

**June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020**  
**Jacob's Blessings**  
**Genesis 48-49**

**BIBLE IN A YEAR READING PLAN**

June 7 Job 21-23      June 11 Job 35-37  
June 8 Job 24-28      June 12 Job 38-39  
June 9 Job 29-31      June 13 Job 40-42  
June 10 Job 32-34      June 14 Psalms 1-8

**Lesson Introduction:** Last week we saw how God used Joseph to rescue His people, and how God providentially moved Jacob and his family to the land of Egypt. As Jacob neared the end of his life, he takes time to bless his sons, and in doing so, points us once again to Christ, the Savior of Israel, and the Savior of the world. As we study this week, we will see how God welcomes in the outsider, how our own merits cannot buy the blessings of God, and how Christ is our savior and mighty King!

**FOUNDATIONAL TRUTHS:**

- **God gives grace to the nations (48:5-22)**
- **Our merits are worthless before God (49:3-7)**
- **Christ is our mighty, eternal King (49:8-12)**

**Read Genesis 48-49**

**Discussion Section 1: The Blessing of Ephraim and Manasseh (Ch. 48)**

-What is the significance of Jacob welcoming in Ephraim and Manasseh?

-Why did the younger receive the greater blessing?

-What was the basis of Jacob's blessing on these boys?

**Note:** After Jacob and his family made their way to Egypt, Jacob wanted to bless his sons before his death. He remembered the promise of God to His father and grandfather, that He would make them a great nation that would bless all people (**Genesis 12:3**). In chapter 48, we see a very interesting turn of events that teaches us something significant about the Kingdom of God. As Jacob prepares to die, he adopts Joseph's sons, and blesses them as his own.

*This blessing was given to Joseph's sons out of gratitude for all that Joseph had done to rescue the people of God. The fact that Jacob gives this blessing to Ephraim and Manasseh signals something important about the nature of God's covenant that He had made with Abraham so many years before. These two boys were half Egyptian. This means that God was extending His blessing to the nations. God had promised Abraham that this covenant would bless all nations, and here in Genesis 48, we see a foreshadowing of that as these two receive this blessing.*

*It is also significant that Jacob intentionally gives the younger one the greater blessing. We have seen time and time again how God loves to use that which seems strange to the world to show that the power belongs to Him, and here we see yet another example of that reality (**1 Cor. 1:27**). Just as God had chosen Jacob to continue the covenant rather than Esau many years before, we see once again the younger receiving the greater blessing.*

*Jacob's blessing was ultimately rooted in his faith in and gratitude toward God (V. 15-16). We see Jacob proclaim God's providence over his life in verse 15, and then God's redemptive power over all evil in verse 16. Because of the grace of God in his life, he had made it to the point where he could be reunited with his son Jacob, and inclusively bless his grandsons. As we consider this blessing, we should be grateful for the implications it has in our lives. God has included us as His children, and the covenant made with Abraham has been extended to us (**Galatians 3:7**)! What a blessing it is to be a part of the family of God, and how gracious He has been to include us in His plan!*

**Discussion Section 2: The Value of our Merits (49:3-7)**

-Why was blessing withheld from Ruben, Simeon, and Levi?

-What natural right did Ruben have to his father's blessing?

-What does this teach us about our merits before God?

**Note:** In chapter 49 we see Jacob go on to bless his sons, but it begins with him speaking of the way that some of them will miss out on blessing. Specifically, he highlights that Reuben, Simeon, and Levi would miss out on the blessings of God because of past sin (**35:22, 34:24-31**). Interestingly, it was Reuben who should have received

*the blessing as the oldest son. We learn a couple of things from Reuben's plight. First, we see that sin has consequences, and second, we are never owed God's blessings based on our merits.*

*Jacob tells Reuben that he will not have preeminence because of the sin he had committed, "going into his father's bed." What a solemn reminder to us that when we sin, we open ourselves up for judgment. Sin always has a price. The Scriptures make it clear that the wages of sin is death (**Romans 6:23**). While it is vital to keep that reality in mind, it is also important to recognize that our sin has ramifications for the here and now. Our sin fractures our fellowship with God. One example of this is **1 Peter 3:7**, where husbands are to live with their wives in an understanding way, so that their prayers might not be hindered. The idea is, when we are living out of fellowship with God, we cannot expect the blessings of God. Although Reuben was one of the offspring of Abraham, he still had to answer for his sin. We too, although children of God, face consequences for our actions, and the discipline of God, for our own good (**Hebrews 12:4-12**).*

*Secondly, we see that Reuben's merits, namely, the fact that he was the firstborn, earned him nothing. There was nothing in Reuben that made him worthy of receiving the blessings of God, for he was sinful, and his sin deserved consequences. In the same way, we too must realize that there is nothing that is in us that earns the favor of God. We may have been born into a "Christian home," gone to church every Sunday of our lives, given to the poor, and never said a cuss word in our lives, yet none of that makes us worthy of God's blessings, or puts God in our debt in any way. We often think of our relationship with God as some sort of transaction that we can affect. If we are the firstborn, we deserve the blessing... If we come from the right home or denomination, we are granted salvation. This passage teaches us clearly that God's blessing is not based on man's merits, but God's mercy. We will see that clearly in our last section, as we consider the blessing of Judah.*

### **Discussion Section 3: The Lion of Judah (49:8-12)**

-Why was Judah chosen to be the line of Christ?

-What does the choosing of Judah to be the line of Christ tell us about God's power and grace?

-What do we learn about Christ from Jacob's blessing of Judah?

**Note:** *Interestingly enough, Judah had plenty of sin in his past as well (**Genesis 37:26-27, Ch. 38**). Truly, he was no more worthy than any of his other brothers to receive the incredible blessing that would come upon him. This passage is a wonderful reminder of God's completely free and sovereign grace. We should be reminded that our salvation is not unlike the blessing of that which Judah received. Although we are sinners, not worthy of anything from God, He pours out the blessing of salvation on us, not because of anything we have done to deserve it, but by His grace alone (**Ephesians 2:1-10**).*

*Judah is told that he will be a kingly line (**V. 8-12**). That his brothers would praise him, that his tribe would be like that of a mighty lion, that the "scepter shall not depart" from his line. Mighty kings of Israel such as David and Solomon would come from the tribe of Judah, but far greater than any of those men would come The Lion Himself, Jesus Christ (**Revelation 5:5**). As we think back on the story of Joseph, this particular blessing should be incredibly significant to us. Yes, God had preserved the line of Jacob, but far more important than that, the line of King Jesus had been preserved.*

*As we close out this lesson, we should spend time praising God that He has provided for us a King Who will reign forever and ever (**Isaiah 9:7, Revelation 11:15**). In these incredibly tumultuous times, it is good to be reminded that the scepter has not passed from the hands of Christ. He reigns now and forevermore, and one day, every creature in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth will bow at His feet (**Philippians 2:11**). Although there is a lion roaming the earth, seeking to devour us (**1 Peter 5:8**), we have the Lion of Judah on our side, and none can overtake Him or defeat Him, for He has already defeated sin and death, and we are secure in Him forever (**1 Cor. 15:55-57**).*