



A MINISTRY INITIATED IN MAY 1993, AND DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST, BY BUILDING THEIR FAITH, ENHANCING THEIR JOY, AND STABILIZING THEIR HOPE, ENABLING THEM TO WORK OUT THEIR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

The Book of Genesis. 04/18/2014

Lesson Number 79



TRANSLATION LEGEND: ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot m(1992); ALT=Analytical-Literal Translation (2005), AMPLIFIED=Amplified Bible (1965), ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot with Greek Interlinear (2003); ASV=American Standard Version (1901), BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949), BRENT=Brenton's English Septuagint; CEB=Common English Bible (2011); CEV=Contemporary English Version (1995); DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899), EMTV=English Majority Text (2002); ERV=English Revised Version (1885), ETRV=Easy to Read (1999), ESV=English Standard Version (2001), GENEVA=Geneva Bible (1599), GNB=Good News (1966), GSNT=Goodspeed (1923), GWN=God's Word (1995), IE=International English (1973), ISV=International Standard Version (1967), JPS=Jewish Publication Society (1917), JUB=Jubilee Bible (2003); KJV=King James Version (1611), LITV=Literary Translation of the Bible (1976), LIVING=Living Bible (1971), MESSAGE=The Message (1993), MKJV=Modern KJV (1962), MONTGOMERY=Montgomery's New Testament (2001), MRD=Peshitta-James Murdock Translation (1852), NAB=New American Bible (2002), NASB=New American Standard Bible (1977), NAU=New American Standard Bible (1995), NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version (1984), NJB=New Jerusalem Bible (1985), NKJV=New King James Version (1979), NLT=New Living Translation (1996), NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989), PHILLIPS=J B Phillips New Testament (1962), PNT=Bishop's New Testament (1595), RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952), TNK=JPS Tanakh (1985), WEB=Webster Bible (1833), WEYMOUTH=Weymouth's New Testament (1903), WILLIAMS=William's New Testament (1937), TYNDALE=Tyndale's Bible (1526), WYCLIFFE=Wycliffe New Testament (1382), YLT=Young's Literal Translation (1862)

GREEK LEXICON LEGEND

LEXICON LEGEND: FRIEBERG = Friberg Lexicon, UBS = Barclay-Newman, LOUW-NIDA = Louw-Nida Lexicon, LIDDELL SCOTT

THE INSPIRED RECORD OF THE BEGINNING OF ALL THINGS: THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH, MANKIND, SIN, THE FIRST CHOSEN AND BLESSED NATION, THE FIRST CURSE, THE FIRST PROMISE, AND THE FIRST FAITH.

DISCLAIMER: The quoting of other translations is not to be taken as a condoning of them. My purpose is rather to show the remarkable diversity, and sometimes outright contradictions that exist among these various versions of Scripture. Our understanding of the Word of God ultimately depends upon our comprehension of the Lord Himself and His eternal purpose. Where this understanding is not present, we are shut up to scholasticism and conjecture, both of which are of the world, not of God.

JACOB BLESSES HIS SONS, #1

Gen 49:1 "And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days. ² Gather yourselves together, and hear, ye sons of Jacob; and hearken unto Israel your father. ³ Reuben, thou art my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power: ⁴ Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel; because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; then defiledst thou it: he went up to my couch. ⁵ Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. ⁶ O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honor, be not thou united: for in their anger they slew a man, and in their selfwill they digged down a wall. ⁷ Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel. ⁸ Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee. ⁹ Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? ¹⁰ The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be. ¹¹ Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes: ¹² His eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk. ¹³ Zebulun shall dwell at the haven of the sea; and he shall be for an haven of ships; and his border shall be unto Zidon. ¹⁴ Issachar is a strong ass couching down between two burdens: ¹⁵ And he saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant; and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute." Genesis 49:1-15

INTRODUCTION

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE TEXT

Knowing that his death is imminent, Jacob calls his sons together, imploring them to be attentive to what he has to say. He says he will tell them

what will "befall" them "in the last days." This is more than a family talk, or the expression of his will for each one of them. In this event, he is God's spokesman – a holy prophet. He will

announce to them that, in some cases, their conduct impacted their future. Or, perhaps more accurately, God's purpose will prevail, even if it means the demotion of some of them. Jacob's

Jacob calls his sons to tell them what will befall them in the last days. One by one he evaluates them and prophesies over them– Given O. Blakely

CONTENTS

- ▶ INTRODUCTION
- ▶ JACOB TELLS HIS SONS WHAT SHALL BEFALL THEM (49:1)
- ▶ GATHER AND HEAR (49:2)
- ▶ THE PROPHECY TO REUBEN (49:3-4)
- ▶ THE PROPHECY TO SIMEON AND LEVI (49:5-7)
- ▶ THE PROPHECY TO JUDAH (49:8-12)
- ▶ THE PROPHECY TO ZEBULUN (49:13)
- ▶ THE PROPHECY TO ISSACHAR (49:14-15)
- ▶ CONCLUSION

words are not speculative, and nothing about them will lead an honest person to think so. He has already demonstrated the accuracy and finality of his words in his prophecy concerning the sons of Joseph. **We are finding that in fulfilling His purpose, God does not depend upon men.** Rather, He leads them to depend upon Him. **If this was not the case, there could not be such a thing as prophecy that is brought to pass by God Himself, and therefore, the glory could not go totally to Him. Genesis overwhelmingly confirms this to be true.**

Men do not fulfil God's prophecy. They are involved, but by Divine causation and discretion.

THE NATURE OF PROPHECY

Since there is so much prophecy in Genesis, it is well to take a closer look at prophecy itself. What is it, and what is its purpose? Why is there such a thing as "prophecy."

First of all, it must be remembered that one of the primary purposes of Scripture it to reveal the nature of God. Of himself, man cannot conceive of a god that is separate from himself and his nature. That is why, left to himself, man *"changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things"* (Rom 1:23). Man *"changed the glory"* by ignoring the fact that nature

testified to the *"power and Godhead,"* or Divinity, of his Creator (Rom 1:20). Instead of men pursuing God, or feeling after Him, as they were created and ordained to do (Acts 17:26-27), they did not engage in that quest, but settled for gods of their own making.

Because man had drifted so far from his original consciousness God, it now became necessary for the Lord to make Himself known. Even in the beginning, with the creation of Adam and Eve, I doubt that very much of God was actually known by the innocent pair. This side of the cross, we have learned that knowing God is a process, not something that is instantly possessed with all of its ramifications and implications. Thus God began, one might say, an educational program – one designed to acquaint humanity with the God who created it.

One of the primary ways this was done was through "prophecy." In prophecy we are introduced to:

- ➔ A God of thought.
- ➔ A God of purpose.
- ➔ A God of precision.
- ➔ A God of wisdom.
- ➔ A God of power.
- ➔ A God who was interested in the welfare of humanity.
- ➔ A God who makes demands upon men.
- ➔ A God who offers incentives through promises.
- ➔ A God who wants to be known.
- ➔ A God who faithfully fulfills His promises.
- ➔ A God who does impossible things.
- ➔ A God whose will cannot be overturned.
- ➔ A God to whom man is responsible.

Prophecy Begins with A Divine Objective

Prophecy is infinitely more that predicting what is going to happen in the future looking into the future, or beholding what will take place, and then declaring it ahead of time. That is the employment of prescience. **While God does see everything from beginning to end, that is not the basis for prophecy.** Divine objective dictates

prophecy, not prescience.

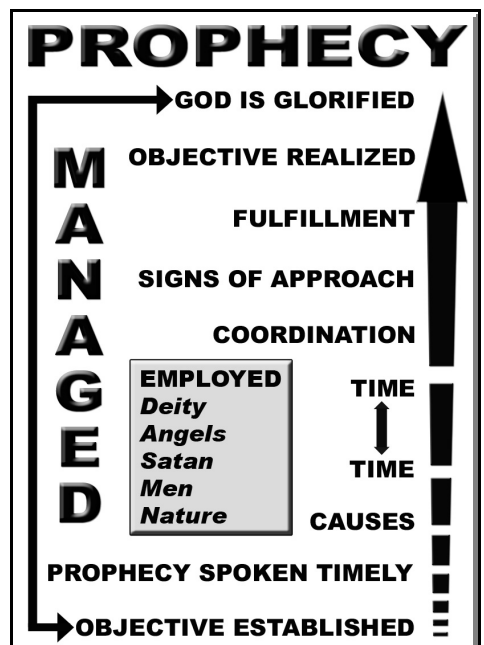
Prophecy begins with a Divine objective – something God has purposed to do. **The thing God has purposed could not possibly have been conceived by any created being – no matter how lofty that personality may have been – say, Adam in the beginning.**

Causes Are Managed

God is involved in every level of prophecy. All of the causes originate with Him, whether it is the employment of the devil himself, the creation of a new thing, or a series of events that are marvelously fitted together.

Time Is Managed

By its very nature, prophecy is interwoven with time, **for that is the thing that makes it discernible.** However, in prophecy God pin-points time, and manages it meticulously. When Christ's disciples asked him about the time associated with something God said He was going to do, Jesus replied, *"It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power"* (Acts 1:7). It is because God Himself



manages the times that we read such expressions as the following:

- ➔ *"The fulness of the time"* (Gal 4:4)

- ➡ *"The time is fulfilled"* (Mk 1:15)
- ➡ *"Signs of the times"* (Matt 16:3)
- ➡ *"The times of the Gentiles be fulfilled"* (Mk 21:24)
- ➡ *"The times of the restitution of all things"* (Acts 3:21)
- ➡ *"The times before appointed"* (Acts 17:26)
- ➡ *"Fully come"* (Acts 2:1)
- ➡ *"Shall come to pass"* (Ex 3:21; Acts 2:21; Rom 9:26)

The Coordination of Events

The Lord coordinates the people and events associated with His prophecies. For example, the deliverance of Israel from Egypt involved the coordination of people: Pharaoh, Pharaoh's counselors, the Egyptians, the presence of Moses and Aaron, the exponential growth of the number of Israelites, etc.

The Approaching Signs

God also managed the signs that alerted those who were perceptive that something of significance approached. When, for example, the Savior was born, there was a coordination of involvement that included Mary, Joseph, Elizabeth, Zacharias, the taxation of Caesar Augustus, the shepherds, Herod, Simon, Anna, and the wise men.

When Jesus entered into His ministry, *"the people were in great expectation"* (Lk 3:15). John the Baptist suddenly appeared to prepare the way of the Lord.

When the prophecies are fulfilled,

possibly have been fulfilled by happenstance or the will of man.

PROPHECIES THUS FAR IN GENESIS

None of the prophecies to which we have been introduced to this point fell to the ground.

➡ **TO SATAN.** *"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."* (Gen 3:15)

➡ **TO ADAM.** *"And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."* (Gen 3:17-19).

➡ **TO EVE.** *"Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee."* (Gen 3:16)

➡ **TO NOAH.** *"And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before*

I will destroy them with the earth." (Gen 6:13)

➡ **THROUGH NOAH TO CANAAN.** *"And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant."* (Gen 9:25-26)

➡ **TO NOAH.** *"And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth."* (Gen 9:11)

➡ **TO NOAH.** *"And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud: And I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh."* (Gen 9:14-15)

➡ **THROUGH NOAH TO JAPHETH.** *"God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant."* (Gen 9:27)

➡ **TO ABRAHAM.** *"And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."* (Gen 12:2-3)

➡ **TO ABRAHAM.** *"Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him."* (Gen 12:7)

➡ **TO ABRAHAM.** *"And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of*

When the prophecies are fulfilled, the purpose of God is fulfilled, and He is glorified. Those two realities could not possibly have been fulfilled by happenstance or the will of man.

the purpose of God is fulfilled, and He is glorified. Those two realities could not

me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold,

the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee." (Gen 13:14-17)

➡ **TO ABRAHAM.** *"And, behold, the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. And He brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be." (Gen 15:4-5)*

➡ **TO ABRAHAM.** *"And He said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full." (Gen 15:13-16)*

➡ **TO ABRAHAM.** *"In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates: The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites And the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims, And the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites." (Gen 15:18-21)*

➡ **TO HAGAR** *"And the angel of the LORD said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude. And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael; because the LORD hath heard thy affliction. And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in*

the presence of all his brethren." (Gen 16:10-12)

➡ **TO ABRAHAM.** *"And I will make My covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly . . . "As for Me, behold, My covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations . . . "And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish My covenant between Me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God." (Gen 17:2,4,6-8)*

➡ **TO SARAH.** *"And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be. And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her. . . "And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him." (Gen 17:15-16,19)*

➡ **TO ABRAHAM.** *"And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation." (Gen 17:20)*

➡ **TO ABRAHAM.** *"And he said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard it in the tent door, which was behind him. . . "Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son." (Gen 18:10,14)*

➡ **DELIVERED TO AN ANGEL.** *"Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?" (Gen 18:18)*

➡ **TO LOT.** *"For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the LORD; and the LORD hath sent us to destroy it." (Gen 19:13)*

➡ **TO HAGAR.** *"Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand; for I will make him a great nation." (Gen 21:18)*

➡ **TO HAGAR.** *"And said, By myself have I sworn saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies. And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed My voice." (Gen 22:16-18)*

➡ **TO REBEKAH.** *"And the LORD said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger." (Gen 25:23)*

➡ **TO ISAAC.** *"Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I swore unto Abraham thy father; And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; Because that Abraham obeyed My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws." (Gen 26:3-5)*

➡ **THROUGH ISAAC TO JACOB.** *"Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven,*

and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine: Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee." (Gen 27:28-29)

➡ **THROUGH ISAAC TO ESAU.** *"And Isaac his father answered and said unto him, Behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above; And by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother; and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck." (Gen 27:39-40)*

➡ **THROUGH ISAAC TO JACOB.** *"And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people; And give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham." (Gen 28:3-4)*

➡ **TO JACOB.** *"And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." (Gen 28:13-15)*

➡ **TO JACOB.** *"And the LORD said unto Jacob, Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee." (Gen 31:3)*

➡ **TO JACOB.** *"And God said unto him, I*

am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins; And the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land." (Gen 35:11-12)

➡ **THROUGH JOSEPH TO THE BUTLER.** *"Yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thine head, and restore thee unto thy place: and thou shalt deliver Pharaoh's cup into his hand, after the former manner when thou wast his butler." (Gen 40:13)*

➡ **THROUGH JOSEPH TO THE BAKER.** *"Yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thy head from off thee, and shall hang thee on a tree; and the birds shall eat thy flesh from off thee." (Gen 40:19)*

➡ **THROUGH JOSEPH TO PHARAOH.** *"Behold, there come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt: And there shall arise after them seven years of famine; and all the plenty shall be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine shall consume the land; And the plenty shall not be known in the land by reason of that famine following; for it shall be very grievous." (Gen 41:29-31)*

➡ **JACOB TO JOSEPH ABOUT EPHRAIM.** *"And his father refused, and said, I know it, my son, I know it: he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great: but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations." (Gen 48:19)*

➡ **JACOB TO JOSEPH.** *"And Israel said unto Joseph, Behold, I die: but God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers." (Gen 48:21).*

➡ **JACOB TO REUBEN.** *"Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel; because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; then defiledst thou it: he went up to my couch." (Gen 49:4)*

➡ **JACOB TO JUDAH.** *"Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee . . . The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." (Gen 49:8-10)*

➡ **JACOB TO ZEBULUN.** *"Zebulun shall dwell at the haven of the sea; and he shall be for an haven of ships; and his border shall be unto Zidon." (Gen 49:13)*

➡ **JACOB TO ISSACHAR.** *"Issachar is a strong ass couching down between two burdens: And he saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant; and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute." (Gen 49:14-15)*

➡ **JACOB TO DAN.** *"Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward." (Gen 49:17)*

➡ **JACOB TO GAD.** *"I have waited for thy salvation, O LORD. Gad, a troop shall overcome him: but he shall overcome at the last." (Gen 49:19).*

➡ **JACOB TO ASHER.** *"Out of Asher his bread shall be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties." (Gen 49:20)*

➡ **JACOB TO NAPHTALI.** *"Naphtali is a hind let loose: he giveth goodly words." (Gen 49:21)*

➡ **JACOB TO JOSEPH.** *"But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel:) . . . The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren." (Gen 49:22-26).*

PROMISES OF THE COMING REDEEMER

I cannot leave this section without accenting the promises of the coming Redeemer, Savior, and Deliverer.

- ➔ TO SATAN IN THE PRESENCE OF ADAM AND EVE. *"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."* (Gen 3:15)
- ➔ TO ABRAHAM. *" . . . and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."* (Gen 12:2-3)
- ➔ TO AN ANGEL. *"Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?"* (Gen 18:18)
- ➔ TO ABRAHAM. *"And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice."* (Gen 22:18)
- ➔ TO ISAAC: *" . . . and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed"* (Gen 26:4).
- ➔ TO JACOB. *" . . . in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed"* (Gen 28:14).

At this point in human history, only three things were known about the One God would send into the world.

- ➔ 3978 B.C. – The "Seed of the woman" would bruise the serpent's head, and the serpent would bruise His heel. (Gen 3:15)
- ➔ 1907 B.C. – All families, or nations, of the world be blessed through Him. (Gen 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14)
- ➔ 1660 B.C. – The gathering of the people would be to Him (Gen 49:10).

THE GLORY OF THE DAY OF SALVATION

Here we see the glory of the day of salvation – a day when a marvelous



abundance would be revealed about the Messiah – the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, the King of kings, the Lord of lords, etc. – none of which was known at the time of our text. Blessings were promised for all families and nations of the earth – but there was not the slightest idea what they would be. The gathering of the people to Him was made known, but how it would be accomplished was not known at all. Further, the details were of such a nature that man was not even able to imagine what they were. Paul put it this way after much revelation had been given: *"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him"* (1 Cor 2:9). Isaiah, whom Paul quoted, said it this way: *"For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what He hath prepared for him that waiteth for Him"* (Isa 64:4).

THE IMPACT OF ADAM'S SIN

The impact of Adam's sin transcends all human reasoning. Men choose to argue about the sin of Adam and the impact it had on the human race. However, the Scriptures are clear that it was staggering for greatness.

In the next generation, murder occurred, as Cain slew Abel. The next time murder occurred, it was worse. Lamech slew two men (Gen 4:23-24). Violence continued to escalate until, in

the days of Noah, God destroyed all flesh, saving for those in the ark – eight persons, and the animals with them.

The point is that as men became more enslaved to sin, they became less intelligent about God, and less able to learn anything concerning Him. This is why there were great gaps of time between any revelations from God. It took man considerable time to grasp what was revealed. Furthermore, it took God longer to establish in men an accurate concept of the Divine nature. This accounts for the relative infrequency of revelation in those early days.

As time passed, and people were blessed of God with faith and revelation, those so blessed became more able to process what God had declared and promised. As this aptitude increased, the amount of revelation also increased.

When Jesus put away sin, the new birth could take place. Those who are born again can now obtain an exponential increase in spiritual aptitude and understanding. Now the saved can be taught by the grace of God (Tit 2:11-13), taught and led by the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:13-14; 1 John 2:20,27), and taught by the glorified Christ (Eph 4:20-21; 1 John 5:20).

With these remarkable advantages, those who believed the Gospel and followed Jesus grew quickly, making such progress as has been rarely seen since those early days of the church.

The Prophets Spoke of Unparalleled Increase and Growth

David and the prophets spoke of the kind of life that would be realized under the Messiah.

- ➔ *"They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures."* (Psa 36:8)
- ➔ *"They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God."* (Psa 84:7)

➔ *"The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing."* (Psa 92:12-14)

➔ *"For I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds,*

saith the LORD; because they called thee an Outcast, saying, This is Zion, whom no man seeketh after." (Jer 30:17)

➔ *"And I will satiate the soul of the priests with fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, saith the LORD."* (Jer 31:14)

➔ *"I will feed them in a good pasture,*

and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they lie in a good fold, and in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel." (Ezek 34:14)

➔ *"And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you."* (Joel 2:25)

JACOB TELLS HIS SONS WHAT SHALL BEFALL THEM

Gen 49:1 *"And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days."*

Jacob knows that his departure is approaching, and that there are things he has been appointed to say. He does not wait until death is upon him, but calls his sons together while he is in a state of lucidity.

GATHER YOURSELVES TOGETHER

"And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together..." Other versions read, *"assemble yourselves,"* ^{NASB} *"gather around,"* ^{NIV} *"come together,"* ^{BBE} and *"Gather yourselves together [around me]."* ^{AMPLIFIED}

Notice that Jacob does not prepare to deliver private words to each of his sons – one at a time. Rather, he brings them all together for his prophesy. Each brother will benefit from what is said to his other brothers.

Jesus did the same thing, calling His disciples together when He had a word for them (Matt 15:32; 23:1; Mk 3:9; 4:34; 8:1; John 21:14).

Those who major on counseling do so one at a time, or possibly with a family. This, however, is not how Jesus generally taught. It is true, Nicodemus and the woman at the well had private meetings with the Lord. But those kinds of meetings were not His manner. Even in those private gatherings, a message was delivered that was applicable to

the masses.

THAT I MAY TELL YOU WHAT WILL BEFALL YOU

"... that I may tell you that which shall befall you..." Other versions read, *"what will happen to you,"* ^{NIV} *"your fate,"* ^{BBE} *"what shall come to you"* ^{GENEVA}

These words are addressed to the sons personally, but they are not intended for them alone. These will be primarily prophesies about their progeny, their posterity.

God had told Abraham that *"nations"* would come from him (Gen

Notice that Jacob does not prepare to deliver private words to each of his sons – one at a time. Rather, he brings them all together for his prophesy. Each brother will benefit from what is said to his other brothers.

"what is in store for you," ^{NJB} and *"what will meet to you."* ^{ABP}

Jacob here speaks with a confidence that had to come from God. Earlier, when he initially refused to allow Simon to go with his brothers back to Egypt, he spoke in this manner: *"My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he is left alone: IF MISCHIEF BEFALL HIM by the way in the which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave"* (Gen 42:38). **But there are no "if's" in this saying.** He would speak in the role of a prophet, and as one of the *"fathers"* with whom God had made His covenant – Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Acts 3:16).

17:4-6). He told Jacob the same (Gen 35:11). Further, Jacob had told Joseph that *"a multitude of nations"* would come from Manasseh, whom Jacob revealed was now to be considered his son, along with Ephraim, who would have the preference (Gen 48:19). However, none of these prophecies had revealed the nature of these *"nations"* that would be in Abraham's primary lineage.

A Unique Circumstance

Prior to Jacob's offspring, the *"fathers"* had only a single offspring that was accepted into God's favor. With Abraham it was Isaac. All other sons were rejected – seven of them: Ishmael, Zimran, Jokshan, Medan,

Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah (Gen 25:2). Concerning Isaac, only one of his sons was accepted – Jacob, with Esau being rejected. Prior to Abraham, only one son of Adam was in the holy lineage – Seth.

Now, with Jacob, he has twelve sons from whom the nation promised to Abraham would be formed, and the additional sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh, will also be included. I do not doubt that all of this was confusing to Satan, who is not omniscient. The only information with which the adversary had to work is that his demise would come from *“the seed of the woman”* (Gen 3:15). But now, two millennia has passed, and so far as he is concerned, he is still stymied concerning the identity of the one who will crush his head. Therefore he worked to cause barrenness in women, and to induce a destruction of Abraham and his offspring.

THE LAST DAYS

“ . . . in the last days.” Other versions read, *“the days to come,”* ^{NASB} *“the latter days,”* ^{ASV} *“in future times,”* ^{BBE} *“at the end of days”* ^{DARBY} *“in the final days”* ^{NJB} *“latter end of the days,”* ^{YLT} *“upon last of the days,”* ^{ABP} and the *latter or last days.”* ^{AMPLIFIED}

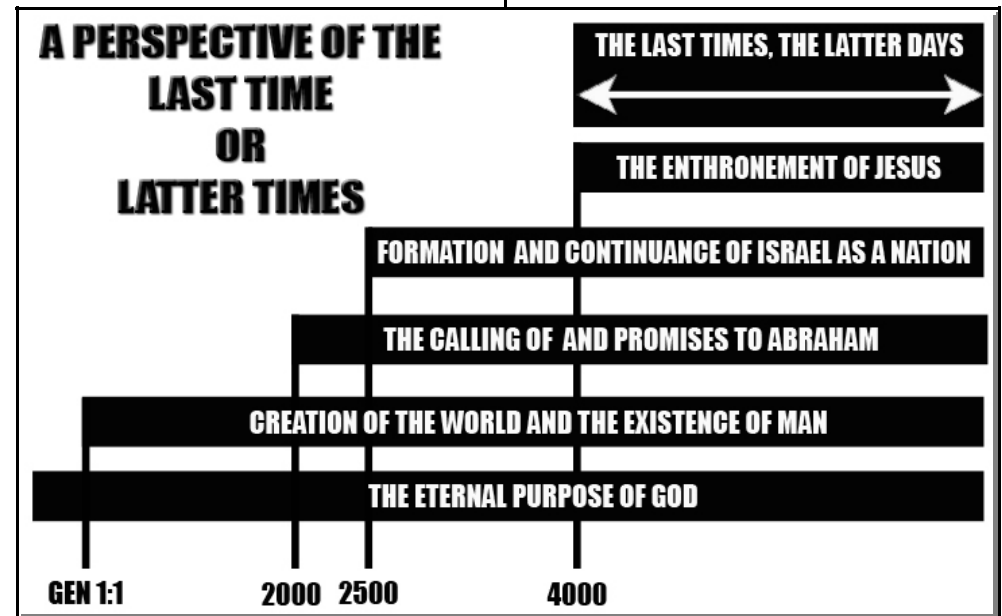
Among other things, this means that none of these sons’ lineage, or offspring, would become extinct before the *“seed of the woman”* appeared, OR during His administration of the Kingdom, whose rule would be prophesied later (Isa 9:6-7; 52:13; Jer 23:5). That reign would be the period of time when *“the pleasure of the Lord”* would *“prosper in His hand”* (Isa 53:10). To put it another way, the *“eternal purpose,”* which was purposed in Christ Jesus, or with Him in mind, will be brought to its culmination by the rule and reign of King Jesus. That is the reason for the existence of the earth itself, for man kind, and the salvation of God. Remove that purpose and there is no reason for the world or mankind.

The enthronement of Jesus officially inducted *“the last days,”* as declared by Joel, and confirmed by

Peter: *“And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams”* (Acts 2:17). Jesus is why the world continued to exist, and when the purpose for which God sent Him is completed, the world will end. There will be no further reason for it to exist.

WHAT WAS JACOB SAYING

Jacob was telling his sons their offspring would be in existence at the end of time. In the aggregate, they were Israel, who is scheduled to be here until the world ends. Those who affirm that Israel has been removed and forgotten have only betrayed their ignorance of the purpose of God. If that theory actually represented the purpose of God, there would have been no



These last days, or latter times, also have a closing period to which both Paul and Peter referred (1 Tim 4:1; 2 Tim 3:1; 2 Pet 3:3).

However, the enthronement of Jesus commenced the last phase of the earth’s existence, and of man upon it. The creation of the world was for the working out of God’s *“eternal purpose”* among men. The creation is therefore referred to as having taken place *“in the beginning”* (Gen 1:1).

The world was not made for “the antichrist,” and he is not the prominent personality in the history of the world. The Seed through whom the world would be blessed, as God promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, is the focus of God’s attention, the reason for the world, and the One around whom both time and its end were built and were structured.

reason for Jacob to call his sons together to tell them, what would befall them *“in the last days.”*

The phrase *“the last days”* occurs seven times in Scripture (Gen 49:1; Isa 2:2; Micah 4:1; Acts 2:17; 2 Tim 3:1; James 5:3; 2 Pet 3:3), and *“latter times”* once (1 Tim 4:1). The expression represents a Divine perspective more than a definitive point in time. The thrust of the expression is not, technically speaking, from the standpoint of time. Rather, the consideration is the working out of God’s *“eternal purpose,”* which has been made known since the exaltation of Christ (Eph 1:9-10; 3:11). When God has completed what He is doing, there will be no further need for time, the world, humanity, or the devil and his hosts. The heavens and the earth shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat (2 Pet 3:10).

GATHER AND HEAR

"² Gather yourselves together, and hear, ye sons of Jacob; and hearken unto Israel your father." Other versions read, *"assemble and listen,"* ^{NIV} *"come near . . . and give ear,"* ^{BBE} *"Gather around and listen,"* ^{GWN} *"Assemble and hearken,"* ^{TNK} *"Listen to me,"* ^{LIVING} *"be convened and hear."* ^{INTERLINEAR}

It was important that Jacob's sons listen carefully to what he was going to say. **This was the word of God concerning their future, and they were to have an interest in it.**

If you are familiar with Scripture, you know that when gatherings are reported in Scripture, the people were always listening – carefully listening.

- ➔ At Mount Sinai (Ex 33:4).
- ➔ When Solomon dedicated the Temple (1 Kgs 8:54-55,66)
- ➔ When Elijah was having a contest with the prophets of Baal (1 Kgs 18:21-22).
- ➔ When Ezra and Nehemiah brought the people together (Neh 8:2-3).
- ➔ When John the Baptist preached (Lk

3:15)

- ➔ When Jesus taught (Mk 12:37).
- ➔ When Peter preached (Acts 2:14-37).
- ➔ When Stephen preached (Acts 6:9-10).
- ➔ When Philip preached (Acts 8:6).
- ➔ When Paul preached (Acts 9:22; 17:23-32; 20:7)

The people always listened.

We are living in a society that has cultured a lack of attentiveness when the things of God are being declared. Generally speaking, church people do not listen to the preaching of Word of God as though they were listening to God Himself (1 Thess 2:13). Anyone of our time who has ever preached has been aware of the many distractions and lack of attentiveness that is seen in the average congregation. **It is the kind of environment in which God does not**

We are living in a society that has cultured a lack of attentiveness when the things of God are being declared. Generally speaking, church people do not listen to the preaching of Word of God as though they were listening to God Himself

Sometimes they were angry (Acts 7:57), sometimes they were convicted (Acts 2:37), sometimes they were helped (Acts 18:27), and sometimes they were comforted (Acts 16:40) – but they always listened.

even work.

To gain the benefit of what Jacob was about to reveal, the sons had to come together and listen to what he said. **Distraction and wandering minds simply would not be permitted.**

THE PROPHECY TO REUBEN

"³ Reuben, thou art my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power: ⁴ Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel; because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; then defiledst thou it: he went up to my couch."

The prophecy begins with the firstborn. However, in the case of Reuben, the word will not be a pleasant or profitable one.

THOU ART MY FIRSTBORN

"Reuben, thou art my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power . . ."

Jacob's eldest son, born to him through Leah, *"Reuben"* means "He hath seen my affliction."

Here was a man who was given a remarkable advantage at birth. Consider what is said of him. What remarkable advantages he had. He was the first born, and what a description is given of that beginning.

"My Might and the Beginning of My Strength"

Other versions read, *"the first-fruit of my strength,"* ^{BBE} *"my strength,"* ^{CEB} *"my vigor,"* ^{NJB} *"my power,"* ^{YLT} *"the child of my vigorous youth,"* ^{LIVING} and *"born at the peak of my powers."* ^{CEV}

By being Jacob's firstborn Reuben was his *"strength,"* having more advantage than the others. **He had more opportunity to be with and work with his father, who was then at the peak of his strength.** He was Jacob's *"might"* in the sense of being more able to carry out Jacob's will, which was more robust and formative at that time.

"The Excellency of Dignity"

Other versions read, *"preeminent in dignity,"* ^{NASB} *"excelling in honor,"* ^{NIV} *"excelling in rank,"* ^{NRSV} *"pre-eminent in pride,"* ^{RSV} *"the head of the list in rank,"* ^{LIVING} *"the first of my children, hard to be endured,"* ^{BRENTON} *"an honored leader,"* ^{CEV} *"excelling in gifts,"* ^{DOUAY} *"the most honored,"* ^{ERV} *"the proudest,"* ^{GNB} *"first in*

majesty," ^{GW} "excel in rank," ^{ISV} and "abundance of exaltation." ^{YLT}

Being the firstborn, Reuben was endowed with the right and capacity to be the leader. He was the highest in rank, and therefore more was expected of him. The circumstances were such that he could more fully execute Jacob's will, and work within the framework of the purpose of God. **These were not goals set before Reuben, but rights – birthrights.**

"The Excellency of Power"

Other versions read, "preeminent in power," ^{NASB} "excelling in power," ^{NIV} "First in power," ^{BBE} "superior in might," ^{CEB} "greater in command," ^{DOUAY} "foremost in strength," ^{NJB} "stubborn to bear." ^{ABP} "self-willed," ^{Brenton} "strongest of all my sons" ^{GNB} "Principal in power," ^{JUB} "at the top in power," ^{MESSAGE} and "the abundance of strength." ^{YLT}

All of the sons had power, or

"wast light as water," ^{GENEVA} "out of control like a flood," ^{GWN} "insolent like water," ^{SEPTUAGINT} "destructive³ like water," ^{NET} "unruly as a flood," ^{NLT} and "unstable and boiling over like water." ^{AMPLIFIED}

The idea is that there was no stability or consistency in Reuben. He acted impulsively rather than thoughtfully. One could not depend upon Reuben to do the right thing invariably. He brought mandrakes to his mother, Leah (Gen 30:14). Then he lay with his father's concubine (Gen 35:22). He is the one who delivered Joseph out of his brother's hands, admonishing them not to shed his blood (Gen 37:21-22). When the brothers were unknowingly standing before Joseph, he reminded them, "Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? therefore, behold, also his blood is required" (Gen 42:22). He is the one who gave the following solution to allowing Benjamin to go to Egypt as was demanded by the

your superiority will end," ^{CJB} "thou shalt have no pre-eminence," ^{DARBY} "grow thou not," ^{DOUAY} "thou shalt not be excellent," ^{GENEVA} "you will not be foremost," ^{NJB} "you shall not excel and have the preeminence [of the firstborn]." ^{AMPLIFIED}

Although he was given every advantage required to excel, Jacob declares that he will not do so. He would not be first in rank. He would not be preeminent. He would not be the foremost son.

BECAUSE

"... because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; then defiledst thou it: he went up to my couch."

It all narrowed down to a single moral infraction: he went into his father's bed and lay with his concubine. **That event took place forty years before the time of our text.** Yet now, at the most important time for Reuben, it is cited as having disqualified him from the rights of the firstborn. As Moses would say to the people of Israel much later, "ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out" (Num 32:23). Under the Law, this kind of sin was singled out: "Cursed be he that lieth with his father's wife; because he uncovereth his father's skirt. And all the people shall say, Amen" (Deut 27:20). Centuries later, a man in the church in Corinth committed this sin, and it had defiled the entire assembly, and even contaminated their eating at the Lord's Table (1 Cor 5:1-8; 10:21).

Today, within the professed church, there is a relaxed view of immorality, and it is wholly unwarranted. If God purged the early church of those who "lied" (Acts 5), we ought to be able to see how serious moral infractions are. Paul said of such sins, "But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints" (Eph 5:3). Other versions read, "But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper

All of the sons had power, or authority, but Reuben, by virtue of being the firstborn, excelled in this area. He could exercise more influence, carrying out more initiatives for the glory of God. O, what Reuben could have been! He himself was the only inhibiting factor.

authority, but Reuben, by virtue of being the firstborn, excelled in this area. He could exercise more influence, carrying out more initiatives for the glory of God.

O, what Reuben could have been! He himself was the only inhibiting factor.

UNSTABLE AS WATER

"Unstable as water . . ." Other versions read, "uncontrolled as water," ^{NASB} "turbulent as the waters," ^{NIV} "boiling over as water," ^{ASV} "as wild as the waters," ^{CEB} "Impetuous as the water," ^{DARBY} "poured out as the water," ^{DOUAY}

ruler there, who was actually their brother Joseph: "Slay my two sons, if I bring him not to thee: deliver him into my hand, and I will bring him to thee again" (Gen 42:37).

Here was a man whose life was a composite of unwise and contradicting actions. Jacob summarized them all in saying he was "unstable as water."

THOU SHALT NOT EXCEL

"... thou shalt not excel . . ." Other versions read, "you shall not have preeminence," ^{NASB} "you will no longer excel," ^{NIV} "the first place will not be yours," ^{BBE} "you won't endure," ^{CEB} "so

for God's holy people," ^{NIV} and "But fornication and impurity of any kind, or greed, must not even be mentioned among you, as is proper among saints. Entirely out of place is obscene, silly, and vulgar talk; but instead, let there be

thanksgiving." ^{NRSV}

Not only are such sins not to take place among God's people, they is not even to be any talk or mention of them among the people of God—i.e. vulgarity.

Sensitivity to sin, particularly immorality, must be cultured – to say nothing of absolutely not committing such transgressions. **Holiness must be found in the church before it will realize any real success and satisfaction.**

THE PROPHECY TO SIMEON AND LEVI

"⁵ Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. ⁶ O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honor, be not thou united: for in their anger they slew a man, and in their selfwill they digged down a wall. ⁷ Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel."

ARE BRETHREN

"Simeon and Levi are brethren..." Other versions read, "brethren in evil," ^{GENEVA} "brothers indeed," ^{NAB} "two of a kind" ^{NLT} "a pair," ^{TNK} and are brothers [equally headstrong, deceitful, vindictive, and cruel]." ^{AMPLIFIED}

"Simeon" means "hearing," and he was the second of Jacob's sons through Leah. "Levi" means "wreath," and he was Jacob's third son through Leah.

The idea is that they thought and acted alike. They were two people with one mind and manner. Theirs was a mind and manner that did not characterize all of the brothers. It was excessive beyond measure.

INSTRUMENTS OF CRUELTY

"... instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. . ." Other versions read, "their swords are instruments of violence," ^{NASB} "deceit and force are their secret designs," ^{BBE} "weapons of violence their stock in trade," ^{CEB} "vessels of iniquity, waging war" ^{DOUAY} "carrying out their malicious plans," ^{NJB} "Their weapons are tools of lawlessness," ^{TNK} and "men of violence and injustice." ^{LIVING}

The words "cruelty" and "violence" have to do with unlawful aggression – what is "WRONG, INJUSTICE". ^{STRONG'S} **This is not warfare**, like the Israelites fighting at Jericho. **It is not defensive posture**, like Nehemiah's builders on the wall (Neh 4:18). This rather speaks of violence that is not justified.

their secret; unto their assembly, mine honor, be not thou united . . . Other versions read, "Let me not enter their council, let me not join their assembly," ^{NIV} and "O my soul, come not into their secret council; unto their assembly let not my honor be united [for I knew nothing of their plot]." ^{AMPLIFIED}

On top of everything, they used deceit to trap their victims, feigning that if they were all circumcised, their families could inter-marry.

The reference is to the response of Simeon and Levi to the molestation of their sister. They directed their anger against all of city of Shechem, killing all of the males. Then they killed Hamor, the offender, and his father Shechem (Gen 34:25-26) – for the sin of a single man, and spoiled the city (Gen 34:27-28). At the time, Jacob protested their violence (Gen 34:30).

On top of everything, they used deceit to trap their victims, feigning that if they were all circumcised, their families could inter-marry (Gen 34:17).

That also took place forty years prior to this occasion. However, Jacob now brings up the matter, informing them that their action will adversely effect their progeny.

DO NOT BE UNITED TO THEM

O my soul, come not thou into

Jacob does not trust their decisions, and wants no part of their kind of thinking. In this prophecy he is affirming that such conduct has no place among the people of God. The only aggression that is lawful among them is that which the Lord commands:—i.e. the destruction of Jericho (Josh 6), and the driving out of the inhabitants of Canaan (Ex 23:31; Num 33:52). In those cases, it would have been sinful not to be on the initiative (Num 33:55).

WHAT THEY DID

"... for in their anger they slew a man, and in their selfwill they digged down a wall . . ." Other versions read, "For in their anger they slew a man, And in their self-will they hamstrung an ox," ^{NKJV} "for in their anger they slay men, and in their wantonness they hamstring oxen," ^{RSV} "in their wrath they put men to death, and for their pleasure even oxen were wounded," ^{BBE}

"for in their wrath they slew a man, and in their self will they digged down a wall," ^{GENEVA} "in their anger they murdered men, and they crippled oxen just for sport," ^{NLT} "in their anger they slew a man, And in their self-will eradicated a prince," ^{YLT} "they murdered a man, and maimed oxen just for fun," ^{LIVING} "in their anger they slew men [an honored man, Shechem, and the Shechemites], and in their self-will they disabled oxen." ^{AMPLIFIED}

First, the translation of maiming animals and hamstringing oxen is the representation of the Septuagint Version. There is some professed basis for this found in the Hebrew expression. However, I do not accept that presentation, for it contradicts the clear statements of the aggression of Simeon and Levi. Their handling of the animals is stated as follows: *"They took their sheep, and their oxen, and their asses, and that which was in the city, and that which was in the field, and all their wealth, and all their little ones, and their wives took they captive, and spoiled even all that was in the house"* (Gen 34:28-29). **They actually added the livestock to their flocks, rather than leaving them maimed by the homes they pillaged.**

Their chief cruelty was in the slaughter of the males. The women, children, and livestock they took for themselves.

DIVIDED AND SCATTERED

" Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel." Other versions read, "I will scatter them in Jacob and disperse them in Israel," ^{NIV} "I will let their heritage in Jacob be broken up, driving them from their places in Israel," ^{BBE} "I will scatter their descendants throughout Israel." ^{LIVING}

NUMBERS 26 CENSUS

Reuben	43,700
* Simeon (smallest)	22,200
Gad	40,500
Judah	76,500
Issachar	64,300
Zebulun	60,500
Manasseh	52,700
Ephraim	32,500
Dan	64,400
Asher	53,400
Naphtali	45,400
* Levi (scattered)	
(Comprised of Libnites, Hebronites, Mahlites)	
.	23,000

Some years later, at Mount Sinai, the tribe of Levi would respond to the call of Moses to slay people because of the idolatry that took place at that time. Three thousand were slain at that occasion (Ex 32:28). However, as a result of their zeal for the Lord, the tribe of Levi was sanctified. This tribe was not to be numbered or given any inheritance in Israel. Instead, they were appointed *"over the tabernacle of the testimony, over all the vessels, and over all things that*

"At the second census in the wilderness, shortly before the conquest, the tribe of Simeon had become so reduced in its numbers (reckoning only 22,000 as against 76,500 in Judah) as to be the smallest of the twelve (Numbers 26:14); to be passed over entirely in the last blessing of Moses (Deuteronomy 33.); to be accorded no independent allotment of territory in Canaan on the completion of the conquest, having only a few cities granted to it within the borders of Judah (Joshua 19:1-9); and to be ultimately absorbed in the more powerful and distinguished tribe under whose protection and tutelage, so to speak, it had been placed (1 Chronicles 4:27). The tribe of Levi also was deprived of a separate inheritance, receiving only a number of cities scattered here and there among the possessions of their brethren." Adam Clarke

belong to it." They were to *"bear the tabernacle, and all the vessels thereof; and they shall minister unto it, and shall encamp round about the tabernacle"* (Num 1:50). **This was a great act of mercy, taking place many generations after the judgment pronounced by Jacob.** Through Moses, God made known that His judgments could be limited–i.e. not be carried forward beyond so many generations, affirming it no less than four times (Ex 20:5; 34:7; Num 14:18; Deut 5:9). God takes no delight in the death of even the wicked (Ezek 33:11).

This is something that cannot be exploited, but it seems to me that it is written to confirm the mercy of God, while, at the same time, solemnly warning men that they will surely reap what they sow.

THE PROPHECY TO JUDAH

⁸ *Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee.* ⁹ *Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?* ¹⁰ *The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.* ¹¹

Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes: ¹² His eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk."

THE PREMINENCE OF CHRIST IN SCRIPTURE

At this point there is a noticeable

change in emphasis. The spotlight is not turned upon the tribes of Israel, but on the Son who shall be given to Israel, and who will spring out of her at the appointed time. The ultimate reason for Israel is the sending of the *"Seed of woman"* (Gen 3:15), and the promised *"Seed"* of Abraham into the world (Gen 22:17). In order to confirm the subjection of Satan himself to God and what He is doing, he was the first one to hear of *"the Seed,"* and what He

would do. The words were spoken in the presence of the sinners, Adam and Eve, in order that they might know a full resolution of the dilemma they had caused had been set in motion. Principalities and powers in heavenly places heard the declaration in order

honor," ^{CEB} "your brothers will acknowledge you" ^{CJB} and "you are the one whom your brothers shall praise." ^{AMPLIFIED}

The word "praise," has the following lexical meaning: "TO GIVE THANKS,

he was confronted about Joseph's cup being taken (Gen 44:3-34). **However, any personal virtue or ability found in Judah gave place to the purpose of God that would be accomplished through him.** His use by God was the point, not any natural aptitude.

THY HAND SHALL BE ON THE NECK OF THINE ENEMIES

" . . . thy hand shall be on the neck of thine enemies . . ." Other versions read, "you grip your enemies by the neck." ^{NJB}

Initially, these words were fulfilled in David, who subdued all of his enemies (2 Sam 5:7,10; 2 Sam 5:17-25; 8:1-18; 12:26-31; 21:15-22; 1 Chron 18:1-11).

However, the greatest of all conquests came through "the Son of David" (Matt 1:1; Lk 18:38-39), who has been exalted to his throne, being made "both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36).

THY FATHER'S CHILDREN SHALL BOW DOWN BEFORE THEE

" . . . thy father's children shall bow down before thee . . ." Other versions read, "your father's sons shall bow down to you," ^{NASB} "will go down to the earth before you," ^{BEB} "your father's sons will do you homage" ^{NJB} "All your relatives will bow before you," ^{NLT} "will do obeisance you," ^{ABP} "shall do thee reverence," ^{Brenton} "Your brothers will bow down to you," ^{ERV} "May the sons of your father bow themselves to you," ^{LITV} "while your brothers honor you." ^{MESSAGE}

That is, because Judah is preferred above the rest of Jacob's sons, they will bow before him, acknowledging that this is true. This was initially fulfilled in the exaltation of David from the tribe of Judah to be the king over the whole nation. "All the congregation" bowed before David (1 Chron 29:20). David was a very real king, and the people knew it.

Ultimately, the "Seed" of Abraham is the focus of this fundamental view. That is, the Messiah, Jesus Christ, will

Make no mistake about this. There is no man or angel, no body of people or objective of a person or group of persons that approximates the importance of the Person and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no subject that is of equal or greater significance than the purpose of God that is made known in Christ Jesus.

that they might observe the circumstances with holy interest and intrigue. Holy angels heard it so they might behold the will of the Lord for those to whom they would be ministering.

Make no mistake about this. There is no man or angel, no body of people or objective of a person or group of persons that approximates the importance of the Person and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no subject that is of equal or greater significance than the purpose of God that is made known in Christ Jesus.

It is to be acknowledged that this perspective is not being made clear by the professed church, and that the greater percentage of professing Christians do not live in view of this dominating consideration. **Nevertheless, every competing thought and purpose will eventually have to yield to what is declared in this primitive prophecy of the Savior of the world.** There is not a solitary word or thought in this declaration that suggests inferiority to any degree in the One who is said to "come."

THY BRETHREN SHALL PRAISE

"Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise . . ." Other versions read, "your brothers will

LAUD, PRAISE." ^{STRONG'S} The name Judah means "praised." He was the fourth son of Jacob by Leah.

Here Jacob places Judah above Joseph, to whom he had given a double portion, and who was given the birthright in the place of Reuben (1 Chron 5:1-2). In this respect, as it is written, "Judah prevailed above his brethren" (1 Chron 5:2). He was exalted in being the progenitor of the most illustrious king over the nation, David, and the one with whom the coming Messiah would be identified (Heb 7:24; Rev 5:5). The throne that would be established "forever" would be identified with his tribe (1 Kgs 9:5; 1 Chron 22:10; Isa 9:7).

It was Jacob's identity with the coming Savior that would be the cause for the "praise" of reference. Also Judah was the one who interceded in the behalf of Joseph, urging them to "sell him to the Ishmaelites" rather than slay him (Gen 37:26-27). He is the one who stepped forward to reason with Jacob about the necessity of Benjamin going back to Egypt with them, as the ruler of Egypt (Joseph) had demanded (Gen 43:3-6,8). When the brothers returned to Egypt, it is written that "Judah and his brethren came to Joseph's house" (Gen 44:14). He is the one who reasoned with Joseph when

not be a mere figurehead. All who are privileged to behold Him, and when they do see Him as He is, will bow before Him. Paul boldly announces *"That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father"* (Phil 2:10-11).

This is the nature of the Divine economy. **The one exalted by God the Father must be acknowledged by those over whom He rules.** This was prefigured in the kings God exalted, which not only included David, but even the heathen kings Nebuchadnezzar (Jer 27:8-11), and Cyrus (2 Chron 26:22-23; Ezra 1:1-8).

A LION'S WHELP

"... Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up..." Other versions read, *"You are a lion's cub, O Judah..."* ^{NIV} *"Judah is a young lion; like a lion full of meat you have become great,"* ^{BBE} *"Judah is a young lion¹-- my son, you return from the kill,"* ^{CSB} *"Judah is a lion's whelp; You stand over your prey, my son,"* ^{NJB} *"Judah, my son, is a young lion that has finished eating its prey,"* ^{NLT} *"Judah is a young lion that has finished eating its prey,"* ^{LIVING} and *"Judah, a lion's cub! With the prey, my son, you have gone high up [the mountain]."* ^{AMPLIFIED}

The picture here is of a young lion that has snared and eaten some prey, then returned to his den in the mountains, and is reposed, refreshed, and satisfied. It speaks of dominancy and superiority. Here we see majesty and success.

This is a most vivid picture of the exalted Christ, having returned to heaven after spoiling the powers of darkness (Col 2:15), and destroying the devil (Heb 2:14).

WHO SHALL ROUSE HIM UP?

"... he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?..." ^{NIV} Other versions read, *"who dares rouse him up,"* ^{NASB} *"who causeth him to arise?"* ^{YLT} *"who*

dares provoke and rouse him?" ^{AMPLIFIED}

This is depiction of one who has conquered, who is thoroughly satisfied, and, and who must not be needlessly aroused or foolishly stirred.

What a marvelous picture of the

IT IS." ^{STRONG'S} This is a term uniquely belonging to the Messiah, and refers to Him as being seated upon David's throne, as proclaimed by Peter: *"Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this, which ye now*

Now God is building the house He promised to build for David. "The throne of David" is said to be the throne upon which the Messiah would sit. It appeared for centuries as though the "throne of David" was not occupied.

exalted Christ. Now, enthroned in glory, there is a sense in which He is resting from His labors – the ones He fulfilled on earth. Now, However, there is a sword proceeding out of His mouth (Rev 19:15). Those who make war against Him (Rev 17:12-14), will only rouse Him to action against them. Now *"in righteousness,"* because He has been aroused by inimical forces, He doth *"judge and make war"* (Rev 19:11). His Kingdom is still *"forcefully advancing"* ^{NIV} (Matt 11:12).

THE SCEPTER SHALL NOT DEPART FROM JUDAH UNTIL SHILOH COME

"... The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come..." Other versions read, *"The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs,"* ^{NIV} *"The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to Him,"* ^{NRSV} *"The scepter turneth not aside from Judah, And a lawgiver from between his feet, Till his Seed come,"* ^{YLT} and *"The scepter or leadership shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until Shiloh [the Messiah, the Peaceful One] comes to Whom it belongs."* ^{AMPLIFIED}

The word *"Shiloh"* means, ^{HE WHOSE}

see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he [David] saith himself, The Lord said unto My Lord, Sit thou on My right hand, until I make Thy foes Thy footstool" (Acts 2:33-35).

This meant that the shedding forth, or pouring forth, of the Holy Spirit signified the effective overthrow of Satan's host, who could not stop this from happening. In Daniel's time, a Satanic principality successfully hindered a holy angel from coming to earth for twenty-one days (Dan 10:13). **However, no such delay took place on the day of Pentecost.** The Lion had been roused after he had spoiled principalities and powers (Col 2:15), and delivered the death blow to the devil's head (Heb 2:14).

Now God is building the house He promised to build for David (2 Sam 7:11,27). *"The throne of David"* is said to be the throne upon which the Messiah would sit (Isa 9:7). It appeared for centuries as though the *"throne of David"* was not occupied. Yet during that time, as God saw things, the scepter did not depart from Judah. That is, its assigned preeminence continued, though unseen by men. But when Shiloh came – the One for whom the throne was intended – the scepter was passed to the glorified Christ who is now *"King of kings, and Lord of Lords"*

(1 Tim 6:15Rfev 17:14; 19:16).

UNTO HIM SHALL THE GATHERING OF THE PEOPLE BE

“ . . . and unto him shall the gathering of the people be. . .” Other

vine, his colt to the choicest branch,”
NIV and “He will tie his donkey to a
grapevine, his colt to the best vine.” GWN

This is a description of the superior and abundant fruitage of the

ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs: But the land, whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven: **A land which the LORD thy God careth for: the eyes of the LORD thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year**” (Deut 11:10-12). And yet again, “That I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil. And I will send grass in thy fields for thy cattle, that thou mayest eat and be full” (Deut 11:15).

There is here a remarkable parallel with spiritual life – life in Christ Jesus. Newness of life is lived amidst a staggering plentitude of benefits. The kind of life is described as “more abundantly.”

versions read, “to Him shall the obedience of the people be,” NKJV “and the obedience the nations shall be His,” NIV “the peoples will put themselves under His rule,” BBE “and it is He whom the peoples will obey,” CJB “He shall be the expectation of nations,” DOUAY and “the One whom all nations will honor.” NLT

“The gathering of the people” is another way of saying God will “draw them” (John 6:45,65), or give them (John 6:39; 17:9,11,24; Heb 2:13) to Jesus.

Note, the prophecy does not say “the people” ought to, or should be gathered to Shiloh – the One to whom they belong – but that they **will!** Jesus, referring to the manner of His death, said that if He was lifted up, He would draw “all men” (or “the people”) to Himself (John 12:32).

ABUNDANT FERTILITY IN CANAAN

Jacob now leaves off speaking of the coming Messiah, and speaks of Judah himself, or the tribe of Judah, and of the abundant fertility of their possession in Canaan.

Binding His Foal Unto the Vine

“ . . . Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine, he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes; His eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk.” Other versions read, “He will tether his donkey to a

land of Judah. The vines would so strong and robust, that one could tether a donkey to them. The wine would be so copious and abundant that it would be like flowing water in which one could wash his clothes. Milk and wine would be so abundant that even the donkeys would be filled with it, described as red eyes and white teeth. What normally would be considered valuable and treated with care would be so abundant it transcended human imagination. I understand this vivid description to be poetic, and not a literal description of things. **It is intended to provoke thoughts that are worthy of God.**

Even when the Israelites had been expelled from the land of Judah, and conquering Nebuzaradan, captain of Nebuchadnezzar's guard, had left “the poor of the people, which had nothing, in the land of Judah,” **it was noted for its vineyards**, which were given to those people (Jer 39:10).

Judah would experience a special fulfillment of God's promise concerning the land. “For the LORD thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; A land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey” (Deut 8:7-8). And again, “For the land, whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence

A Difference

There is, however, one difference. With Israel, the promise was conditioned upon their faithful and consistent obedience (Deut 11:8). **The promise to Judah was unconditional – an appendage, as it were, to the covenant made with Abraham.**

THE PARALLEL WITH SPIRITUAL LIFE

There is here a remarkable parallel with spiritual life – life in Christ Jesus. Newness of life is lived amidst a staggering plentitude of benefits. The kind of life is described as “*more abundantly*” (John 10:10). The benefits include, but are not limited to, the following.

- “**All spiritual blessings**” (Eph 1:4).
- “**All things that pertain to life and godliness**” (2 Pet 1:3).
- “**The unsearchable riches of Christ**” (Eph 3:8).
- “**The riches of His grace**” (Eph 1:7).
- “**Exceeding riches of His kindness**” (Eph 2:7).
- “**The riches of His glory**” (Eph 3:16).
- “**His riches in glory**” (Phil 4:19).
- “**All riches of the full assurance of understanding**” (Col 2:2).
- Grace that is “**exceeding abundant with faith and love**” (1 Tim 1:14).
- “**Abundant mercy**” (1 Pet 1:3).
- “**The fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ**” (Rom 15:29).
- “**All the fulness of God**” (Eph 3:19).
- **Completeness** in Christ (Col 2:10).

- ➔ All things **richly** given *“to enjoy”* (1 Tim 6:17).
- ➔ **“Exceeding greatness of His power toward us”** (Eph 1:19).
- ➔ **“Exceeding great and precious promises”** through which we

become *“partakers of the Divine nature”* (2 Pet 1:4).

There is certainly no lack in Christ Jesus. There is nothing about salvation that is inadequate, unsatisfying,

incomplete, or limited. It is so wonderful that **this is the environment in which Jesus is bringing many sons to glory.** Its richness more than compensates for any hardship or suffering we are called to endure.

THE PROPHECY TO ZEBULUN

“¹³ Zebulun shall dwell at the haven of the sea; and he shall be for an haven of ships; and his border shall be unto Zidon.”

One thing I have come to appreciate about details like this, is the acquaintance it brings of the extent, yet minuteness, of the work of the Lord. Every son of Jacob is not well known – Zebulun is one such person. Also, the territory allotted to Zebulun was extremely small, when compared with, for example, Judah and Manasseh.

This was the sixth, and last, son born to Jacob by Leah. He was Jacob’s tenth son. The meaning of his name is

“habitation.” STRONG’S

THE HAVEN OF THE SEA

“Zebulun shall dwell at the haven of the sea . . .” Other versions read, *“at the seashore,”* NASB *“will be by the sea,”* BBE and *“by the coast.”* GWN

The *“sea”* of reference is the Sea of Galilee and the Mediterranean sea, the land being located between them.

The land allotted to Zebulun by Jacob does not match the land assigned by Joshua. It is generally understood that Israel never fully occupied the land given to them. During the reign of king David, tribute was taken from the full

area.

A HAVEN FOR SHIPS

“ . . . and he shall be for an haven of ships; and his border shall be unto Zidon. . . ”

The border of the land assigned to Zebulun would be a place where ships would dock, probably loading, unloading, or waiting out difficult seasons of weather. Although it was a relatively small area, yet there would be much international activity.

Zidon was to the north of Canaan. I have found there is not much reliable information concerning this text, so must leave the matter here.

THE PROPHECY TO ISSACHAR

“¹⁴ Issachar is a strong ass couching down between two burdens:¹⁵ And he saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant; and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute.”

A STRONG ASS

“Issachar is a strong ass couching down between two burdens . . .” Other versions read, *“a strong donkey, Lying down between two burdens,”* NKJV *“lying down between two sheepfolds,”* NASB *“lying down between two saddlebags,”* NIV *“crouching down between two sheepfolds,”* RSV *“stretched out among the flocks,”* BBE *“bedding down beside the village hearths,”* CEB *“Crouching down between two hurdles,”* DARBY *“lying down between the borders,”* DOUAY *“resting between the inheritances,”* SEPTUAGINT *“lying down*

between two saddlebags. {Or campfires},” NIB *“resting among the saddle bags,”* LIVING *“taking rest between the lots,”* ABP *“resting in the meadows,”* CEV *“He will lie down under his heavy load,”* ERV *“crouching between the corrals.”* MESSAGE

Once again, we have an excellent exposure to the absolute confusion caused by translators. As I have before emphasized, the answer to Scriptural interpretation cannot be found in the “original language – upon which most, if not all, of these versions are based. Thus, students are asked to choose between the following words: “burdens,” “sheepfolds,” “saddlebags,” “flocks,” “village hearths,” “hurdles,” “borders,” “inheritances,” “campfires,” “lots,” “meadows,” “heavy load,” and “corrals” – thirteen choices, and no

consistent academic means of arriving at a conclusion.

I take it that the emphasis here is on strength – a *“strong ass.”* That strength was exhibited by holding up under two burdens, one hanging on the left, and the other on the right. Geographically, Issachar was between two larger kingdoms, Naphtali and Manasseh. His territory was extremely small, like that of Zebulun, which stood between two seas. **Issachar, like the ass, would be noted for its servitude.** Perhaps even of the tribes between which it was situated.

HE SAW THAT REST WAS GOOD

“ . . . And he saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant . . . ” Other versions read, *“When he sees how good is his resting place and*

how pleasant is his land," ^{NIV} "he saw that a resting place was good, and that the land was pleasant," ^{NRSV} and "saw that rest was good and the land was pleasing." ^{BBE}

The idea is that the location and circumstances of Issachar's habitation were good and pleasant, and the tribe recognized it. That is what constrained the next response.

HE BOWED HIS SHOULDER TO BEAR AND BECAME A SERVANT TO TRIBUTE

" . . . and bowed his shoulder to bear and became a servant unto tribute." Other versions read, *"and became a band of slaves,"* ^{NKJV} *"submit to forced labor,"* ^{NIV} *"a servant under taskwork,"* ^{ERV} and *"became a toiling serf."* ^{NAB}

Seeing the pleasantness of its circumstances, the tribe of Issachar gladly acquiesced to being a servant.

A GLORIOUS DEPICTION

We have in Issachar a glorious depiction of servitude to Christ Jesus. It

Jesus does ask us to bear a burden, and we are to take upon ourselves His yoke. But it is not burdensome – not when we experience the joyous satisfaction of serving Him.

is seen in the marvelous words of Jesus Himself: *"Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of [from] Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light"* (Matt 11:28-30).

Jesus does ask us to bear a burden, and we are to take upon ourselves His yoke. But it is not burdensome – not when we experience the joyous satisfaction of serving Him.

It is no wonder that Paul confessed, *"And I will very gladly spend*

and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved" (2 Cor 12:15). The joy and satisfaction does not always come from those among whom the servant of God labors – even though there are occasions when it does. **However, the lasting and invigorating joy comes from "fellowship" with the Lord Jesus (1 Cor 1:9), the "communion of the Holy Spirit" (2 Cor 13:14; Phil 2:1), and the "fellowship" that is experienced with others who are "walking in the light" (1 John 1:7).** O, that more would come to Jesus and experience the lightness of His burden, and His sweet rest. Let all come and receive!

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 4/18./14. We will continue our series of lessons in the book of Genesis. The eightieth lesson will cover verses 49:16 thru 33: "JACOB BLESSES HIS SONS, #2." Jacob blesses Dan thru Benjamin. He then charged his sons concerning his burial. When he had finished this instruction, he gathered his feet into the bed, and was gathered to His people. Our meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.