



# **WELCOME TO BIBLE HOUSE OF GRACE**

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## **Genesis 49**

(2019)

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## Genesis 49.

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### Topics.

- Jacob gathers his sons to tell them what will happen in days to come.
- Jacob's prophecy over Reuben, Simeon, Judah, Zebulun and Issachar.
- Jacob's prophecy over Dan, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Joseph and Benjamin
- Jacob's blessings over all twelve tribes.
- Jacob is buried in the field at Machpelah of Mamre in Canaan.
- Twelve reasons why Joseph can be seen as a type of Christ.
- The difference between man's purposes and God's purposes.

**FOR INFORMATION:** concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

**The previous chapter:** in chapter forty-eight Joseph took Manasseh and Ephraim to see his sick father Israel/Jacob. Israel accepted Ephraim and Manasseh as his own sons and laid his right hand on Ephraim and his left hand on Manasseh and in this way blessed Ephraim the younger son with the greater blessing and Manasseh the older son with the lesser blessing. The chapter ended with Israel telling Joseph he has given him one mountain slope (one portion in KJV).

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### GENESIS 49:1-2

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### Jacob gathers His Sons to say what will Happen in Days to Come.

- **Genesis 49:1-2:** Then Jacob called his sons and said, "Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you what shall happen to you in days to come (which shall befall you in the last days the last days KJV). <sup>2</sup>"Assemble and listen, O sons of Jacob, listen to Israel your father.

**NOTICE:** Jacob is called both Jacob and Israel.

**Jacob called his sons:** (v1) this was most likely done by sending messengers to the twelve sons different dwelling places.

**Gather yourselves together:** (v1) it was Israel's desire that all his sons would be sent for to see their father before he died, and to hear his final words. It would be a great comfort to him to have all his children around him when he was dying, and he knew by the Spirit of God that before he left this world and all its worries and troubles to enter the invisible and eternal state he would be a blessing to them in his last dying moments and be a witness of the faith, peace and hope he had in God to those gathered around him. Though he is about to give a special individual address to each son it is not given in private, but in the presence of the whole family. Amongst Christians and Jews this chapter has been called the dying song of Jacob as a prophetic hymn spoken by Israel under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

**I may tell you what shall happen to you in days to come:** (v1) (which shall befall you in the last days the last days in KJV), not only themselves individually, but also their descendants. Some things are said relating to temporary thing and others to spiritual things and some things spoken are blessings or prophecies of good things while others are curses (i.e., foretell bad things to come), but all are prophetic predictions spoken by Jacob under the spirit of prophecy.

**The last days:** in this context refers to the time following Israel's death to the appearing of the Messiah who is spoken of in this prophecy and his return in glory.

Some of the things spoken had their fulfilment:

- When God brought Israel out of Egypt and the tribes of Israel were established in the land of Canaan.
- In the times of the judges and later times.
- During the times of the Messiah.
- Others won't be fulfilled until the Lord returns in glory to gather the faithful to himself.

**NOTE:** all of the following blessings, prophecies, predictions and curses apply to the tribe and their descendants and not just the son who Israel is speaking to.

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## REUBEN

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### GENESIS 49:3-4

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#### Jacob's Prophecy over Reuben.

- **Genesis 49:3-4:** "Reuben, you are my firstborn, my might, and the firstfruits of my strength (the beginning of my strength in KJV), preeminent (excellency in KJV) in dignity and preeminent (excellency in KJV) in power. <sup>4</sup>Unstable as water, you shall not have preeminence (not excel in KJV), because you went up to your father's bed; then you defiled it—he went up to my couch!"

**Reuben, you are my firstborn, my might:** (v3) Reuben was born in the prime of Jacob's life, his birth would have brought enormous joy to Jacob's heart being the firstborn son, so it is easy to understand why he at first speaks so highly of him. the expression, "my might," carries the idea that he being the first of his children and the oldest of all was his support in raising the younger children and his help in family matters. The firstborn son was due a double portion meaning, he was to have a double portion of all of the inheritance and all things that his father had (Deut. 21:15-17). Israel magnifies the privileges and rights due to the firstborn and the pride he had in Reuben being his firstborn and oldest son. He tells Reuben that as the firstborn son had first place in the family and was to be honoured by his younger brothers and all others with excellency, meaning with honour and dignity and respected as the elder brother that rightfully has the authority and power over those born after him and over his household (but not over his father). This was the privilege rank, authority and honour that belong to the first-born son.

**Unstable as water:** (v4) carries the following ideas:

- In the same way that water without any boundaries flows wherever it is able corrupt passions without restraint flow up from the human heart and as a result wicked behaviour outwardly overflows.
- As the banks of a river cannot contain the waters of a river in flood the corrupt passions of the flesh if not controlled will manifest themselves in outward corrupt behaviour.
- As water left to its own natural course flows downward likewise the passion of the flesh left to take their own natural course will always lead downward.

Reuben was unstable as water in that he let his lustful passions ruin his life when he laid with Bilhah his father's concubine. (Gen. 35:22). This is why Israel in his prophetic words concerning Reuben said he would not

have preeminence, (not excel in KJV) or dignity above his brothers and power over them which he would have had if he had not grossly sinned and brought shame upon Israel by laying with his father's concubine. By this sin Reuben forfeited all the rights and honours due to him as the firstborn son. The following two things should be mentioned here:

1. Nothing great or excellent is recorded of the tribe of Reuben throughout the Scriptures. No king, prince, judge, prophet, ruler or any person of renown is recorded as having sprung up from his tribe, we only read of Dathan and Abiram, who were sinful and ungodly in acts of rebellion.
  2. Though Reuben forfeited the rights due to the firstborn son by his gross sin (1 Chron. 5:1) and brought great shame upon Israel and his own reputation his father did not disinherit him, nor was he excluded from a tribe's share in the Promised Land. It simply means his blessing was greatly lessened and modified according to his past corrupt behaviour.
- The boundaries of the inheritance and land of the people of Reuben, Gad and half the tribe of Manasseh are found in (Joshua 18:7).

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## SIMEON AND LEVI

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### GENESIS 49:5-7

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#### Jacob's Prophecy over Simeon.

- **Genesis 49:5-7:** "Simeon and Levi are brothers; weapons of violence are their swords (instruments of cruelty are in their habitations in KJV). <sup>6</sup>Let my soul come not into their council (into their secret in KJV); O my glory, be not joined to their company. For in their anger they killed men (they slew a man in KJV), and in their willfulness they hamstrung oxen (dig down a wall in KJV). <sup>7</sup>Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce, and their wrath, for it is cruel! I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel.

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**Simon and Levi are brothers:** (v5) they are brothers in that they are both sons of Leah and brothers by character and temper and by the fact that the same prediction would be equally applicable to both their tribes.

**Weapons of violence are their swords:** (v5) the word instruments comes from the Hebrew word (*kalah*) in this context it refers to any vessel or apparatus that can be prepared and used as armour and as a weapon and artillery (i.e., swords, bows, chariots and anything that is used as an object to inflict harm and the word cruelty: comes from the Hebrew word (*chamac*) in the context of these verses it means violence and extreme oppression and carries the idea of wrong doing and unjust gain by violence or oppression. This means that the expression, "instruments of cruelty are in their habitations (in KJV) mean that within Simeon and Levi's nature and within their tribes there have been and will be again plots of violence and plans to take up weapons of war against others for their own advantage and gain.

**Let my soul come not into their council (into their secret in KJV):** (v6) carries the idea that Jacob does not want to be united in their assembly or enter into an alliance with them. This is because by doing so they would bring dishonour to his good name as they did when Simeon and Levi (Dinah's brothers) took their swords and invaded the city of Shechem and killed Hamor and his son Shechem and all the males with the sword and took Dinah and went away. Later they returned with their brothers and not only plundered the city of all its wealth and all that was in the fields, but also took their little ones and their wives' captive. When Jacob heard what Simeon and Levi had done, he said, "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." (Genesis 34:25-30). This is why Jacob says, "Let my soul come not into their council," he suspects by aligning himself with them

they would bring dishonor to his name (i.e., make his name to stink) (Gen. 34:30). He is signifying that his nobleness, dignity and honour would be degraded in the sight of God and man if he banded together with Simeon and Levi. It is also why he says, "Simeon and Levi are brothers; weapons of violence are their swords (cruelty are in their habitations in KJV)." (v5). Jacob here signifies to his sons and all their descendants that he did not consent to Simeon and Levi's wickedness so that all future generations would know that their bloody murderous actions were undertaken without his consent and that all would know he considered it a blight upon the nation that he could not turn a blind eye to or let it pass without any consequences.

**In their anger they killed men (they slew a man: (v6)** this refers to Hamor and Shechem, together with all the males of the city (Gen. 34:25-26) and so the word man in this context as used in the King James Bible embraces all the men (the singular is used for the plural), this maybe to put the emphasis upon Hamor or Shechem, because they were the primary men and the reason Simeon and Levi cruelly slaughtered all the males of the city.

**They hamstrung oxen (dig down a wall in KJV):** (v6) the expression, "They dig down a wall refers to the plot they formed for the destruction of the inhabitants of Shechem. It carries the idea that by self-will and arrogant temper and cruelty they broke into the city to murder the men and broke into the houses to take the children and women captive. It is unlikely that this refers to a wall surrounding the city of Shechem since by their easy access into the city it does not appear to have been walled, and if it was they would not have been a large enough band of men to tear down such a wall, nor would they have had enough time. If there was a wall it would mean they broke a hole through the wall, but more likely means they broke a hole in the wall of Shechem's palace or its court which they broke through to get in and slay Hamor and Shechem, and take away Dinah their sister. (Gen. 34:26).

**Digged:** comes from the Hebrew word (*`aqar*) and means to dig down and pluck up (especially by the roots) and specifically to hamstring. Figuratively it carries the idea of exterminating. Hamstring means constrain and confine.

**Oxen:** comes from the Hebrew word (*baqar*) it refers to an animal of the ox kind, a bull, calf, cow or heifer of either gender (as used for ploughing). Collectively a herd of bulls, calves, cows, heifers or cattle. The following verses show that oxen and bulls were a symbol of majesty and princes and of mighty warriors.

- A firstborn bull—he has majesty, and his horns are the horns of a wild ox; with them he shall gore the peoples, all of them, to the ends of the earth; they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh. (Deut. 33:17).
- Many bulls encompass me; strong bulls of Bashan surround me (Psalm 22:12).
- Rebuke the beasts that dwell among the reeds, the herd of bulls with the calves of the peoples. Trample underfoot those who lust after tribute; scatter the peoples who delight in war. (Psalm 68:30).

Concerning Simeon and Levi we read:

- They took their (the people of Shechem) flocks and their herds, their donkeys, and whatever was in the city and in the field. (Gen. 34:28).
- On the third day, when they (the men of Shechem) 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. (Gen. 34:25).

This means that the expression, "They hamstrung oxen," (v6) could embrace the following two things:

1. The literal oxen that Simeon and Levi took and drove away from the fields of the Shechemites.

2. Simeon and Levi, murdering Hamor the prince of Shechem, and all the men of the city and in this way, it could be said that they hamstrung the princes, the nobles, the rulers and the men of Shechem from protecting the women and children of the city.

**I will divide them (Simeon and Levi) in Jacob and scatter them in Israel:** (v7) God does not cut Simeon and Levi off from the promised inheritance; but He does divide them. While Moses was on Mount Sinai with the LORD the people had Aaron make a golden calf. The tribe of Levi in accordance with the command of Moses performed an acceptable service in their zeal against those who worshipped it and because of this Jacob's prediction became a blessing for Levi.

- When Moses saw that the people had broken loose (for Aaron had let them break loose, to the derision of their enemies), <sup>26</sup>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. <sup>27</sup>And he said to them, "Thus says the LORD'S 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.' " <sup>28</sup>And the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses. And that day about three thousand men of the people fell. <sup>29</sup>And Moses said, "Today you have been ordained for the service of the LORD'S, each one at the cost of his son and of his brother, so that he might bestow a blessing upon you this day." (Exod. 32:25-29).

On account of the Levites zeal against idolatry, the tribe of Levi was allotted forty-eight cities and their farmland in various districts in the land, and in this way, they were honourably separated from one another and scattered through the nation of Israel to be priests to the LORD. (Joshua chapter twenty-one).

**I will divide and scatter Simeon:** (v7) Simon was the weakest of all the tribes at the close of their travels in the wilderness the tribe of Simeon only numbered 22,200. (Num. 26:14) most other tribes were double this number and some almost three times greater this means that Simeon was the weakest of all the tribes. In the blessing of Moses when all the heads of the tribes of Israel were gathered together (Deut. 33:1-29) the only tribe that is not mentioned in these blessings is the tribe of Levi. his tribe obtained no distinct territory, but only a part of that of Judah. Their inheritance was in the midst of the inheritance of the people of Judah. (Josh. 19:1) it formed part of the territory of the people of Judah. This was because the portion of land the people of Judah inherited was too large for them so the people of Simeon obtained an inheritance in the midst of their inheritance. (Josh. 19:9). Two colonies from the tribe of Simeon later went out from the parent tribe, and established themselves in different locations in the land and in this way separated themselves from one another (1 Chron. 4:24-43). In this way Jacob's prediction was fulfilled for both Simeon and Levi.

- The Levites have no portion among the tribes for the priesthood of the LORD is their heritage (Josh. 18:7) and the boundaries of the inheritance and land of the people of Simeon are found in (Joshua 19:1-9).

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## JUDAH

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### GENESIS 49:8-12

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#### Jacob's Prophecy over Judah.

- **Genesis 49:8-12:** "Judah, your brothers shall praise you; your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; your father's sons shall bow down before you. <sup>9</sup>Judah is a lion's cub; from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He stooped down; he crouched as a lion and as a lioness (as an old lion in KJV); who dares rouse him? <sup>10</sup>The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff (a lawgiver in KJV) from between his feet, until tribute (Shiloh in KJV) comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples (the

gathering of the people in KJV). <sup>11</sup>Binding his foal to the vine and his donkey's colt to the choice vine, he has washed his garments in wine and his vesture in the blood of grapes.

<sup>12</sup>His eyes are darker than wine (red with wine in KJV), and his teeth whiter than milk.

**Judah, your brothers shall praise you:** (v8) when Leah gave birth to Judah her fourth son she said, "This time I will praise the LORD," therefore she called his name Judah. (Gen 29:35). Judah comes from the Hebrew word (*yadah*) which means celebrated and carries the idea of thankfulness. In the same way that Leah celebrated the birth of Judah, likewise his eleven brothers, their tribes and their descendants will celebrate him for the following reasons:

- God gave Judah the pre-eminence and first place amongst the tribes. When the cloud lifted from the tabernacle and the people of Israel set out by stages from the wilderness of Sinai for the first time at the command of the LORD by Moses the standard of the camp of the people of Judah went out first and in this way they lead all the others through the wilderness. (Num. 10:11-14).
- After the death of Joshua, the people of Israel inquired of the LORD, "Who shall go up first for us against the Canaanites, to fight against them?" The LORD said, "Judah shall go up; behold, I have given the land into his hand." (Judges 1:1-2). After the death of Joshua Judah by the appointment of God lead the tribes and their armies against the Canaanites. Reuben, Jacob and Leah's firstborn son had slept with his father's concubine Bilhah (Gen. 35:22) and therefore forfeited the rights due to the firstborn son as did Simeon Leah's second son and Levi her third son because they cruelly and murderously slaughtered all the men of Shechem (Gen. 34:25-29) therefore Judah Leah's fourth son and his tribe, took the foremost place amongst the tribes of his brothers. By His leadership, skill, wisdom, bravery and courage, Judah conquered the nations in the land and won freedom for the empire for Israel. The first judge, Othniel was of the tribe of Judah as was Caleb, whose godly reputation was much the same as that of Joshua.

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In every age, the tribe of Judah was more honoured than any of the other tribes and when God granted the nation and people of Israel mercy their kings at that time were from the line of Judah. Judah grew up from a lion's whelp (v9), meaning, from a little power, but became a powerful and formidable chief among the tribes like a fierce lion that none could devour.

**Your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies:** (v8) means he will have great victory over his enemies, because of his superior strength enemies will flee before him, but rather than escape, will be captured, and submit to his overwhelming power. The expression is take from the practice of warriors who would snap the neck of their enemies and throw their lifeless bodies down at their feet. Eliphaz the Temanite in the following verses uses similar language.

- Because he (the wicked man) has stretched out his hand against God and defies the Almighty, <sup>26</sup>running stubbornly against him (even upon his neck in KJV) with a thickly bossed shield (Job 15:25-26).

During Job's great suffering he felt as though God was taking hold of his neck.

- I (Job) was at ease, and he (the LORD) broke me apart; he seized me by the neck and dashed me to pieces; he set me up as his target (Job 16:12).

Your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies is also taken from the custom of conquerors, who are said to put the yokes upon the necks of the conquered.

- By your (Esau) sword you shall live, and you shall serve your brother (Jacob); but when you grow restless you shall break his yoke from your neck. (Gen. 27:40).

- Because you (the people of Israel) did not serve the LORD your God with joyfulness and gladness of heart, because of the abundance of all things, <sup>48</sup>therefore you shall serve your enemies whom the LORD will send against you, in hunger and thirst, in nakedness, and lacking everything. And he will put a yoke of iron on your neck until he has destroyed you. (Deut. 28:47-48).
- The LORD of hosts will wield against them (Israel's enemies) a whip, as when he struck Midian at the rock of Oreb. And his staff will be over the sea, and he will lift it as he did in Egypt. <sup>27</sup>And in that day his (the LORD'S) burden will depart from your (Israel's) shoulder, and his yoke from your neck; and the yoke will be broken because of the fat (i.e., abundance). (Isaiah 10:26-27).
- If any nation or kingdom will not serve this Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and put its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, I will punish that nation with the sword, with famine, and with pestilence, declares the LORD, until I have consumed it by his hand. (Jer. 27:8).
- Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: I have put upon the neck of all these nations an iron yoke to serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and they shall serve him, for I have given to him even the beasts of the field. (Jer. 28:14).

Jacob's prophetic words that Judah's hand would be upon the neck of his enemies (v8) was partly fulfilled when Judah fought against the Canaanites.

- After the death of Joshua, the people of Israel inquired of the LORD, "Who shall go up first for us against the Canaanites, to fight against them?" <sup>2</sup>The LORD said, "Judah shall go up; behold, I have given the land into his hand." <sup>3</sup>And Judah said to Simeon his brother, "Come up with me into the territory allotted to me, that we may fight against the Canaanites. And I likewise will go with you into the territory allotted to you." So Simeon went with him. <sup>4</sup>Then Judah went up and the LORD gave the Canaanites and the Perizzites into their hand, and they defeated 10,000 of them at Bezek (Judg. 1:1-4).

Partly by Othniel also from the line of Judah:

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- When the people of Israel cried out to the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer for the people of Israel, who saved them, Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother. <sup>10</sup>The Spirit of the LORD was upon him, and he judged Israel. He went out to war, and the LORD gave Cushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand. And his hand prevailed over Cushan-rishathaim. (Judges 3:9-10).

And more fully by David's defeat of the Philistines (2 Sam 8:1) and his great victories by kings and commanders of armies who were in the line of Judah that turned the backs of their enemies. (Psalm 18:40) and by Solomon and those that followed and ultimately by Israel's Messiah the Christ who rose up out of the tribe of Judah.

**Your father's sons shall bow down before you:** (v8) this refers to Judah not as an individual, but as the head of a tribe in Israel. It means the sons of Jacob being his father and their descendants will not only honour Judah above other tribes and show him the respect due to the firstborn, but will also submit to his kingly authority and power. This was verified in God's choosing the tribe of Judah, and David to govern the Hebrew nation and settling the kingdom of Israel upon the descendants of Judah and especially the Messiah being born of this tribe, whose Kingdom is everlasting, and to whom every knee shall bow. These blessings and predictions of Jacob partly declare the individual state of the brother's but are more fully fulfilled in their descendants.

**Judah is a lion's cub:** (v9) a young lion is not only full of youthful vigour, courage, strength, energy and fearlessness, but is also a terror to his enemies which after hunting and feasting on its prey then retires to its lair to rest. This could be applied the first time after the death of Joshua, that the LORD said, "Judah shall go up first to fight against the Canaanites for the LORD has given the land into his hand." (Judges 1:1-2).

**From the prey, my son, you have gone up:** (v9) this expression can carry the following two ideas:



1. After having many triumphant victories and conquering strong enemies Judah has grown higher in respect, honour and power amongst all the tribes of Israel and by his enemies has become a leader of armies that is greatly to be feared.
2. Many lions dwell in mountains and come down to hunt for their prey and after getting it returns up to their safe and peaceful dwelling place, likewise Judah is likened to a lion going up to the mountains its primary dwelling place to rest after it has found its prey and feasted on it.

**He stooped down; he crouched as a lion:** (v9) the lion is the king of beasts, all who hear his roar tremble; when he captures his prey there is no escape and after feasting, he leaves and none dares to pursue him to revenge the savaged prey. In the following verse the LORD is likened to the fearlessness of the lion:

- For thus the LORD said to me, "As a lion or a young lion growls over his prey, and when a band of shepherds is called out against him is not terrified by their shouting or daunted at their noise, so the LORD of hosts will come down to fight on Mount Zion and on its hill. (Isaiah 31:4).

Judah is likened to a crouching lion in that they without fear stalk their enemies, meaning that they patiently plan their attacks without fear, they do not invade and enemy on impulse, but carefully plot, plan and strategies before striking the final blow.

**As a lioness (as an old lion in KJV); who dares rouse him:** (v9) the lioness is said to be more-fierce than the male, especially the most dangerous when she has cubs to protect, likewise Judah is far more to be feared when those under his rule and protection are being threatened by enemies. This same principal applies to both the lioness and the old lion, meaning a full-grown lion (in contrast to a youthful lion) that has reached it full strength. Who in their right mind would dare to disturb or provoke such a lion. All who have wisdom would not only have a cautious fear of him, but also seek peace with him. By this prophetic expression it was foretold that the tribe of Judah would become a very formidable force in the land that would not only obtain great victories, but would also peaceably enjoy the plunder and fruits of the victories.

**Summary of the lion:** Judah's victory's will not be followed afterward with overthrows or defeats as often happens after victories in war, but will instead be followed by peace and posterity.

- Judah and Israel lived in safety, from Dan even to Beersheba, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, all the days of Solomon. (1 Kings 4:25).

**The sceptre shall not depart from Judah:** (v10) the word scepter comes from an unused root probably meaning a shoot that branches off. Literally it was a rod of wood that was called a Sceptre (or staff) because it was adorned with carvings relevant to the tribe and their faith, that was handed down from father to son and in this way, it soon became an emblem of authority. It signifies both tribal headship, authority and power and the authority of royal kingship as with David and Solomon. Each tribe had a staff (or sceptre) which became an ensign (i.e., a banner, flag, badge) that signified the tribes' authority. The staff of Judah here signifies all the tribes being united under one staff (or sceptre) meaning all tribes are united under one government. Depending upon the context the sceptre can signify any of the following: the might of armies; a symbol of righteousness; the power of the law to crush the wicked; the strength of a strong leader or ruler; God's power being with His people; the dominion and royal power of a nation and the dominion and authority of a king and his government.

(Num. 24:17) (Ps. 45:6) (Isaiah 14:5) (Ezek. 19:14) (Amos 1:5, 8) (Zech. 10:11)

The idea is that the dominion and law of Judah will always be with his descents until the Messiah comes who the people will give their obedience to. There is nothing in all of Jacob's prophecy concerning Judah, but honour, dominion, victory and safety. The expression, "the sceptre shall

not depart from Judah," (v10) means that the kingly power or dominion and authority (as the sceptre symbolises) of the government or the heads and princes of the tribe of Judah which commenced as soon as it became a tribe would continue to the coming of the Messiah, which it did. Some may wonder how can it be said that the dominion and authority shall not depart from Judah, when Judah himself had no dominion and authority? The answer of course is that Jacob is speaking prophetically, and foretelling of Judah's descendants. The tribe of Judah (or at least a remnant of it) did remain until the coming of the Messiah as did the tribe of Levi and Benjamin, but neither of them had the status, authority and dominion as the tribe of Judah did.

**Nor the ruler's staff (a lawgiver in KJV) from between his feet:**

(v10) the English standard Bible translates it, "the scepter shall not depart from Judah, while the King James Bible says, "a lawgiver will not depart from Judah." There has been much said amongst commentators as to which of these two are correct. But there is no valid reason to reject one and accept the other since the word scepter signifies both, the dominion and power of a ruler and the righteousness of a nation which by extension embraces the law and justice.

- 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. (Num. 24:17).
- Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of uprightness. (Psalm 45:6).
- For the LORD is our judge; the LORD is our lawgiver; the LORD is our king; he will save us. (Isaiah 33:22).

**From between his feet:** this expression refers to those who are begotten and born of his tribe, it means, from among his descendants or from his children's children.

**The word lawgiver:** in this context can embrace a scribe or a teacher of the law or a ruler, judge, or prince of the Sanhedrim. The prophecy implies that the tribe of Judah and their ruler's judges and descents would continue either with a king or governor or in civil and ecclesiastical power until Shiloh comes referring to the Lord Jesus Christ and afterward be replaced by him.

**Judah's history:**

- Judah had the highest rank among the tribes in the wilderness
- David, who was anointed as the rightful sovereign of all Israel, and in whom the throne became hereditary was of the line of Judah.
- The revolt of the ten tribes limited the dominion and power of Judah, but it did not abolish the actual sovereignty of Rehoboam the head of the tribe of Judah or of his successors who continued to be the recognised sovereigns until sometime after the return from the Babylonian captivity.
- During their captivity they would have been under a type of internal government exercised by the family of David of the tribe of Judah.
- After their return from Babylon, Zerubbabel, of David's race, was their leader; and the tribe of Judah, and those who were incorporated with them, had regular judges and rulers from among themselves.
- Prior to Jesus birth the whole nation of Israel was virtually absorbed into Judah so that there was basically no trace of self-government of individual tribes, but that of Judah until Jesus came, who was a descendant of the royal line of David and of Judah.
- Under the kings of Persia Syria, the Greeks and afterward under the Romans, the great council of the Jews, titled, "the Sanhedrim," was formed primarily of the tribe of Judah and it continued to possess great authority until the coming of Christ.

- Judah retained its power to the latter end of Herod's reign, when Christ was come; and though it was greatly diminished, it had some power remaining, even at the death of Christ, but very soon afterward lost all its power.

Judah's history shows that in all respects the sceptre (dominion and judicial authority and civil and ecclesiastical power), though gradually weakened, did not depart from the tribe of Judah.

**NOTE:** there is no need to apply the words, "the ruler's staff (a lawgiver in KJV) shall not depart from Judah," (v10) to any specific king, governor or ruler because after Israel's return from the Babylon captivity the name Judah superseded the name of Jacob as the common title and the name of all tribes collectively and in this way all tribes went by the name of Judah.

**Shiloh:** is a place in Palestine it comes from the Hebrew word (*Shiylah*) and (*Shalah*) it means to be tranquil, happy, safe, prosperous, secure and successful. Summed up it means rest and peace. It was situated on a hill in the heart of the country and was about ten miles due south of Shechem, in the territory of Ephraim not far from Jerusalem, twenty or twenty-five miles north of the city, twelve miles north of Beth-el, and ten miles south of Shechem surrounded by a pleasant valley. It is also an epithet (name) of the Messiah. By God's order the tabernacle (figuratively meaning a place of rest) and the Ark of the Covenant was moved to Shiloh. The following verses show that it was the LORD who choose the place for the Tabernacle and the Ark

- Then the whole congregation of the people of Israel assembled at Shiloh and set up the tent of meeting there. The land lay subdued before them. (Josh. 18:1).
- Go now to my place that was in Shiloh, where I made my name dwell at first, and see what I did to it because of the evil of my people Israel. (Jer. 7:12).

The Tabernacle with its contents continued at Shiloh during the whole period of the Judges, for more than three hundred years until the days of Samuel (1 Sam. 1:3) and its capture by the Philistines, after which the place lost all importance and sank into obscurity after its destruction by the Philistines, long before Judah took the leading role amongst the tribes of Israel. Following are the various meanings that have been given to Shiloh:

- He who shall be sent and peaceful or peace-maker,
- He for whom it is laid up or the things laid up for him.
- Until he come, whose it is or until Messiah come, whose is the Kingdom.

These all agree with the title, "the King and Prince of peace," that Scripture gives to the Messiah the Lord Jesus Christ. This means that in the context of (Gen. 49:10) Shiloh is used to signify security, successfulness, happiness, prosperity and safety. This means the word is used as an as an epithet (name and title) of the Messiah and that the expression, "Until Shiloh comes," in its fullest sense means, "until the Messiah comes with his Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace." It also means that the nation of Israel as a collective whole has been without a ruler and without a judge for over two-thousand years since Shiloh came to who the people gathered (i.e., faithful Jews and Gentiles).

**The obedience of the peoples (the gathering of the people in KJV):** (v10) when Shiloh (i.e., the Messiah) both Jews and Gentiles gathered to him and accepted him as their King and Saviour. The partition between the Jews and Gentiles was broken down (Eph. 2:14-22) and the converted Gentiles, along with the converted Jews, became his obedient people and worshippers. This gathering of the people to him will continue until he comes in his glory and the last immeasurable multitudes of the redeemed from all nations are gathered into his everlasting Kingdom.

**Binding his foal to the vine and his donkey's colt to the choice vine:** (v11) amongst commentators there are varying ideas as to what this expression means, following are the three most common ones:

1. The vines would be so common and grow in such abundance and so thick and strong that travellers would tie their donkeys to the vines. The land would bear an abundance of fruit and the vines an abundance of rich, luscious purple grapes that passers-by would load their donkeys up with them and if the donkeys ate the fruit of the vines and of the land no one would be concerned since the country would be so abundant with them.
2. The expression, "Binding his foal to the vine and his donkey's colt to the choice vine," (v11) literally applies to Shiloh (i.e., the Messiah) spoken of in the following verses:
  - Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. (Zech. 9:9).

Which was fulfilled in the following verse:

- When they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Beth-phage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, <sup>2</sup>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. (Matt. 21:2).
3. Because of the Gentiles uncleanness and ignorance of spiritual things they are here being compared to an ass's colt, so in regards to the expression, "Binding his foal to the vine and his donkey's colt to the choice vine," (v11) the picture is of the Gentiles cleaving to Shiloh (i.e., the Messiah the true vine).
    - I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. (John 15:1).

**He has washed his garments in wine and his vesture in the blood of grapes:** (v11). This is a hyperbolical (extreme exaggeration) used to highlight the great abundance of wine in the tribe of Judah. It means that the vines throughout the land would be so plentiful that if it were practical the wine from them would be used for washing robes and garments instead of water. Figuratively it may be applied to Christ whose sufferings and death, is likened to a vesture dipped in blood.

- Who is this who comes from Edom, in crimsoned garments from Bozrah, he who is splendid in his apparel, marching in the greatness of his strength? "It is I, speaking in righteousness, mighty to save." (Isaiah 63:1).

Here Jesus is spoken of as being crimson red in his garments and in the following verse the faithful who trust in him are pictured as having their garments washed clean by the blood of Jesus.

- Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth. To him who loves us and has washed us from our sins by his own blood. (Revelation 1:5).
- Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?" <sup>14</sup>I said to him, "Sir, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. (Rev. 7:13-14).
- They (the redeemed) have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death. (Rev. 12:11).

**His eyes are darker than wine (red with wine in KJV):** (v12) this can refer to the following two things:

1. The excellency of character and richness of love and grace of the ruler and lawgiver (i.e., Shiloh the Messiah to come).

2. In the book of Proverbs, it is written, "who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has complaining? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes?" (Prov. 23:29). Based on this verse the expression, "eyes darker than wine," could refer to the suffering of Jesus.

- He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. (Isaiah 53:3).

It may also signify our Saviours' joy spoken of in the following verse:

- Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, <sup>2</sup>looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. (Heb. 12:1-2).

And the fierceness and fury of his wrath:

- The hairs of his head were white like wool, as white as snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, (Rev. 1:14).

**His teeth whiter than milk:** (v12) this expression signifies the purity and holiness of Christ's nature and of his word.

- The hairs of his (one like a son of man) head were white like wool, as white as snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire. (Rev. 1:14).

And by extension those who belong to his family:

- Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. (Psalm 51:7).
- Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool. (Isaiah 1:18).
- The boundaries of the inheritance and land of the people of Judah are found in (Josh. 15:1-12) (Josh. 18:5).

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## ZEBULUN

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### GENESIS 49:13

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#### Jacob's Prophecy over Zebulun.

- **Genesis 49:13:** "Zebulun shall dwell at the shore of the sea; he shall become a haven for ships, and his border shall be at Sidon (Zidon in KJV).

**Zebulun:** comes from the Hebrew word (*zabal*) meaning dwelling or habitation he was the sixth and youngest son of Leah (Gen. 30:20), the tenth in line of the Children of Jacob. Their inherited territory was in Galilee between the Mediterranean Sea and the Sea of Galilee sometimes called the sea of Tiberias and of Gennesaret. The territory of Zebulun lay upon the inland sea of Gennesaret, but did not extend to the shore of the Mediterranean, but Moses in the following verses also speaks of Zebulun as a tribe that would draw an abundance from the seas.

- Rejoice, Zebulun, in your going out, and Issachar, in your tents. <sup>19</sup>They shall call peoples to their mountain; there they offer right sacrifices; for they draw from the abundance of the seas and the hidden treasures of the sand. (Deut. 33:18-19).

The general meaning of Jacobs' blessing to Zebulun is most likely that even though their land did not reach to the Mediterranean Sea, their primary trade would be in maritime pursuits and commerce rather than

agriculture and livestock. Jesus went and lived in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali (Matt. 4:12-15). Fulfilling the following prophecy of Isaiah:

- There will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. (Isaiah 9:1-2)

The remainder of the chapter goes on to prophetically speak of the coming of the Prince of Peace and the government being on his shoulder forever. There is no doubt that the people of Zebulun would have had many ships and a great fishing trade on the Sea of Galilee and since the boundary of their territory was not such a great distance from the shores of the Mediterranean Sea would have done much trade with those dwelling along the coastline.

- The boundaries of the inheritance and land of the people of Zebulun are found in (Joshua 19:10-16).

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## ISSACHAR

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### GENESIS 49:14-15

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#### Jacob's Prophecy over Issachar.

- **Genesis 49:14-15:** "Issachar is a strong donkey, crouching between the sheepfolds (between two burdens in KJV). <sup>15</sup>He saw that a resting place was good, and that the land was pleasant, so he bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant at forced labor.

Issachar is pictured as a donkey in the following three ways:

1. As a strong donkey meaning one that is able to carry heavy loads and work hard.
2. As crouching between the sheepfolds (between two burdens in KJV) this presents the following three ideas, firstly, a picture of a donkey crouching under the heavy load on his back when the sacks on either side of his body are overfilled with products of great weight, secondly, as donkeys that have the strength to take over the fertile pasture lands that the surrounding sheep occupy, but choose instead to remain in peace on their own fields and thirdly as donkeys being penned in different stalls to those that sheep and cattle were kept in.
3. As donkeys' content to rest in the fertile fields they were given and therefore willing to submit to the servitude of their masters, rather than rebel or flee the land.

The symbolism is that the tribe of Issachar would be strong and industrious with no ambition to go to war to become their own masters, but instead would humble themselves and therefore were able to carry the burden of having masters over them and for the sake of a peaceful life would pay the taxes the kings or rulers of the land forced upon them. Some feel that the expression, "Couching down between the sheepfolds (between two burdens in KJV)" may refer to the two kingdoms on either side of their land, on the one side the Phoenicia kingdom and on the other side the kingdom of Samaria. The tribe settled down in the good land of lower Galilee in the midst of the Canaanites. They were industrious in agricultural labours and for the sake of peace they bowed their shoulder (meaning they humbled themselves) and became servants to paying taxes rather than rise up in rebellion and undertake the struggle for liberty and independence, they became like the strong donkey a bearer of burdens and a payer of tribute.

- The boundaries of the inheritance and land of the people of Issachar are found in (Joshua 19:17-23).

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**GENESIS 49:16-18**


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**Jacob's Prophecy over Dan.**

- **Genesis 49:16-18:** "Dan shall judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel. <sup>17</sup>Dan shall be a serpent in the way, a viper by the path, that bites the horse's heels so that his rider falls backward. <sup>18</sup>I wait for your salvation, O LORD.

**Dan shall judge his people:** (v16) the name Dan comes from the Hebrew word (*diyn*) it literally means Judge. Jacob in this prophecy alludes to the meaning of the name of Dan. It can apply to the following things, the angel of the LORD appearing to the wife of Manoah of the tribe of the Danites and saying to her, "You are barren, but you shall conceive a son" (Judges 13:1-2) after which she gave birth to her son and named him Samson. Then some years later we read in Scripture, "he judged Israel in the days of the Philistines twenty years." (Judges 15:20). Though it can apply to Samson it is somewhat limited since the prediction embraces the entire tribe and not just one man. It is better understood in the following way, though Dan is one of the sons of one of Jacob's concubines, he will not be subject to any of them, but shall have their own head of the tribe and be governed by judges within their own tribe and not others. All tribes had their own head ruling them and their own, governments, judges and governors amongst them that ruled the tribe so it is most likely that this is spoken of Dan, because he is the first son of Leah (the woman Jacob was tricked into marrying) mentioned in these predictions of Jacob. Should this reasoning be correct it means that the expression, "Dan shall judge his people," (v16) carries the idea that though Dan was a son of Jacob's concubine Leah, he will not be subject to the rule or authority of any other tribe (especially those born to Rachel Jacob's true wife and the woman he loved), but will have absolute power within their own tribe. This idea is in harmony with the following verse:

- There shall be with you a man from each tribe, each man being the head of the house of his fathers. (Num. 1:4).

**Dan shall be a serpent in the way:** (v17) the serpent here embraces all kinds of deadly adders especially that kind of horned serpent of the colour of the sand which makes it easily to hide its body in desert sands and the dust of the highways travellers commonly use. Since it can hide itself in such a way it is not only a most deadly creature to all who come near it, but also able lie in wait without being seen, until it is ready to strike its prey with its deadly bite. These very small serpents (in compassion to horses) are pictured as inflicting the much larger animal with a deadly wound, not by attacking its head, but by attacking its weakest part, its heel causing both the horse and its rider to fall.

**The character of the serpent:** is one of subtleness, deceptiveness, cunning and though small in size deadly dangerous. Following are two aspects of the nature of the serpent that can be applied to the tribe of Dan.

1. History shows that the tribe of Dan was the ringleaders in idolatry, they were the first tribe that publically erected a molten image in the Promised Land, and, by their example and perseverance in this iniquity, infected all the tribes of Israel with their sin. This idolatry began soon after the days of Joshua, in those days when there was no king in Israel and everyone did what was right in his own eyes and continued till the day of the captivity of the land. This idolatry began with Micah (from the tribe of Judah) who set up a carved image and a metal image and had a shrine in his own house for his household gods and ordained one of his sons to be his priest (Judges 17:1-5) and hired a Levite priests serve him (Judges 17:9-10). Sometime after this, men from the tribe of Dan returned to the house of Micah and took his carved image, the

ephod, the household gods, the metal image and the Levite priest (Judges 18:18-20) then left. The armies of Dan slaughtered the people of Laish rebuilt the city and named it Dan after the name of Dan their ancestor and set up Micah's carved images that he had made 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. Micah's carved image as long as the house of God was at Shiloh. (Judges 18:27-31). Micah's false gods led to false worship among amongst many of the tribes of Israel for over three hundred years until Israel took the Ark of the Covenant from Shiloh into all the camp of Israel (1 Sam. 4:3-5), after which it was captured by the Philistines. (1 Sam. 4:10-11 (1 Sam. 5:1), both chapters cover the entire story. Added to this great sin a golden calf was set up in the land of Dan. Jeroboam feared the people of his kingdom would return to Rehoboam king of Judah and the temple at Jerusalem to offer sacrifices and worship God so he set up a golden calf at Bethel and at Dan so that the people would have a set place amongst the ten tribes of his kingdom to offer sacrifices and worship God. These golden calves became a continual stumbling block for the people of Dan and the ten tribes of Israel. (1 Kings 12:26-30). In these ways the description of Dan being a serpent in the way was a very apt spiritual description of his tribe especially when the following is taken into account. After making the golden calves Jeroboam celebrates with a festival at which he offered sacrifices to the calves on the altar (1 Kings 12:32-33) saying 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. (1 Kings 12:28).

After Aaron had finished fashioning the golden calf while Moses was on Mount Sinai, the people offered sacrifices and worshipped it (Exod. 32:2-8) and Aaron said:

- These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt! (Exodus 32:1).

The declarations of Aaron and of Jeroboam are almost identical, truly the expression, "Dan shall be a serpent in the way," is a fitting expression since one of these golden calves was set up in his land.

2. The symbolism of the serpent is used here to signify the subtlety of the tribe of Dan who would conquer their enemies more by cunning than by strength. They would use surprise and deceptive means to gain advantages over their enemies, like a serpent suddenly biting the heels of the horse or a traveller. Many use the character of Samson (from the tribe of Dan), who by tying three hundred torches to the tails of foxes set fire to the Philistines stacked grain, their standing grain and their olive orchards (Judges 15:3-6) and with jawbone of a donkey struck down a thousand Philistines (Judges 15:12-17). Then at the end of his life destroyed the two pillars of the palace so the dead which he slew at his death were more than those that he slew in his life. (Judges 16:23-31). This they feel answers to the symbolism of the smaller creature (being only one man) defeating the far greater creature (being multitudes of men). However, though Samson may be used to illustrate the cunning and disposition of the whole tribe and is a good example of the smaller conquering the greater, Jacob's prophecy embraces the whole tribe and not an individual person. The inheritance of the tribe of Dan was at the extreme part of the country so being distanced from the main core of the other tribes they had need of cunning policy and skilful methods of warfare to defend themselves against invaders.

- The boundaries of the inheritance and land of the people of Dan are found in (Joshua 19:40-48).



## Jacob's Prophecy over Gad.

- **Genesis 49:19:** "Raiders shall raid Gad, but he shall raid at their heels.

Gad: comes from the Hebrew word (guwd) and (gadad) it means to crowd upon (i.e. attack, invade and overcome), and carries the idea of a troop distributing a fortune (this would of course be from enemies they have conquered and plundered). Jacob alludes to Gad's name, which signifies a troop. His prophecy for Gad is a prediction that his tribe would be a warlike one, and sometimes be conquered and at other times conquer, but overall will be valiant and in the end be entirely victorious. In the book of Chronicles, it is written, "the Gadites were mighty and experienced warriors, expert with shield and spear, whose faces were like the faces of lions and who were swift as gazelles upon the mountains." (1 Chron. 12:8). This very brief prophecy of Jacob's agrees with the later history of Gad's descendants as the following shows.

- Moses said, "Gad crouches like a lion; he tears off arm and scalp." (Deut. 33:20-21).

**Gad's land:** Moses the servant of the LORD gave Gad and Reuben and the half the tribe of Manasseh Gilead beyond the Jordan River on the east for their inheritance (Josh. 18:7) so they lived in Gilead in Bashan and in its towns and in all the pasturelands to their limits. (1 Chron. 5:11, 16).

When Leah gave birth to Gad, she said, "Good fortune has come (a troop cometh in KJV) (Gen. 30:11) in contrast to this Jacob says that troops will invade him and that Gad by cunning will plunder them. This means that Gad will suffer many invasions, but he will gather his forces and pursue them with avenging wrath. Jacob foresees that the location of their land would not only leave them vulnerable since they were separated from the main body of Israel, but also expose them to invasions and raids by the Moabites and Ammonites surrounding them. Jacob predicts that these nations surrounding their borders will frequently invade the country of Gad and for a time conquer and plunder it. History shows that this is exactly what happened and that eventually the Ammonites took possession of their country (Jer. 49:1). Being established on the other side of the Jordan River they were often exposed to the attacks and raids of the hostile powers on their borders (i.e., the Moabites and Ammonites) who came upon them like troops of robbers seizing their possessions and oppressing them for some eighteen years.

- The anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of the Philistines and into the hand of the Ammonites,<sup>8</sup> and they crushed and oppressed the people of Israel that year. For eighteen years they oppressed all the people of Israel who were beyond the Jordan in the land of the Amorites, which is in Gilead. (Judges 10:7-8).

In the book of Jeremiah, it is written:

- Concerning the Ammonites. Thus says the LORD: "Has Israel no sons? Has he no heir? Why then has Milcom dispossessed Gad, and his people settled in its cities? (Jer. 49:1).

These verses show that at various times throughout Gad's history Jacob's prophecy, "Raiders shall raid Gad," (v19) was fulfilled, but what about the second half of the prophecy, "Gad shall overcome at the last." In Saul's and David's time they did overcome the Moabites and Ammonites when their enemies were wholly subdued and later the Gadites with the Reubenites and half tribe of Manasseh overcome the Hagarites and Arabians and dwelt in their place until the Assyrian and Babylonian captivity of the ten tribes.

- The Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh had valiant men who carried shield and sword, and drew the bow, expert in war, 44,760, able to go to war.<sup>19</sup> They waged war against the Hagarites, Jetur, Naphish, and Nodab.<sup>20</sup> And when they prevailed over them, the Hagarites and all who were with them were given into their hands, for they

cried out to God in the battle, and he granted their urgent plea because they trusted in him.  
<sup>21</sup>They carried off their livestock: 50,000 of their camels, 250,000 sheep, 2,000 donkeys, and 100,000 men alive. <sup>22</sup>For many fell, because the war was of God. And they lived in their place until the exile. (1 Chron. 5:18-22).

Jacob shows that throughout Gad's history their will often be wars, raids and invasion, in some they will suffer defeat and other have the victory, but in the end will be victorious and overcome all their enemies. Likewise, it is with the people of God in their present warfare state, who are often foiled with their spiritual enemies, sin, the flesh and the world, but at the end will be more than conquerors over them through faith in Christ who loved and died for them.

- The boundaries of the inheritance and land of the people of Gad, Reuben and the half tribe of Manasseh are found in (Josh. 18:7).

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## ASHER

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### GENESIS 49:20

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#### Jacob's Prophecy over Asher.

- **Genesis 49:20:** "Asher's food shall be rich (his bread shall be fat in KJV), and he shall yield royal delicacies.

**Asher:** comes from the Hebrew word (*'ashar*) it means happy, honest and right. Figuratively it carries the idea of going forward, prospering, guiding, leading and bringing relief.

- Moses said of Asher, "Most blessed of sons be Asher; let him be the favorite of his brothers, and let him dip his foot in oil. <sup>25</sup>Your bars shall be iron and bronze, and as your days, so shall your strength be. (Deut. 33:24-25).

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Because their territory extended along the seacoast from Mount Carmel to Lebanon, it was not only very fertile soil abounding in the production of everyday foods, fruits, fish and meats commonly eaten by all, but also be fruitful in dainty foods fit for the royal place such as the best wines, the freshest fish, meats and sweetest fruits as well as spice and herbs of all kinds.

**His bread shall be fat:** carries the idea that the tribe of Asher would have and abundance of the best food to support themselves without being dependent upon others.

**He shall yield royal delicacies:** means food fit for kings, such as the finest corn, fresh fish, sweet tasting fruit, the most delicate wine, oil, spice, herbs etc., foods fit to furnish the table of the king's palace.

- The boundaries of the inheritance and land of the people of Asher are found in (Joshua 19:24-31).

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## NAPHTALI

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### GENESIS 49:21

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#### Jacob's Prophecy over Naphtali.

- **Genesis 49:21:** "Naphtali is a doe (a female deer) let loose that bears beautiful fawns. (a hind let loose: he giveth goodly words in KJV).

Naphtali comes from the Hebrew word (*pathal*) it means my wrestling and carries the idea of struggling.

**A doe let loose:** the picture here is of a female deer after being penned or tied up is set free into the wide-open fields agile and nimble, skipping, hopping and roaming with the joy of freedom. The inheritance of Naphtali was a most fruitful country which bordered around the shores of the Sea of Galilee and abounded with gardens, palm trees, fig trees and olive trees so the expression, "A doe let loose," is most likely a symbolic picture of the character of Naphtali being content in their land and zealous for their freedom and independence.

**A doe that bears beautiful fawns:** a new born fawn is a harmless, gentle and beautiful creature. The symbolism in regards to Naphtali most likely refers to goodly words, such as words that are trustworthy and courteous and skilful words that overcome potential wars by intelligent speeches rather than by force.

**Naphtali Barak and Deborah:** the only important historical event in which the tribe of Naphtali was involved was the battle with Deborah in which the armies of Jabin king of Canaan and the armies of Sisera the king's commander were defeated. (Judges 4:4-24). Some feel that Jacob's prophecy was fulfilled in Barak and others of the tribe of Naphtali who were at first reluctant to go to battle, like the hind facing an enemy, but when Deborah called them to go to war they went. At the end of the battle they both sang goodly words in the famous song of Deborah and Barak celebrating the triumphant victory of this battle. (the song is found in Judges 5:1-31). Others feel the words of Jacob's prophecy is better applied to their good character and the fact they were lovers of freedom and good and skilful speakers in negotiations loving peace rather than war. It is pointless to debate which of these two maybe correct since both can apply to the tribe of Naphtali. The overall or general meaning of the prophecy seems to be that the tribe of Naphtali would be located in a territory so fertile and peaceable, that they would feed on the richest pasture and spread out like a deer giving birth to her young. While the expression, "A hind let loose," means that they will not be shut up, but wholly left to their own freedom, to feed upon the best pastures free from all former restraints.

- The boundaries of the inheritance and land of the people of Naphtali are found in (Joshua 19:32-39).

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## JOSEPH

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### GENESIS 49:22-26

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#### Jacob's Prophecy over Joseph.

- **Genesis 49:22-26:** "Joseph is a fruitful bough, a fruitful bough by a spring (well in KJV); his branches run over the wall. <sup>23</sup>The archers bitterly attacked him, shot at him, and harassed (hated in KJV) him severely, <sup>24</sup>yet his bow remained unmoved (abode in strength in KJV); his arms were made agile (strong in KJV) by the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob (from there is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel), <sup>25</sup>by the God of your father who will help you, by the Almighty who will bless you with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that crouches beneath, blessings of the breasts and of the womb. <sup>26</sup>The blessings of your father are mighty beyond the blessings of my parents, up to the bounties of the everlasting hills. May they be on the head of Joseph, and on the brow (crown of the head in KJV) of him who was set apart from his brothers.

**INTRODUCTION:** Joseph was Jacob's dearest son, the child of his true and most loved wife; he was also the saviour of Israel's family, and the actual ruler of Egypt; and his father had bestowed upon him the portion of the firstborn in giving him two tribes (i.e., a double portion). What Jacob says of Joseph is part history and part prophecy.

**A fruitful bough by a spring:** (v22) this expression carries the following eight ideas:

1. He was fruitful in saving the people of Egypt, Canaan and the Hebrew race.
2. He was fruitful in giving birth to two sons who became two tribes of Israel.
3. He was fruitful in the extraordinary increase of his tribe.
  - The number of those from twenty years old and upward, every man able to go to war: listed of the tribe of Ephraim were 40,500 and those listed of the tribe of Manasseh were 32,200. (Num. 1:33-35).
  - Joshua said to the house of Joseph, to Ephraim and Manasseh, "You are a numerous people and have great power. You shall not have one allotment only. (Josh. 17:17)
  - A firstborn bull—he has majesty, and his horns are the horns of a wild ox; with them he shall gore the peoples, all of them, to the ends of the earth; they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh. (Deut. 33:17)
4. He was fruitful in that he triumphed over all opposition, so that he became the saviour of Israel.
5. He was fruitful in worldly blessings (he had all the power and wealth of Egypt available to him).
6. He was fruitful in spiritual blessings (God blessed him with amazing dreams) and in his union with Him.
7. He was fruitful in worldly honour and glory as he was in spiritual honour and glory.
8. He was fruitful in love, grace, mercy and forgiveness.

**His branches run over the wall:** (v22) the picture here is of a fruitful tree that is planted near a fountain or stream or spring of fresh water that has its branches covering a great wall and spreading out over the top of it. The idea is that Joseph and his descendants will be a strong protection to the people of Israel.

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**His bow remained unmoved (abode strength in KJV):** (v24) this statement is in the context of being bitterly hated, which means that the attack of the archers in this context does not refer to literal military attacks, but to the attacks of his bothers upon his life and their bitter hatred toward him (Gen. 37:4-5, 8). It embraces him being cruelly treated by his bothers; being sold as a slave; being tempted by a seductive woman and being cast into prison all of these are embraced in the expression, "the archers bitterly attacked him and hated him severely." Likewise, the bow in the expression, "His bow remained unmoved," (abode in strength in KJV): (v24) in this context does not refer to a literal bow, but to Joseph's faith.

It means that his faith did not fail, by his good character, his integrity, wisdom, fortitude, patience and hope and faith in God. He remained unmoved, and resisted and overcame all the powerful attacks, temptations and difficulties that came upon him so that all his enemies could neither defile nor destroy him. His and his descendants' faith and their fortitude and their hope in God would be unmoved and unshaken. They would stand firm in the face of their powerful enemies until they became their conquerors.

**His arms were made agile (strong in KJV):** (v24) this expression carries the idea that his wisdom and courage symbolised by strong arms were made strong by the power and influence of the mighty God of Jacob upon his life. It means that in the face of all despair, rejection, temptation, sorrow and suffering he did not succumb to bitterness or hatred or weaken in his faith and because of this remained strong in God and strong in grace and in forgiveness, not by his own strength, but by his faith in the Mighty God of Jacob.

**From there is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel:** (v24) the words, "from there," immediately follow the words, "the Mighty One of Jacob." Which means that the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel, does not refer to Joseph as some believe, but to the God of Jacob and of Abraham and Isaac. It is from God that the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel will come. However, the title, "the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel," can be applied to:

1. Joseph who through God's somewhat strange and mystical dealings with him (i.e., he was hated by his brothers, they plotted his murder, but instead for financial gain sold him into slavery, he was tempted by Pharaoh's seductive wife and put in prison) and by these hardships, sorrows and trials he was afterward exalted to the right hand side of Pharaoh and became the shepherd and stone raised up by God to be the saviour of Egypt, Canaan and the Hebrew race.
2. Joseph's son Ephraim whose name later replace that of Jacob as a title of the collective tribes of Israel, because he became a shepherd and stone (i.e., saviour) of Israel.
3. The true Shepherd, the Stone of Israel the Lord Jesus Christ who also was rejected, hated, persecuted and suffered great sorrow, but endured strong in faith and was afterward exalted to the right hand side of his heavenly Father to be the Shepherd and Stone of the global church of God, the body of Christ and his Kingdom. The apostle Paul wrote:
  - No one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 3:11).

And Paul wrote to all (i.e., Jews and Gentiles) who have been saved by grace in Christ Jesus and belong to the household of God that they are:

- Built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, <sup>21</sup>in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. <sup>22</sup>In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. (Ephes. 2:19-22).

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And Peter wrote:

- For it stands in Scripture: "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame. (1 Peter 2:6).

This verse is cited from:

- Thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I am the one who has laid as a foundation in Zion, a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation: 'Whoever believes will not be in haste. (Isaiah 28:16).

**By the hands of the mighty One of Jacob:** (v24) the idea carried in these words is that even though the people of Egypt, Canaan and the Hebrew race were saved and greatly blessed by Joseph's faith and wisdom the God of Jacob was the author of it. It was by God's plan and purposes that Joseph would be sold into slavery and afterwards exalted to the highest position in all the land (excepting Pharaoh himself) so that Israel, his eleven sons and their families would have a saviour and rock to support and shepherd and feed them in the time of famine.

**Blessings of heaven above:** (v25) this expression embraces the following two things:

1. The showers of rain that fall from above and fair weather and sunshine in their season that bring life to the fruits of the earth.
  - I will give you your rains in their season, and the land shall yield its increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. (Lev. 26:4).
  - The LORD will open to you his good treasury, the heavens, to give the rain to your land in its season and to bless all the work of your hands. (Deut. 28:12).

- Blessed by the LORD be his (Joseph's) land, with the choicest gifts of heaven above, and of the deep that crouches beneath, <sup>14</sup>with the choicest fruits of the sun and the rich yield of the months, <sup>15</sup>with the finest produce of the ancient mountains and the abundance of the everlasting hills, <sup>16</sup>with the best gifts of the earth and its fullness and the favor of him who dwells in the bush. May these rest on the head of Joseph. (Deuteronomy 33:13-15).

2. The power favour, love and grace of God from above and all spiritual blessings God favours His people with such as, His love, salvation and forgiveness of sin, His grace that He daily showers upon us and the gift of eternal life and all the spiritual blessing that come to us through faith in His Son the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Blessings of the deep:** (v25) refers to the blessing that the seas, the rivers and subterranean springs and streams from beneath the earth bring to us, such as an abundance of fish and fertile soil that brings forth lush pasturelands and fruitful fields. It carries the idea that the land will be a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, flowing out into the valleys and hills.

**Blessings of the breasts and womb:** (v25) this not only means that Joseph will be greatly blessed with children and his descendants will multitudes abundantly, but also that their livestock will breed healthy flocks of sheep and herds of cattle so that they also greatly increase.

**By the God of your father:** (v25) meaning all of these blessings that Jacob has prophetically spoken to Joseph will come to him by the same God his father worships who is the Mighty God of Jacob, the God of Joseph's grandfather Abraham and the God of Jacob's father Isaac. It is by His sovereign plans and purposes that these blessing will come upon Joseph.

**The blessings of you father:** (v26) the English Standard Bible says, "The blessings of your father are mighty beyond the blessings of my parents," while the King James Bible states, "The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors (i.e., ancestors) (v26). Both of these translations at first glance seem to imply that the blessings Jacob bestowed upon Joseph are greater than those which he himself had received from his father Isaac and his grandfather Abraham, but the following verses show that this was not so. Following is the blessing Isaac bestowed upon Jacob:

- May God give you of the dew of heaven and of the fatness of the earth and plenty of grain and wine. <sup>29</sup>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!" (Gen. 27:28-29).

The LORD in a dream said to Jacob:

- I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land, for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you. (Gen. 28:15).

When Jacob had the dream of the angels of God ascending and descending on a ladder that reached from earth to heaven with the LORD standing at the top of it the LORD made the following promise to Jacob:

- The LORD stood above it (the ladder) and said, "I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring. <sup>14</sup>Your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and in you and your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed. <sup>15</sup>Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land. For I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you." (Gen. 28:13-15).

God here is renewing the promise concerning the land, and the blessing of the Kingdom in the seed of Abraham to come for the whole race of mankind on all the earth that he made to Abraham. Greater detail of this same promise is given in the following verses:

- I will make of you (Abram) a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. <sup>3</sup>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." (Gen. 12:2-3).
- In your (Abraham) offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice." (Gen. 22:18).
- I will multiply your (Abraham) offspring as the stars of heaven and will give to your offspring all these lands. And in your offspring all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, (Gen. 26:4).

From these verses we learn that God would multiply Israel's offspring as the stars of heaven and the dust of the earth; his offspring would spread throughout the nations of the world; the LORD would never leave him, but keep him wherever he goes and bring him back to the Promised Land and make of him a great nation that will bless all the families of the earth. This promise crowns all other promises, because it points forward to the promised Messiah, in whom all the promises are fulfilled. There is no other greater promise than this promise made to Abraham and confirmed upon Isaac and Jacob. This promise is still valid today, it is as effective and trustworthy as the day the LORD spoke it to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and it is guaranteed to all who dwell on earth who repent before the LORD and believe in the promised seed of Abraham Israel's Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ and Saviour of the world. In this chapter (Gen. 49) the chief spiritual blessing of all twelve sons was bestowed upon Judah.

- The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff (a lawgiver in KJV) from between his feet, until tribute (Shiloh in KJV) comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples (the gathering of the people in KJV). <sup>11</sup>Binding his foal to the vine and his donkey's colt to the choice vine, he has washed his garments in wine and his vesture in the blood of grapes. (Gen. 49:10-11).

This is prophetically speaking of the Messiah the Christ coming from the descendants of Judah (between his feet) which history shows and all Christians know he did. (see v8-11) (above). In contrast to the prophecy given to Judah Joseph prophecy though wonderful only relates to earthly prosperity which means that the blessings Jacob bestowed upon Joseph in no way superseded God's blessings upon Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. However, this is not an error in Scripture, but an error in our understanding of it, since this difficulty can be harmonised in the following way. The expression, "The blessings of your father (Jacob) are mighty beyond the blessings of my parents (his grandfather Abraham and Isaac his father) (v26) refers not to spiritual blessings, but to earthly blessings. Meaning the blessing that Jacob gave to Joseph were greater than those his father Isaac bestowed upon him. This is a true statement if we accept that the blessing in focus are earthly blessings and not spiritual blessing which Joseph's blessing were. The earthly blessings Jacob bestowed upon Joseph were greater and more numerous, than the earthly blessings Isaac had bestowed upon him for the following reason, Joseph remained in Egypt at the right-hand side of Pharaoh which meant that, all the power and wealth of Egypt was available to him to save and bless the Hebrew race, God's chosen people.

- Joseph remained in Egypt, he and his father's house. Joseph lived 110 years. (Genesis 50:22).

**Blessings to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills:** (v26) the everlasting hills in this context refers to the Hebrew race, God's chosen people Israel, it means that these blessings bestowed upon him who was once separated from his family will overflow beyond the boundaries of Joseph and eventually become blessings to all the people of Israel.

**They shall be on the head of Joseph, as a crown:** (v26) this expression can carry the following two ideas:

1. May all the earthly blessings (especially the authority, power, riches and abundance Joseph had in Egypt) remain as a crown upon his head until the day the LORD takes him home.

2. May all these blessings be worn upon the head of him who was once scorned, hated and trampled upon be to his brothers as a crown of honour now that God has highly honoured and exalted him above those who once despised and hated him.

**Who was set apart from his brothers:** (v26) this can embrace both his separation from his family and his brothers when they sold him into slavery and he was taken into Egypt, and to his separation from them when he remained in Egypt while his family was in Goshen. When a spotlight is put upon Jacobs blessing to Joseph it is seen that though tremendously wonderful, they are at their core limited to an abundance of prosperity and fruitfulness on earth, but have no Messianic promises (this had been given to Judah) (v8-12) (above).

The history of the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh show how fully these blessings that Jacob bestowed upon his loved son Joseph were realized.

- The boundaries of the inheritance and land of the people of Joseph are mostly found in the inheritance of land given to Ephraim and Manasseh (Josh. 17:1-18). Jacob did give a field to Joseph (John 4:5), but his greater portion was given to his two sons. This was because even though Joseph was one of Jacob's sons his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, were adopted by Jacob in his stead (Genesis 48). This is also why Joseph is often omitted from the lists of the tribes.

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## BENJAMIN

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### GENESIS 49:27

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#### Jacob's Prophecy over Benjamin.

- **Genesis 49:27:** "Benjamin is a ravenous wolf, in the morning devouring the prey and at evening dividing the spoil."

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These words of Jacob shine a spotlight upon the truth that he was guided and speaking by the Spirit of prophecy and not from his own will. If he had not been influenced by the Spirit of God, it certain he would not have spoken such harsh words over his dearly loved son Benjamin. Had he been speaking from his natural affection for his youngest son his words (as would be any fathers) would have been spoken with kindness, tenderness and many good blessings. But instead, Jacob only foresees that Benjamin's offspring would be a warlike tribe, strong and daring, and that they would enrich themselves with the spoils of their enemies and be feared by their neighbours.

**Ravenous (ravin in KJV):** comes from the Hebrew word (*taraph*) it means, to pluck off or pull and tear to pieces to feed off or from. History and a biblical study of Benjamin shows that his race was the most warlike of all the tribes of Israel perfectly agreeing with Jacob's prophetic description of his race.

- The boundaries of the inheritance and land of the people of Benjamin are found in (Joshua 18:11-21).

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## THE TWELVE TRIBES

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### GENESIS 49:28

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#### Jacob's Blessings over all Twelve Tribes.

- **Genesis 49:28:** All these are the twelve tribes of Israel. This is what their father said to them as he blessed them, blessing each with the blessing suitable to him (every one according to his blessing he blessed them in KJV).



This verse shows that Jacob's prophetic words are not limited to the twelve sons of Jacob who later became the heads of twelve tribes in the land of Canaan, but also embraces their tribes. By dividing the land of Canaan up amongst the twelve sons into separate portions it could be said that the land had been divided up much like America is divided up into separate states with each state having its own independent head and its own government. In this same way each tribe was to be independent and have its own head and its own tribal government and in the same way that the individual states of America would unite under one head and one government should another nation come upon them in war, the separate tribes were likewise to unite together as one force when enemies came upon them to destroy them. Sadly, as we travel through the book of Judges, we find that the tribes were not only separated in times of peace, but also in times of war and that tribal independence eventually lead to anarchy.

**Cursed or blessed:** some raise the question, how can it be said that, "Jacob blessed each tribe with a blessing," since there is no blessing given to Reuben, Simeon and Levi, but rather a curse. To answer this, the following three things, need to be noted:

1. The verse says, "each son was blessed with the blessing suitable to him," meaning according to their nature and character. (v28).
2. All were blessed with an inheritance in the Promised Land and all were left with a part in the covenant God had made with Abraham Isaac and Jacob.
3. Each blessing was suited to the character of each individual and despite the evil some of them had committed, none were cast out of the land or the eternal promises of God.

**NOTE:** the land was divided into twelve parts even though there were thirteen tribes. This was because Levi was selected for the priesthood and had no part of the land of Canaan for his own. Sometimes the tribe of Joseph is counted as one tribe and at other times as two tribes, Manasseh and Ephraim. When it is counted this way, Levi and Joseph are not counted since Levi had no inheritance in the land and Joseph's inheritance is counted in Manasseh and Ephraim.

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## JACOB'S BURIAL

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### GENESIS 49:29-33

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#### Jacob is Buried in the Field at Machpelah of Mamre in Canaan.

- **Genesis 49:29-33:** Then he commanded them and said to them, "I am to be gathered to my people; bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, <sup>30</sup>in the cave that is in the field at Machpelah, to the east of Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field from Ephron the Hittite to possess as a burying place. <sup>31</sup>There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife. There they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife, and there I buried Leah— <sup>32</sup>the field and the cave that is in it were bought from the Hittites." <sup>33</sup>When Jacob finished commanding his sons, he drew up his feet into the bed and breathed his last and was gathered to his people.

**The cave of Machpelah:** (Gen. 23:8) is in Hebron. It is exalted by Jews, Christians, and Muslims for its association with Abraham and is today viewed as the second holiest places in the Land of Israel (Jerusalem is of course the first) because it contains the burial site of the biblical Patriarchs and Matriarchs within the cave. It is the burial place that Abraham purchased for his family after Sarah died (Gen. 23:8-17). Later Isaac and Ishmael buried Abraham there (Gen. 25:9). Eventually Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Sarah, Rebekah and Leah were all buried in this cave. These are considered the patriarchs and matriarchs of the Jewish people. The only one who is missing is Rachel (loved wife of Jacob), who was buried near

Bethlehem where she died in childbirth. The building over the tomb is truly amazing in its dimensions, complexity and antiquity. Huge walls built by Herod the Great over two-thousand years ago surround it, while the interior is a combination of medieval architecture, Arabesque décor from later centuries, and from synagogues founded after the re-establishment of the Jewish community in this region following the 1967 Six Day War. In one corner of the largest hall, with its house-like tomb markers for Isaac and Rebecca a cupola stands over a small opening into the actual Cave of Machpelah. Another, smaller room contains the tombs of Abraham and Sarah, and across an open courtyard are those of Jacob and Leah.

In verse eighteen of this chapter Jacob said, "I wait for your salvation, O LORD," he had no fear of death or of leaving this world. It could be truly said of him that, "He died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar he lived as a stranger and exile on the earth. (Heb. 11:13), because he desired a better country, a heavenly one and because of his faith God was not ashamed to be called his God, and has prepared for him (as He has for all the faithful) a city (Heb. 11:16-17) that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God. (Hebrews 11:10).

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## **TWELVE REASONS WHY JOSEPH CAN BE SEEN AS A TYPE OF CHRIST**

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Joseph can be seen as a type of Christ in the following ways:

1. Israel's brothers at first hated and rejected Joseph, but when he was exalted to royal glory they not only repented of their evil, but also bowed down to him and obeyed and followed all that he commands them to do. Likewise, Jesus Jewish brothers at first hated and rejected him, but when he returns in royal glory, they will not only weep with tears of great sorrow, but also bow down to him and obey and follow all that he commands them to do.

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The prophet Zechariah wrote:

- On that day (the day the Lord protects the inhabitants of Jerusalem) I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. <sup>10</sup>"And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn. <sup>11</sup>On that day the mourning in Jerusalem will be as great the priests will mourn by themselves and each family will mourn by themselves (Zech. 12:9-14).
2. Joseph became the shepherd and saviour of Israel and provided all that they needed to survive in this world. Likewise, Jesus became the Shepherd of his people and provides all that they need for their everlasting salvation.
  3. Though Joseph was of a good and godly character all that he achieved, he achieved by the Spirit, the power and the influence of God upon his life. Likewise, though Jesus was of a good and godly character all that he achieved, he achieved by the Spirit, the power and the influence of God upon his life.
    - When Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; (Matt. 3:16) (Mark 1:10) (Luke 3:22).
    - John bore witness: "I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. (John 1:32).
  4. Joseph shed tears of tenderness and strong affection toward his brothers behind closed doors, Likewise, Christ makes himself and his loving-kindness known to his people out of the sight and hearing of the world.

5. Joseph said to his brothers, "be not afraid, fear not I will save you," and he provided all the necessary provisions that they would need as they journey through Egypt to him. These statements coming from a man of Joseph royal standing would humble his brothers especially when their conscience convicted them of their sin. Likewise, Jesus not only, tells his brothers and sisters in his family, "not to fear or be afraid," and they are humbled, but he also provides all that is needed (love, mercy, grace and forgiveness etc.), for their salvation as they journey through this world toward him.
6. Joseph fully conscious of the sin his brothers had committed against him, tests his brothers to see if they had a true heart toward him and his father and if so, he will save them. Likewise, Jesus tests those in his family to see if they have a true heart of love and faith toward him and his heavenly Father and if so he will save them.
7. The brothers grieved over the way they had treated Joseph and were willing to do all that was needed to make it right, (as much as humanly possible) by doing all they could to protect Joseph and save their father from further hurt and emotional pain. Likewise, sinners must grieve over their sins before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and be willing to do all that they can to make any wrong right (as much as humanly possible) by doing all they can to heal a hurt they may have caused or correct a wrong they may have done.
8. Joseph manifested himself as a brother and a friend to those who once were his despisers and his enemies and assures them of his love and the riches of his grace to save and protect them. Likewise, Jesus manifests himself as a brother and a friend to those who were once his despisers and enemies and assures them of his love and the riches of his grace to save and keep them.
9. Joseph commands his brothers to lay aside envy, anger, malice, and strife, and to live in peace with each other. Likewise, Jesus commands those in his family to love their neighbour as themselves and do all they can to live in peace.
10. Joseph supplied all that was needful to bring his family home to himself so that where he was, they would also be. Likewise, Jesus supplies all that is needful (i.e., love, mercy, grace, forgiveness etc.), to bring his family home to himself so that where he is they will also be.
11. When Joseph sent for his people, many for a time may have felt some doubts and fears, but from need and the thought of seeing his royal glory and grandeur and of being with him motivated them to trust him and leave their homeland and pack up all their worldly goods to go to see him. Likewise, when Jesus calls for his people, many for a time may feel some doubts and fears, but from need for salvation and the thought of seeing his royal glory and grandeur and of being with him motivates them to trust him and put his Kingdom before their own and his will before all their worldly goods.
12. Despite how bad Joseph's brothers had treated him, when he saw their repentant and good heart, he turned it all around for their good. Likewise, despite what sin a sinner may have committed or done against Christ if they come to him with honest repentance, he will turn their life around for good.

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#### **THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MAN'S PURPOSES AND GOD'S PURPOSES.**

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The brothers put Joseph in the pit, and he became ruler of Egypt, they grieved their father's life for twenty-two long years and Joseph's dreams came true and all their wickedness brought about the fulfilment of God's purpose. In this story we see the difference between man's purposes and

God's purposes Joseph's only thought was to provide food and temporary shelter for his family during the remaining five years of famine. Neither he nor they could know that this was the continuing fulfilment of the covenant God made with Abraham and that the bringing of them into the land of Egypt was to mould Jacob's family into a nation that God would call His chosen people. Joseph vision went as far as saving his family through the years of famine and Joseph family travelled to Egypt to be saved from the famine, but God's purposes for saving Joseph and his family did not end when the famine passed, but continues even to this day. From Egypt Jacob's family became a nation and from this nation came the prophets, the scrolls of the Bible, the law and the Messiah the Saviour of the world and the Good News of the Gospel that is being spread amongst all nations of the world even today. Had Joseph not been raised to the right hand side of Pharaoh, two things are certain, firstly, Pharaoh would have exalted a powerful Egyptian ruler to govern the land, secondly, this ruler would have had no concern for the small Hebrew family in the land of Canaan (seventy in all) (Gen. 46), and thirdly, the Hebrew race being so small would more than likely have not survived the famine. This means that today we would not have the Bible, the Messiah the Christ, the Gospel and the glorious Hope of eternal life in everlasting glory. Man records the history of Joseph void of God; secular history ignores the dreams and God's sovereign and divine hand bringing about His plans and purposes despite the wickedness of the brothers. In contrast to this the Bible presents the history of Joseph from heavens viewpoint. Though Joseph, his brothers and family were ignorant of God's eternal plan their ignorance and evil ways did not hinder it from coming to pass, in fact all their wickedness work together to bring it to pass.

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*As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.*