

## A Few Thoughts on Genesis 49

Jacob's Last Words

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This chapter, being the last words of Jacob, gives a glimpse into God's way with the twelve tribes of Israel.

1) Reuben is illustrative, first of man unfallen, verse 3, then as fallen, verse 4. Simeon and Levi set forth the paramount features of fallen man. "Corruption and violence are in their ways" — lust and lawlessness. Though Israel had been hedged about with the mercy and blessing of Jehovah, they were no different from the Gentiles as we read even in the Ephesian epistle, they "were children of wrath, even as others" (Eph. 2: 3).

2) Judah, the royal tribe, suggests the intervention of God in Christ. Had not Israel rejected God, having sought a king, like unto the nations? (1 Sam. 8: 5-7). Desiring to become like the nations, they evinced the sad fact that they had indeed become like them morally — disobedience marked them, and so they sought sovereign independence (please read at this point, Deuteronomy 17: 14-20). Yet God interposed in amazing mercy, for of Judah the Lord Jesus came, "born King of the Jews" (Matt. 2: 2). "He came unto His own (things)" — for Israel's throne was His by Personal right. Yet, "His own (people) received Him not" (John 1: 11).

Praise God, for the thought that His being the true Judah we may say, "Thou art He whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee" (verse 8), "Thou art gone up" (verse 9), suggests the present period of Christ's ascension to the right hand of God. Verse 10 is the prophetic future and then he shall return as Shiloh, the true Prince of Peace. He shall be the gathering centre for the tribes and in a wider sense for all nations, "To Him shall the gathering of the peoples be."

Verses 13 to 15 are descriptive, in the prophetic history of Zebulun and Issachar, of Israel's condition today in commercialism and as largely dependent upon the Gentile nations for their existence. Though since 1948 we have had the State of Israel in existence, there are still more Jews among the Gentiles than in the promised land.

Suggestively, between verses 15 and 16, the rapture of the Assembly shall occur. The calling out of the Assembly forms no part of the time ways of God. At the present time the clock of prophecy is still stopped. It shall not begin to tick again until the Assembly shall be caught up to heaven to join Christ as His Bride.

3) The recovery of Dan, taking his proper place as "one of the tribes of Israel," though he shall yet be "as a serpent in the way," will be the fruit of the Spirit of God working conviction, leading to repentance. This shall be in consequence, even in Dan, of the cry of a remnant, "I have waited for thy salvation, O LORD."

It has been suggested that anti-christ may come out of Dan. In the book of Judges, chapter 18, Dan was the first tribe to practice idolatry. Later, Jeroboam son of one of Solomon's servants, having come to reign over the divided kingdom (1 Kings 12: 20), became notorious for his making Israel to sin by worshipping two golden calves which he set up — one in Bethel, and the other in Dan! (1 Kings 12: 25-30). It is not without significance that Dan is omitted from the one hundred and forty four thousand who are sealed in Rev. 7: 4-8).

The overcoming, too, of Gad, with the blessings of Asher all await that coming day when Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, shall be accepted where once He was rejected — and shall be glorified where once He was crucified! The present day is characterised by Psalm 65: 1, "Praise waiteth for Thee, O God, in Sion." But then in the day of His power, "Thy people shall be willing" (Psalm 110: 3). And, "They shall be still (continually) praising Thee" (Psalm 84: 4).

4) Jacob's prediction as to Naphtali suggests the loosing of a remnant, which, with desire for the coming King, shall provide the preachers who shall carry the tidings of the coming kingdom, "He giveth goodly words."

Joseph indicates the coming national resurrection, exaltation, and blessing. The long suffering under the Gentile oppressors' rods shall give way to rich and lasting blessing, with enduring liberty, from the hands of the mighty God of Jacob. Whilst the history of Joseph would yield us precious typical teaching as to our Lord Jesus Christ, we confine it to its application to the coming day of glory when shall have come the world kingdom of our God and His Christ. Then, too, the nations shall come into blessing as subsidiary to Israel. "Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall." Assuredly, in the world to come it will be a case of "Rejoice ye Gentiles with His people" (Romans 15: 10 cited from Deut. 32: 43).

Finally, in Benjamin there is predicated the subjugation of every foe, "Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf." Praise God, if there is going to be a devouring of the prey, there shall also be a dividing of the spoil. This will bring to mind Isaiah 53: 12. The true Joseph "shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied" and the true Benjamin "shall divide the spoil with the strong because He has poured out His soul unto death."

If there is going to be a full answer in blessing to the once suffering Israel — much of it rightly deserved during the times of the Gentiles — how thankfully we look on to "the day of Jesus Christ," when He Who suffered so wrongfully at the hands of Jew and Gentile and sacrificially for sin at the hands of God, shall fill the highest station.

Then shall the kingdom of God come in power. Israel on earth shall be the head and not the tail, Christ shall be owned as universal Lord. Then shall it be plain to all, as foreshadowed by the words of Jacob respecting Judah, "Thou art He Whom Thy brethren shall praise."