

Message Ten

Jacob's Prophesying with Blessing

(1)

Scripture Reading: Gen. 49:1-15

I. Jacob's twelve sons eventually became the twelve tribes of Israel, a type of the church as God's house, the Israel of God, composed of all the believers—Gal. 6:16; 1 Tim. 3:15; Heb. 3:5-6:

- A. Jacob's maturity in life, the zenith of his life, issued in the overflow of life, his prophesying with blessing for the building up of God's house—Prov. 4:18; Gen. 47:7, 10; 48:14-16; 49:1-28; 47:31; Heb. 11:21; cf. 1 Cor. 14:4b, 31.
- B. Whatever was spoken prophetically by Jacob concerning his sons is a type, a picture, of the church and should be applied to the church and to the spiritual experience of the believers, as well as to the sons of Israel—cf. 10:6.

II. The prophecy concerning Reuben is a warning concerning the defilement of fleshly lust, and the prophecy concerning Simeon and Levi is a warning concerning the destruction of the natural disposition—Gen. 49:3-7:

- A. Although Reuben had the preeminence of the birthright, because of his defilement he lost the birthright and became in danger of dying or of being greatly decreased; this should be a solemn warning to us—vv. 3-4; cf. Eph. 5:5; Matt. 1:2; Deut. 33:6; 1 Cor. 6:17-20; 1 Thes. 4:3-8; 1 Cor. 9:27; Phil. 1:20; Rom. 6:12-14; 8:2; 12:2; 16:20; 2 Tim. 2:22.
- B. Because of their cruelty according to their disposition, Simeon and Levi received no blessing from Jacob (Gen. 49:5-6; 34:25-30; cf. Deut. 22:6-7); rather, Jacob exercised his judgment over them to scatter them among the children of Israel (Gen. 49:7) so that they would not be able to behave cruelly according to their disposition (Josh. 19:1, 9; 21:1-3, 41):
 - 1. Later, Levi used his disposition in a renewed, transformed way to slay the worshippers of the golden calf; our natural disposition can be useful if three conditions are met: consecration, using our natural disposition against our natural desire, and using it in a renewed and transformed way—Exo. 32:26-28.
 - 2. Because of his absoluteness, desperation, and faithfulness

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toward God, Levi received the blessing of the priesthood with the Urim and the Thummim—Deut. 33:8-9; Exo. 32:26-28.

III. The prophecy concerning Judah portrays Christ in the four Gospels (the contents of the gospel), the prophecy concerning Zebulun portrays the shipping out of the gospel in the Acts (borne by the wind of the Holy Spirit), and the prophecy concerning Issachar portrays the practice of the church life in the Epistles and Revelation (for God's building)—Gen. 49:8-15:

- A. The prophecy concerning Judah portrays the good news of Christ—the victory of Christ (vv. 8-9), the kingdom of Christ (v. 10), and the enjoyment and rest in Christ (vv. 11-12); these three truths are a summary of the New Testament:
 1. Judah, likened poetically to a young lion, is a type of Christ as the ultimate Overcomer—v. 9; Rev. 5:5:
 - a. In His victory Christ is typified as a young lion overcoming the enemies and couching in satisfaction after enjoying the prey (Gen. 49:9a); this is a picture of the victory of Christ over His enemies in His crucifixion (Col. 2:15; Heb. 2:14) and of His satisfaction and rest in His ascension as the issue of His victory (Eph. 4:8).
 - b. Christ is also the producing lioness, bringing forth many overcomers as His “lion cubs”—Gen. 49:9b; cf. Prov. 28:1; Rev. 22:5.
 - c. That no one dares to rouse Judah up (Gen. 49:9b) signifies that Christ's terrifying power in His resurrection and ascension has subdued everything (Matt. 28:18; Phil. 2:9; Eph. 1:21-23).
 2. In His authority and kingship Christ comes as the Peace Bringer, the One to whom all the nations will submit and obey—Gen. 49:10; Eph. 2:14-15:
 - a. The scepter, a symbol of the kingdom (Psa. 45:6; Heb. 1:8), denotes the kingly authority of Christ; that the scepter will never depart from Judah means that the kingship will never depart from Christ (2 Sam. 7:12-13; Dan. 2:44-45; 7:13-14; Rev. 11:15; 22:1, 3); we must be under

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- the ruling of Christ to reign for Christ over Satan, sin, and death (Col. 2:19; Rom. 5:17).
- b. *Shiloh*, meaning “peace bringer,” refers to Christ in His second coming as the Prince of Peace, who will bring peace to the whole earth—Isa. 9:6-7; 2:4; Rom. 14:17; Col. 3:15; Matt. 14:22-33; cf. Job 3:25-26; Prov. 3:25-26.
3. Due to His victory and kingship, Christ can be enjoyed by us to be our rest—our perfect peace and full satisfaction—Gen. 49:11-12:
 - a. To bind our donkey, or our foal, to the vine indicates that the journey is over and that the destination has been reached; the vine in verse 11 typifies the living Christ, who is full of life.
 - b. To bind our donkey to the vine signifies to cease from our labor and our striving in our natural life and to rest in Christ, the living One who is the source of life (John 15:1, 5; Matt. 11:28-30); because Christ has won the victory and has gained the kingdom, He has become the rich vine to us for our enjoyment, rest, and satisfaction.
 - c. Garments signify our behavior in our daily living, and wine signifies life (Gen. 49:11b; John 2:3); hence, to wash our garments in wine and our robe in the blood of grapes signifies to soak our behavior, our daily walk, in the enjoyment of the riches of Christ’s life (Matt. 9:17 and footnote 1).
 - d. The eyes being red with wine and the teeth being white with milk (Gen. 49:12) signifies transformation from death to life by the enjoyment of the rich life of Christ (John 10:10; Judg. 9:13); the whiteness of the teeth indicates the sound, healthy function to take in God’s Word as food and to utter His word so that others may be nourished (Eph. 6:19).
 - B. The prophecy concerning Zebulun portrays the preaching of the gospel—Gen. 49:13:
 1. Zebulun, a seaport, was part of Galilee, the place where the Lord Jesus began His ministry of the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom—v. 13; Matt. 4:12-23; 28:7, 10, 16-20.
 2. Zebulun typifies Christ as the “shore” of the evangelists

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for the transportation and spreading in the preaching of God's gospel; after Christ accomplished all the things that are to be proclaimed as the gospel, on the day of Pentecost at least one hundred twenty gospel "ships," all of whom were Galileans (Acts 2:7; 13:31), set out from the "shore" to spread the gospel (Deut. 33:18a).

3. We can be the Galilean preachers, the gospel "ships," who sail out from Christ as the "shore" through prayer by the power of the Holy Spirit as the heavenly wind and with the riches of Christ in the Word to reach the whole world—Acts 1:8; 2:2-41; 4:31; Psa. 68:1, 11-13, 18-19, 27.
- C. The prophecy concerning Issachar portrays the church life—Gen. 49:14:
1. The strong donkey signifies the natural man; to couch is to rest in satisfaction; and the sheepfolds signify the denominations and various religions based on the law—v. 14; cf. John 10:1-9, 16.
 2. The poetry in Genesis 49:14 portrays the genuine church life as the issue of the preaching of the gospel, in which our natural man rests in satisfaction between (outside) the religious sheepfolds; the land typifies Christ as the green pasture enjoyed by the believers in the church life—vv. 14-15a; John 10:9.
 3. In Moses' blessing in Deuteronomy 33:18b, Issachar was to rejoice for his tents; there the tents signify the local churches as the expressions of the unique Body of Christ (Eph. 4:4a), in which the believers rejoice in the enjoyment of Christ's riches (Phil. 4:4; 1 Thes. 5:16).
 4. This enjoyment issues in our willingness to carry out our service, which is assigned by Christ as the Head; such service becomes a tribute offered to the Master for His satisfaction—Gen. 49:15b; 1 Cor. 12:4-6, 18, 28; Eph. 2:10; 4:11-12; cf. Rom. 15:16.

IV. The consummation concerning Judah (the gospel in the four Gospels), Zebulun (the preaching of the gospel in the Acts), and Issachar (the church life fulfilled in the remaining books of the New Testament) is seen in Deuteronomy 33:19, which says that the peoples, the nations, will be called

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to the mountain, signifying the kingdom of God (Dan. 2:35), where they will offer sacrifices of righteousness and enjoy the abundance of the seas (the church composed mainly of Gentile believers—footnote on Matt. 13:1) and the hidden treasures of the sand (the kingdom hidden in the earth—v. 44); this shows that the gospel, the preaching of the gospel, and the church life as the issue of the gospel result in the enjoyment of the church life and the kingdom life (Rom. 14:17).