

Jacob's Blessings and Curses – Part 2

August 20, 17

(Scripture Reading: Genesis 49:8-12)

My father's prediction about his children! He predicted that I will be a sportsman!

Sometimes what we bless and curse comes true!

Jacob cursed the person who stole Laban's idol! The person who took the idol will die? Rachel was the one who took that idol, and she lived very short life, and died.

Genesis 49 is a father's progress report on his children. Past behavior is the best prediction of one's future. Jacob tells his children to assemble together so that he can tell them what will befall them, not only about their time. But the end of the age also! Let us quickly go through each verse.

Reuben: V3, 4. Jacob calls Reuben, His might and beginning of his strength because he was the actual first born. He was supposed to have preeminent in dignity and preeminent in power. But he had absolutely no self-control. He went and slept with his own step mother. Therefore, he shall not be preeminent in dignity or power.

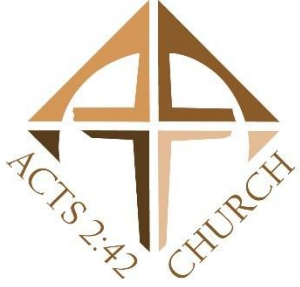
Levi and Simeon: both these children noted for their excessive anger. They went and destroyed a whole town because their sister was defiled by the prince of that town, Shechem. Jacob did not want to associate his glory with them. He basically cursed them rather than blessing:

"Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce; And their wrath, for it is cruel. I will disperse them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel. (Genesis 49:7 NASB)

Levi tribe was scattered in Israel because they did not have their own land. But Simeon was reduced in number, and he received only few cities, and that too they were part of Judean southern parts.

Judah: Judah got the best blessing. Vs. 8-12 God did speak through Jacob about the Messianic promise.

1. Your brothers shall praise you! The very meaning of Judah stands for praise. Leah named Judah because she said, "I will praise Him!"
2. Your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies
3. His brothers will bow down to him (Judah will provide the leadership for them and they will submit to him. Great leaders emerged from Judah: David, Solomon, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Uzziah, Jotham, Hezekiah, Josiah!
4. Judah is like a young lion ripening into its full strength, and ferocity. Lion is a symbol of strength, courage, ferocity, and security. Jesus is indeed the Lion of Judah!



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5. Messianic promise: the scepter shall not depart from Judah.
6. Messiah to come through Judah! "Until Shiloh comes!" who will rule eternally. Shiloh can be related to the Word, Shalom which means peace. Shiloh can be taken from the root Shaka which means rest.
7. He will basically be blessed with so much vineyard with quality grapes! "11, 12 "He ties his foal to the vine, and his donkey's colt to the choice vine; He washes his garments in wine, and his robes in the blood of grapes." His eyes are dull from wine, and his teeth white from milk. (Genesis 49:11-12 NASB)

Jesus is that wine. His people will be soaked in that crimson red blood that washes away our sins and the milk of His Word!

The bottom line is this!

Jesus Christ gives us peace, Jesus Christ gives us rest, Jesus Christ gives us abundance, and He is the Lord of Lords, and He rules over all! The scepter did not pass from Judah until Shiloh came, and it did happen when Jesus Christ our Lord came, dwelt among us, died for our sins, rose again triumphantly, and His Kingdom reigns forever!

Zebulun: 13. "Zebulun will dwell at the seashore; And he shall be a haven for ships, And his flank shall be toward Sidon. (Genesis 49:13 NASB)

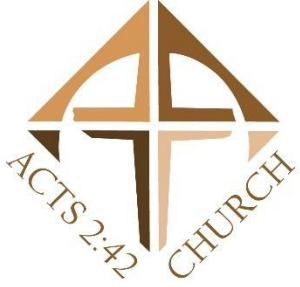
Living by the seas, this tribe engaged in trading rather than engaging in agriculture.

Issachar: Verses 14, 15. "Issachar is a strong donkey, lying down between the sheepfolds. "When he saw that a resting place was good and that the land was pleasant, He bowed his shoulder to bear burdens, and became a slave at forced labor. (Genesis 49:14-15 NASB)

While Ishmael, Abraham's first son through Hagar was called a wild donkey, Issachar was called a strong donkey, with strong bones, ready to do hard labor! He offered his work to hireling positions, and that demands tributes.

Dan. Verses 16-18. "Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel. "Dan shall be a serpent in the way, a horned snake in the path that bites the horse's heels, So that his rider falls backward. "For Your salvation I wait, O LORD. (Genesis 49:16-18 NASB)

Dan means to judge or judging. Samson was of that tribe, judging Israel for twenty years! He shall judge his own tribe too.



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He was treacherous like a snake and made his enemies stumble. Dan was the first tribe to have an idol among their midst! Some think, antichrist will emerge from this tribe in the last days. It is interesting to note that in this context Jacob cries out, "For your salvation, I wait oh Lord!"

Dan is omitted from the numbering of 144,000 saints in Revelation, 7:5-8 and also from the list of 1 chron.1-7. I

Gad: Verse 19. "As for Gad, raiders shall raid him, But he will raid at their heels. (Genesis 49:19 NASB)

Gad struggled constantly against his enemies and would prevail in the end. They had taken the land of Gilead which means all that is good and pleasant for believers. This land looked good for Gad and so they grabbed it even though it was outside the Jordan River. Hence there is a saying about Gilead. "There is a balm in Gilead to soothe the sin sick soul!"

Asher: 20. "As for Asher, his food shall be rich, and he will yield royal dainties. (Genesis 49:20 NASB)

They inherited later the best agricultural land and the trade routes, and they naturally accumulated lot of wealth, and indulged in luxury. Asher means, happy, or fortunate! During judges' time, they refused to help out other tribes in fighting their enemies. They were emblem of selfishness.

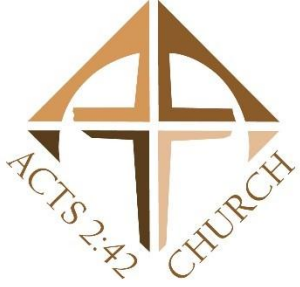
Naphthali. "Naphtali is a doe let loose, He gives beautiful words. (Genesis 49:21 NASB)

According to judges 4, and 5, Naphtali was conquered by Canaanites, but Barak delivers them with ten thousand soldiers.

This part of Scripture was fulfilled in Jesus Christ, our Lord. He spent most of His time ministering in Galilee which is part of Naphthali. Isaiah says in chapter 9, people who lived in Galilee has seen a great light! Isaiah also says that how lovely are the feet of those who carry the gospel! The disciples did carry the beautiful words of Jesus!

Joseph: Remember, this blessing actually goes to Manasseh, and Ephraim tribes!

1. 22-26. Joseph is a fruitful bough! Manasseh and Ephraim produced such leaders as Joshua, and five of the fifteen judges of Israel! Gideon, Abimalech, Jair, Jephthah, and Samuel.
2. He was persecuted, harassed, shot at, but he remained firm!
3. V24??? But his bow remained firm, And his arms were agile, because God Himself will make him strong. From the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob (From there is the



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Shepherd, the Stone of Israel), (Genesis 49:24 NASB). This is the first time God is called as Shepherd in the Bible! God is their rock or stone! God is their foundation for everything! Our life ought to be built upon God! All other foundations, philosophies, isms are sinking sand!

4. God of your father blesses you from heaven with blessings of heaven above, blessings from the deep beneath, blessings of the breasts, and the womb. Joseph was blessed with heavenly rain and fertile soil, with the blessings of springs, and streams, with the blessings of many offspring and descendants.
5. "The blessings of your father Have surpassed the blessings of my ancestors Up to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills; May they be on the head of Joseph, And on the crown of the head of the one distinguished among his brothers. Joseph was to be blessed beyond Jacob or his ancestors! (Genesis 49:24, 26 NASB)

Benjamin: "Benjamin is a ravenous wolf; in the morning he devours the prey, and in the evening he divides the spoil." (Genesis 49:27 NASB)

Tribe of Benjamin was vicious, cunning, and often times victorious!

This tribe produced some popular leaders like king Saul, his son Jonathan, and Saul's commander, Abner.

These prophecies should be read as warnings as well as the prediction of the future in the history of Israel.

What kind of blessings you want? Let us seek spiritual blessings from above!

Great commentator, Mathew Henry said these words while he was on his death bed:

"A life spent in the service of God and in communion with Him is the most pleasant life that anyone can live in the world."

Pastor Daniel Israel