

BOOK OF GENESIS

GENESIS 49

VERSES 1-4

1 Then Jacob called for his sons and said: "Gather around so I can tell you what will happen to you in days to come.

2 "Assemble and listen, sons of Jacob; listen to your father Israel.

3 "Reuben, you are my firstborn, my might, the first sign of my strength, excelling in honor, excelling in power.

4 Turbulent as the waters, you will no longer excel, for you went up onto your father's bed, onto my couch and defiled it.

ADDED TEXTUAL NOTES, QUESTIONS, OTHER

Verse 1— "What will happen to you in days to come"—the Hebrew phrase (bĕ' aḥărît hayyāmîm) literally means "in the latter days" or "in the end of days." What do you think this means?

Verse 2— Notice the parallel structure: "sons of Jacob" // "father Israel." The text uses both names deliberately—they're Jacob's biological sons but Israel's covenant heirs.

Verse 3-4— Reuben should have had it all—firstborn rights, double portion, family leadership. "My might, the first sign of my strength" acknowledges his position. But "turbulent as the waters" describes his instability. The Hebrew (paḥaz kammayim) means "reckless, boiling over" like unstable water. Why? Genesis 35:22—Reuben slept with Bilhah, Jacob's concubine. Do you see it as fair that one sin disqualifies someone? What

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VERSES 5-7

5 "Simeon and Levi are brothers—their swords are weapons of violence.

6 Let me not enter their council, let me not join their assembly, for they have killed men in their anger and hamstrung oxen as they pleased.

7 Cursed be their anger, so fierce, and their fury, so cruel! I will scatter them in Jacob and disperse them in Israel.

happened to grace? Also, whose “original sin” do they mimic?

ADDED TEXTUAL NOTES, QUESTIONS, OTHER

Verse 5— "Simeon and Levi are brothers"—the only sons addressed together. They partnered in violence (Genesis 34—the massacre at Shechem after Dinah's rape). "Weapons of violence" – whose “original sin” do they mimic?

Verse 7— "I will scatter them in Jacob and disperse them in Israel"—this is judgment, not blessing. Simeon's tribe becomes absorbed into Judah, eventually losing distinct identity (Josh 19:1-9). Levi's tribe is scattered among all Israel with no territorial inheritance (Num 18:20-24; Josh 21). BUT—Levi's scattering becomes a BLESSING when they're set apart as priests! God redeems their violence into service. Moses

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VERSES 8-12

8 "Judah, your brothers will praise you; your hand will be on the neck of your enemies; your father's sons will bow down to you.

9 You are a lion's cub, Judah; you return from the prey, my son. Like a lion he crouches and lies down, like a lioness—who dares to rouse him?

10 The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he to whom it belongs shall come and the obedience of the nations shall be his.

11 He will tether his donkey to a vine, his colt to the choicest branch; he will wash his garments in wine, his robes in the blood of grapes.

12 His eyes will be darker than wine, his teeth whiter than milk.

and Aaron are Levites. How does God transform judgment into mercy?

ADDED TEXTUAL NOTES, QUESTIONS, OTHER

Verse 8— "Judah, your brothers will praise you"—the Hebrew word for "praise" (yôdûkâ) is a wordplay on Judah's name (Yĕhûdâ, from yādâ, "to praise"). Leah named him "praise" (29:35), and now that name becomes prophetic. Leadership shifts to Judah. "Your father's sons will bow down to you"—this was Joseph's dream (37:9-10), but it's fulfilled through Judah's line (David, Messiah). Why does kingship go to Judah, not Joseph?

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Verse 9— "You are a lion's cub"—lion imagery throughout. Judah is gûr 'aryê (young lion) who grows into 'aryê (mature lion) and lābî' (lioness/old lion). The progression: cub → hunter → resting king. "Who dares rouse him?" implies absolute dominance. This lion imagery reappears: Numbers 24:9 (Balaam's oracle), Revelation 5:5 ("Lion of Judah"). Christ is the fulfillment.

Verse 10— THE MESSIANIC PROPHECY. "The scepter will not depart from Judah"—royal authority belongs to Judah's line. "Until he to whom it belongs shall come"—Hebrew: 'ad kî yābō' Šîlōh. This is debated: (1) "Shiloh" as a name meaning "he to whom it belongs" or "peaceful one"; (2) "until tribute comes to him." Either way, this points to a future ruler from Judah who will receive "the obedience of the nations." Jews and then eventual Christians both saw this as Messianic. David's line comes from Judah; Jesus is "Son of David, Lion of Judah."

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VERSES 13-21

13 "Zebulun will live by the seashore and become a haven for ships; his border will extend toward Sidon.

14 "Issachar is a rawboned donkey lying down among the sheep pens.

15 When he sees how good is his resting place and how pleasant is his land, he will bend his shoulder to the burden and submit to forced labor.

16 "Dan will provide justice for his people as one of the tribes of Israel.

17 Dan will be a snake by the roadside, a viper along the path, that bites the horse's heels so that its rider tumbles backward.

18 "I look for your deliverance, LORD.

19 "Gad will be attacked by a band of raiders, but he will attack them at their heels.

20 "Asher's food will be rich; he will provide delicacies fit for a king.

21 "Naphtali is a doe set free that bears beautiful fawns.

ADDED TEXTUAL NOTES, QUESTIONS, OTHER

Verse 13 — Maritime trade and commerce. Zebulun's territory in Galilee was near the sea, positioned for trade routes. How is this fulfilled in Jesus?

Verses 14-15 — "Rawboned donkey"—strong but choosing ease over freedom. Issachar loves his "pleasant land" so much he accepts servitude to keep it. This is spiritual compromise: valuing comfort over calling.

Verses 16-17— "Dan will provide justice" (dān yādīn—wordplay on his name). But he's a "snake by the roadside"—treacherous, striking from ambush. Dan's tribe set up idols (Judges 18:30-31) and led Israel into apostasy. Jeroboam placed golden calves in Dan (1 Kings 12:28-30). Samson (a Danite) shows both strength and betrayal.

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	<p>How can a tribe provide justice yet be a snake?</p> <p>V. 18— Jacob's sudden prayer: "I look for your deliverance, LORD." Hebrew: <i>lîšû 'āṭĕkā qiwwîṭî Yĕhwāh</i> ("For your salvation I wait, O LORD"). Why interrupt here? This is the only direct address to God in the chapter.</p> <p>Verse 19 — Wordplay: Gad (<i>gād</i>) attacked by raiders (<i>gĕdûd</i>) but attacks their heels (<i>'āqēḅ</i>). Sign of perseverance. What might this prophetically proclaim?</p> <p>.</p>
<p>VERSES 22-26</p> <p>22 "Joseph is a fruitful vine, a fruitful vine near a spring, whose branches climb over a wall. 23 With bitterness archers attacked him; they shot at him with hostility.</p>	<p>ADDED TEXTUAL NOTES, QUESTIONS, OTHER</p> <p>Verse 22— "Joseph is a fruitful vine"—the Hebrew <i>ben pōrāṭ</i> (fruitful son) plays on Ephraim's name ("fruitful," 41:52). "Near a spring"—constant source of life. "Branches climb over a wall"—Joseph's influence extends beyond</p>

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24 But his bow remained steady, his strong arms stayed limber, because of the hand of the Mighty One of Jacob, because of the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel, **25** because of your father's God, who helps you, because of the Almighty, who blesses you with blessings of the skies above, blessings of the deep springs below, blessings of the breast and womb.

26 Your father's blessings are greater than the blessings of the ancient mountains, than the bounty of the age-old hills. Let all these rest on the head of Joseph, on the brow of the prince among his brothers.

boundaries. His two sons become tribes; his descendants multiply. Fruitfulness despite opposition.

Verse 23-24— "Archers attacked him"—this summarizes Joseph's suffering: brothers' betrayal, Potiphar's wife's accusation, prison, false charges. Many "shot at him with hostility." Yet he survived and thrived. BUT "His bow remained steady"—Joseph didn't retaliate. He remained strong through suffering. Why?

Verse 25— Joseph receives COMPREHENSIVE blessing: "Blessings of the skies above" (rain, dew), "blessings of the deep springs below" (water, fertility), "blessings of the breast and womb" (children, nourishment). Heaven, earth, and family—total blessing. What does this sound like to you?

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<p>VERSES 27-33</p>	<p>Verse 26— "Your father's blessings are greater than... the ancient mountains." Jacob's blessings surpass even nature's permanence because they're rooted in God's covenant. What does this communicate?</p> <p>ADDED TEXTUAL NOTES, QUESTIONS, OTHER</p>
<p>27 "Benjamin is a ravenous wolf; in the morning he devours the prey, in the evening he divides the plunder." 28 All these are the twelve tribes of Israel, and this is what their father said to them when he blessed them, giving each the blessing appropriate to him. 29 Then he gave them these instructions: "I am about to be gathered to my people. Bury me with my fathers in the cave in the field of Ephron the Hittite, 30 the cave in the field of Machpelah, near Mamre in Canaan, which Abraham bought</p>	<p>Verse 28— "Giving each the blessing appropriate to him"—not all receive the same blessing. Each tribe has unique destiny and gifting. What does this foreshadow? (1 Cor 12:4-6).</p> <p>Vv. 29-32— Jacob's final instructions repeat his burial request from 47:29-30. He wants to be buried in the cave of Machpelah with Abraham, Isaac, Sarah, Rebekah, and Leah. Jacob lists the patriarchs and matriarchs buried in</p>

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along with the field as a burial place from Ephron the Hittite.

31 There Abraham and his wife Sarah were buried, there Isaac and his wife Rebekah were buried, and there I buried Leah.

32 The field and the cave in it were bought from the Hittites."

33 When Jacob had finished giving instructions to his sons, he drew his feet up into the bed, breathed his last and was gathered to his people.

Canaan, emphasizing covenant continuity. By being buried there, he declares: Canaan is our home; Egypt is temporary. BUT! What else is remarkable about this decision of Jacob's? Think Rachel. Gen. 35:19-20;48:7

Verse 33— "He drew his feet up into the bed, breathed his last and was gathered to his people." What imagery does this communicate?

"Gathered to his people" is a beautiful euphemism for death, implying reunion with ancestors and continuity beyond death. Jacob dies in Egypt but will rest in Canaan. How does his example teach us to die well?