

Message Eleven

**Jacob's Prophecy with Blessing
(2)**

Scripture Reading: Gen. 49:16-28

I. The prophecy concerning the apostasy with Dan indicates Jacob's concern about the setting up of a divisive center of worship—Gen. 49:16-18; Judg. 17:9-10; 18:27-31; 1 Kings 12:26-31:

- A. Dan fought as a young lion to gain more land (signifying Christ), but after being successful and victorious, he became a serpent—proud, individualistic, and independent; he acted in his pride to set up an idol and a divisive center of worship and to ordain a hired priest in the city of Dan during the time that the house of God was in Shiloh—Deut. 33:22; Josh. 19:47; Judg. 18:27-31; cf. Deut. 12:5.
- B. As a serpent, Dan bit the horse's heels so that its rider fell backward (Gen. 49:17), signifying that the apostasy brought in by Dan became a great stumbling block to the nation of Israel; throughout the history of the church many spiritual people have followed Dan's example, thereby frustrating God's people from going on in His ordained way; a further fulfillment of Jacob's prophecy concerning Dan is seen in 1 Kings 12:26-31.
- C. The source of Dan's apostasy was in not caring for his brothers; not caring for the other parts of the Body is the source of apostasy, resulting in competition—v. 31.
- D. Division is not only denominationalism but can also involve localism and regionalism; even in our personal experience we can be distracted from the right way in following God and actually be working for our self-interest:
 - 1. The best way to be safeguarded from falling into apostasy is by taking care of others to care for the entire Body and the Lord's unique testimony in the Lord's one work; if Dan had consulted the other tribes, he would have been kept from apostasy—cf. 1 Cor. 12:20; 15:58; 16:10; Acts 15:1-2.
 - 2. We can be healed from our apostasy and enjoy the Lord's boundless love by returning to the Lord, acknowledging our offense to Him to be forgiven of all our iniquity, seeking His face, and pursuing to know Him so that we may live in His presence, in resurrection—Hosea 5:13—6:3; 14:1-8.

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II. The prophecy concerning the recovery with Gad indicates not only his victory but also that he would not enjoy his victory by himself—Gen. 49:19; Deut. 33:20-21:

- A. Gad's victory, corresponding to his victory in Deuteronomy 33:20, signifies the recovery of the victory of Christ lost by Dan because of his apostasy.
- B. Gad provided the first part of the good land (the land east of the Jordan) for himself, but before enjoying his portion, he fought with his brothers to gain their portion of the land west of the Jordan, thus executing Jehovah's righteousness and His judgments in Israel—vv. 20-21; Num. 32:1-32.
- C. Dan's failure was because he was individualistic and cared only for himself, whereas Gad's success was because he was corporate and took care of the need of his brothers.
- D. In New Testament terms, to follow Gad's example we need to take care of the Body corporately; today this is to be filled with the corporate sense of the Body and to care for the members of the Body for the accomplishing of God's will, which is to have the Body life—Rom. 12.

III. The prophecy concerning the sufficiency of Asher typifies the enjoyment of Christ as the rich provision of life for fighting and building—Gen. 49:20:

- A. Jacob's prophecy in Genesis 49:20 and Moses' blessing in Deuteronomy 33:24-25 show the sufficiency of Asher, coming after the recovery with Gad; Asher was blessed with rich food, with the rich provision of life.
- B. Just as Asher was the one "dipping his foot in oil," we can "walk in oil" by enjoying the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ for our daily walk—v. 24; Phil. 1:19; Gal. 3:5; 5:25.
- C. When we enjoy the Lord daily as our rich provision of life ("as your days are, so shall your strength be"—Deut. 33:25b), He becomes our secret of sufficiency for us to be content in any situation (Phil. 4:11-13; Psa. 23:1).
- D. The issue of such a rich provision is the enjoyment of absolute rest with peace, strength, security, and sufficiency.

IV. The prophecy concerning the consummation with Naphtali typifies that when we experience Christ in resurrection,

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we become those who will take the earth by preaching Christ as the gospel of the kingdom to the whole inhabited earth—Gen. 49:21; Deut. 33:23; Psa. 22:27; Matt. 28:19; Acts 1:8; Rom. 15:19; Matt. 24:14:

- A. “Naphtali is a hind let loose; / He gives beautiful words”—Gen. 49:21:
 - 1. The hind typifies the resurrected Christ; “the hind of the dawn” (Psa. 22, title) signifies Christ in His resurrection, which took place at early dawn (Luke 24:1).
 - 2. A hind is a deer known for its leaping and jumping; Christ in resurrection is the leaping One—S. S. 2:8-9.
 - 3. Beautiful words, rich and pleasant words, words of joy and life, come out of the experience of the resurrected Christ—Gen. 49:21; Matt. 28:16, 18-20; John 7:37-39a; Acts 2:32-36; 5:20.
- B. “O Naphtali, satisfied with favor, / And full of the blessing of Jehovah: / Possess the sea and the south”—Deut. 33:23:
 - 1. Naphtali is satisfied with favor (the Old Testament equivalent of New Testament grace) and is full of the blessing of Jehovah; the blessing does not refer to material blessing but to the blessing in the spirit, the blessing in life, the blessing in the heavenlies—Eph. 1:3.
 - 2. Naphtali will possess the sea (the Gentile world—Matt. 13:1; Dan. 7:3; Rev. 17:15) and the south (the land of Israel), signifying that those who experience the resurrected Christ will possess the whole earth through their proclaiming of Christ (Matt. 28:19; Acts 1:8; Rom. 15:19).

V. The prophecy concerning the universal blessing of the Triune God being with Joseph was due to his being separate from his brothers in the principle of a Nazarite—Gen. 49:22-26; Num. 6:1-9:

- A. Joseph as a fruitful bough by a fountain with branches running over the wall typifies Christ as the branch (Isa. 11:1) for the branching out of God through His believers as His branches (John 15:1, 5), with God as the source of their fruitfulness, to spread Christ over every restriction and limitation, magnifying Him in all circumstances (Gen. 49:22; Phil. 1:20; Acts 4:31).

CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OUTLINES

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- B. As the one universally blessed by his father, Joseph typifies Christ, the appointed Heir of all things, and Christ's believers, His partners, who participate in His inheritance and who are blessed by the Father with every spiritual blessing—1 Cor. 3:21-22; Rom. 8:17; Heb. 1:2, 9, 14; 3:14; Eph. 1:3:
1. The blessings bestowed on Joseph encompass all time, from ancient times to eternity (Gen. 49:25-26; Deut. 33:13-16), and all space, from heaven to earth, including the deep under the earth (Gen. 49:25b; Deut. 33:13-14, 16a); time plus space equals the universe.
 2. The universal blessing on Joseph will consummate in the new heaven and new earth, in which everything will be new as a blessing to Christ and His believers—Rev. 21:1, 4-5; 22:3, 5:
 - a. Only God is new; anything that is kept away from God is old, but anything that comes back to God is new—2 Cor. 5:17.
 - b. To be renewed means to come back to God and have something of God put into us so that we are mingled with God and one with God; the secret of receiving God as our blessing of newness is to bring everything to God and let Him get into everything—4:16.
 - c. The universal blessing on Joseph means that blessing is everywhere; our praises turn everything of the curse of the fall into a blessing—cf. Eph. 5:20.
- C. Joseph overcame in his sufferings because he was strengthened by God, the Mighty One of Jacob and the All-sufficient One, and because he saw that everything was arranged by God to be a blessing to him—Gen. 49:24-25; 45:5; 50:20; 1 Cor. 3:21-22; Rom. 8:28; Eph. 5:20; 1 Thes. 5:18.
- D. Joseph was blessed with “the favor of Him who dwelt in the thornbush” (Deut. 33:16a; Exo. 3:2-6, 14-15; Mark 12:26-27); the highest blessing is to enter into God's dwelling place and stay in His presence (Psa. 27:4, 8; 84:10-12).

VI. The prophecy concerning the dwelling place of the Triune God being with Benjamin will ultimately consummate in the New Jerusalem as the mutual dwelling of God and His

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redeemed for eternity; this is the greatest blessing to God's people—Gen. 49:27; Deut. 33:12; Rev. 21:3, 22:

- A. As a tearing wolf, Benjamin is a type of Christ, who destroys the enemy by tearing him to pieces—Gen. 49:27; Eph. 4:8; 2 Cor. 10:5.
- B. Moses' blessing of Benjamin says that he will dwell securely beside Jehovah and that Jehovah will dwell between Benjamin's shoulders; Jerusalem with God's temple, God's dwelling place, was located in the territory of Benjamin—Deut. 33:12; Judg. 1:21.
- C. All the blessings issue in God's dwelling place; this is God's good pleasure, the desire of His heart—cf. Heb. 11:21; Prov. 4:18; Psa. 90:1; John 15:4; 14:23; Isa. 66:1-2.

VII. Genesis 49:1-28 is an abstract of the entire Bible and a summary of the history of God's people, as seen in the twelve sons of Jacob, the nation of Israel, and the church; it is also a portrait of the personal history of every believer:

- A. Jacob's first four sons—Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah—were sinners, indicating that the history of God's people begins with sinners; however, two of these sinners, Levi and Judah, were transformed to become priests and kings.
- B. Out of the kingship with Judah a kingly salvation was produced, which was preached as the gospel in the Gentile world by Zebulun and which issued in the church life with Issachar; but the apostasy came in through Dan, followed by the recovery with Gad, which issued in the sufficiency of the riches of Christ with Asher and in the resurrection with Naphtali.
- C. Finally, the history of God's people concludes with Joseph and Benjamin, who typify Christ as the One who is altogether victorious and perfect, without defect; according to Jacob's prophecy and Moses' word, Joseph brought in God's boundless, universal blessing (vv. 22-26; Deut. 33:13-16), and Benjamin, God's eternal dwelling place (v. 12).
- D. Thus, the conclusion of Genesis 49 corresponds with the conclusion of the entire Bible—the universal blessing in the new heaven and the new earth, in which is God's eternal dwelling, the New Jerusalem, as the issue and goal of God's universal blessing—cf. Eph. 1:3; 2:22.