



Go for God!

“BLESSINGS – PROPHECY – HOPE!”

Genesis Chapters 48 - 50

Chapter 48 – “Family Blessings!”

(v1-7) Jacob reminds and reaffirms the Abrahamic Covenant passed on to him to Joseph.

(v8-20) Jacob blesses the two sons of Joseph, but in reverse order, the younger (Ephraim) blessed over the elder (Manasseh).

(The patriarchal blessing took on prophetic significance with such action and words, since Ephraim would be the most influential of the two to the extent that Ephraim would become a substitute name for Israel. Ephraim did indeed become the dominant tribe of the 10 northern tribes, eventually being used as the national designate for the 10 tribes in the prophets (Is. 7:2,5,9,17; Hos. 9:3–16). Jacob blesses Joseph and his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim.)¹

(v21-22) Israel (Jacob) prophetically promises an inheritance for Joseph’s family back in the land of Canaan.

Chapter 49 – “Family Future!”

(v1-27) Jacob prophetically speaks the future of each of his twelve sons, this prophecy spans to the “last days.”

(v3-4) REUBEN (*behold a son*) - Years later, as the hatred of Jacob's sons for Joseph grew, it was Reuben who advised his brothers not to kill their younger brother. He suggested that they merely bind him, which would have allowed him to return later to release Joseph to his father (Gen 37:20-22). It also was Reuben who reminded his brothers that all their troubles and fears in Egypt were their just reward for mistreating Joseph (Gen 42:22). When Jacob's sons returned from Egypt, Reuben offered his own two sons as a guarantee that he would personally tend to the safety of Benjamin on the next trip to Egypt (Gen 42:37). In view of these admirable qualities, it is tragic that he became involved in incest with Bilhah, his father's concubine (Gen 35:22). As the firstborn, Reuben should have been a leader to his brothers and should have received the birthright-the double portion of the inheritance (Deut 21:17). His act of incest, however, cost him dearly. He never lost his legal standing as firstborn, but he forfeited his right to the birthright.

(v5-7) SIMEON (*God hears*) - Simeon's descendants became one of the twelve tribes of Israel. He and his brother Levi tricked the Hivites of Shechem and massacred all the males because one of them had raped Dinah, their sister (Gen 34:2,25,30). Simeon was the brother whom Joseph kept as security when he allowed his brothers to leave Egypt and return to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan (Gen 42:24).

- **LEVI** (*joined*) - The third son of Jacob and Leah (Gen 29:34). His three sons were ancestors of the three main divisions of the Levitical priesthood: the GERSHONITES, the KOHATHITES, and the MERARITES (Gen 46:11). Levi participated in the plot against Joseph (Gen 37:4) and later took his family to Egypt with Jacob. On his deathbed Jacob cursed Simeon and Levi because of their "cruelty" and "wrath," and foretold that their descendants would be divided and scattered (Gen 49:5-7). Levi died in Egypt at the age of 137 (Ex 6:16).

(v8-12) JUDAH (*praise*) - The fourth son of Jacob by his wife Leah and the founder of the tribal family out of which the messianic line came (Gen 29:35; Num 26:19-21; Matt 1:2). Judah was one of the most prominent of the 12 sons of Jacob. He saved Joseph's life by suggesting that his brothers sell Joseph to Ishmaelite merchants

¹John F. MacArthur, Jr., *The MacArthur Study Bible*, (Dallas: Word Publishing) 1997.

rather than kill him (Gen 37:26-28). Later, in Egypt, it was Judah who begged Joseph to detain him (Judah) rather than Benjamin, Jacob's beloved son. In an eloquent speech Judah confessed what he and his brothers had done to Joseph; shortly thereafter, Joseph identified himself to his brothers (Gen 44:14-45:1). It appears that Judah was the leader of Jacob's sons who remained at home. Even though he was not the oldest son, Judah was sent by Jacob to precede him to Egypt (Gen 46:28). Also Judah, rather than his older brothers, received Jacob's blessing (Gen 49:3-10). In that blessing, Jacob foretold the rise of Judah: "Your father's children shall bow down before you....the scepter shall not depart from Judah...until Shiloh comes" (Gen 49:8,10). The line of Judah ran through Perez to David and thus became the messianic line (Luke 3:30).

(v13) ZEBULUN (*dwelling, habitation*) - The tenth son of Jacob, and the sixth and last of Leah (Gen 30:19-20). We have nothing recorded concerning Zebulun personally. In the genealogical list (chap. 46) he is mentioned as having, at the time of the migration into Egypt, three sons, founders of the chief families of the tribe (cf. Num 26:26). During the desert journey Zebulun, with Judah and Issachar, formed the first camp. The tribe then numbered 57,400 (Num 1:31). The territory of Zebulun in Canaan lay between the Sea of Galilee and the Mediterranean. Nazareth and Cana were in it; and it embraced a section of the shore of the former sea, where Christ performed so many of His miracles, thus fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah (Isa 9:1-2; cf. Matt 4:12-16). In the visions of Ezekiel (Ezek 48:26-33) and of John (Rev 7:8) this tribe finds due mention.

(v14-15) ISSACHAR (*he will bring reward*) - The ninth son of Jacob and the fifth of Leah. At the descent into Egypt four sons are ascribed to Issachar; these sons founded the four chief families of the tribe (Gen 46:13; Num 26:23-25; 1 Chron 7:1). The number of fighting men, when the census was taken at Sinai, was 54,400, ranking the tribe fifth (Num 1:28-29); at the second census the number had increased to 64,300, ranking it third (26:25). Jacob's prophecy "Issachar is a strong donkey, lying down between the sheepfolds. When he saw that a resting place was good . . . he bowed his shoulder to bear burdens, and became a slave at forced labor" (Gen 49:14-15) was fulfilled by Issachar's paying tribute to the various marauding tribes attracted to its territory by the richness of the crops.

(v16-18) DAN (*judge*). The fifth son of Jacob and the first of Bilhah. Dan had one son-Hushim (Gen 46:23), or Shuham (Num 26:42). Jacob's blessing of Dan predicted: *Dan shall judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel. Dan shall be a serpent by the way, a viper by the path, that bites the horse's heels, so that its rider shall fall backward* (Gen 49:16-17). Nothing else is known of Dan himself other than the "Tribe of Dan," which at the Exodus numbered 62,700 warriors (Num 1:39) and at the second census 64,400, holding their rank as second.

(v19) GAD (*good fortune*) - The seventh of Jacob's twelve sons. Moses praised Gad for his bravery and faithfulness to duty (Deut 33:20-21). The Gadites were a warlike tribe, and they bravely aided their brethren in the conquest of Canaan (Josh 4:12; 22:1-4). Surrounded by the Ammonites, Midianites, and many other hostile tribes, they nobly defended their country. In the division of the kingdom, Gad fell to the northern state, and many of the wars between Syria and Israel must have ravaged its territory (2 Kings 10:33). At last, Tiglath-pileser carried the Gadites and the neighboring tribes away as captives into Assyria (15:29; 5:26).

(v20) ASHER (*happiness*) - The eighth son of Jacob, the second by Leah's maidservant, Zilpah (Gen 30:13). On his deathbed Jacob blessed Asher: *"Bread from Asher shall be rich, and he shall yield royal dainties"* (Gen 49:20). Asher had four sons and one daughter. Upon quitting Egypt the tribe numbered 41,500, ranking ninth; and at the second census the number had increased to 53,400 men of war, ranking fifth in population. With the exception of Simeon, Asher is the only tribe W of the Jordan that furnished no judge or hero to the nation. Anna, daughter of Phanuel, who was of the tribe of Asher, as a prophetess and a godly woman, recognized the infant Jesus as the Messiah (Luke 2:36-38).

(v21) NAPHTALI (*my wrestling*) - the sixth son of Jacob (Gen 35:25). Of the personal history of Naphtali we know nothing, as up to the time of Jacob's blessing the twelve patriarchs his name is mentioned only in the two public lists (Gen 35:25; 46:24). When Israel went down into Egypt Naphtali had four sons (Gen 46:24; 1 Chron 7:13). While in Egypt Naphtali increased with wonderful rapidity, numbering at the first census 53,400 (Num 1:43), ranking sixth. The number decreased during the wilderness journey, for at the second census the adult males amounted to only 45,400, ranking eighth (26:50).

(v22-26) JOSEPH (*may God add*) is a fruitful bough. –

I. THE BLESSING OF JOSEPH.

1. His extraordinary increase
2. His great prosperity.
 - (1) All kinds of blessings were promised.
 - (2) His blessings were to surpass all former instances.
 - (3) His blessings are traced to their source.

II. PRAISE OF HIS CHARACTER.

1. He had been a much-trying man (ver 23).
 - (1) The archers of envy and hatred.
 - (2) The archers of temptation.
 - (3) The archers of persecution.
 - (4) The archers of neglect and ingratitude.
2. He had gained the victory over his trials (ver 24).

III. HIS DESTINY THE NATURAL RESULT OF HIS CHARACTER.

1. His filial obedience.
2. His desire for God's glory.
3. The operation of that principle by which God rewards in kind.
4. The principle that God's dealings in the past constitute a ground of hope and trust for the future.
5. The principle by which a firm and well-established godliness tends to continue

(v27) BENJAMIN (*son of the right hand*) – You would expect Jacob to say more to and about his youngest son Benjamin, the "son of his right hand," but his words were few and puzzling. Why compare Benjamin to a "ravenous wolf? The men of Benjamin were brave and helped defeat Sisera ([Judg 5:14](#)), but when you read Benjamin's tribal history in [Judg 19](#) and [20](#), you see the ravenous wolf in action. Saul, the first king of Israel, was from Benjamin. During his career, he more than once tried to kill David ([1 Sam 19:10](#)), and he ruthlessly murdered everybody in the priestly city of Nob ([22:6ff](#)). Other Benjamites known for their ferocity were Abner ([2 Sam 2:23](#)), Sheba (chap. [20](#)), and Shimei ([16:5-14](#)). Saul of Tarsus, a Benjamite ([Rom 11:1](#); [Phil 3:5](#)) was like a wild animal when he persecuted the church and tracked clown Christians to imprison them.

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(v28-33) Jacob requests to be buried with his fathers, then dies.

Chapter 50 – “Family Hope!”

(v1-14) Jacob is buried with his fathers.

(v15-21) Joseph’s heart of forgiveness is displayed once again and our key verse is Genesis 50:19-21 – “Joseph said to them, “Do not be afraid, for am I in the place of God? But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive. Now therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones.” And he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.”

(v22-26) Joseph dies at 110 years old and prophetically speaks of Israel returning with his bones to the land of Canaan. Hebrews 11:22 - *By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave instructions concerning his bones.*