my anointed. His enemies I will clothe with shame, but on him his crown will shine."***
- vi. Shepherd – v. 24
 - a. John 10:11 ***I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.***
- vii. Stone of Israel – v. 24
 - a. Acts 4:11 ***This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone.***
 - b. 1 Corinthians 10:1-4 ***For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ.***
- viii. The God of your father – v. 25
 - a. Jesus revealed himself to be the same God of Abraham at the burning bush

- i. Exodus 3:13-14 ***Then Moses said to God, “If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what shall I say to them?” God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And he said, “Say this to the people of Israel: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”***
 - ii. John 8:58 ***Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.”***
- ix. The Almighty – v. 25
 - a. God calls himself the Alpha and the Omega, the Almighty
 - i. Revelation 1:8 ***“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”***
 - b. Jesus calls himself the Alpha and the Omega
 - i. Revelation 22:12-13 ***“Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”***

LXIII. QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- A. What can we learn about God from the way he deals with Reuben, Simeon and Levi?

- B. What can we learn about God from the way he deals with Judah?

- C. Why do you think God uses such weak men to bring about his purposes?

- D. Does Jesus have the obedience of the nations now? If not, when will this happen?

E. How does it make you feel to think about Jesus as a Warrior-King when he returns?

F. What can we learn about Jesus from studying the names of God in this chapter?

G. What are some ways we can experience the wealth and abundance of the coming kingdom now?

H. What aspects of this wealth and abundance will we not experience until Jesus returns?

I. How does it encourage you knowing that Jesus will come one day to establish his kingdom and restore the earth to an Eden-like state?

J. How does this reality of the coming king change the way you live right now?

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- K. How will you respond to what God has revealed about the future in the Scriptures?

LXIV. FURTHER STUDY

- A. Why do you think the psalmist used the same description for a righteous man in Psalm 1:1-3 as Jacob did for Joseph in verse 22?

- B. Read Deuteronomy 33. What are some similarities you see between Joseph's blessing and Moses's blessing on Israel? What are some differences?

- C. What do you notice about the context around these two blessings that would indicate they are necessary? What does this teach us about God's nature?

- D. How does Reuben exemplify Jesus's statement in Matthew 19:30? How can we avoid the same fate?

E. How will Jesus obtain the obedience of the nations (Psalm 2:6-9)?

F. Read Psalm 72. Based on what you've learned so far in Genesis, what clues do you see in this psalm that indicate the psalmist is talking about another, future King?

G. Considering the message of prosperity during the reign of the coming King in verse 11, why is the same image used in such a violent way in Isaiah 63:1-6? What do you think the prophet's message is here?
