



The Book of Genesis. 05/2/2014

Lesson Number 80



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.

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 Stand 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, #2

Gen 49:16 "Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel. ¹⁷ 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. ¹⁸ I have waited for thy salvation, O LORD. ¹⁹ Gad, a troop shall overcome him: but he shall overcome at the last. ²⁰ Out of Asher his bread shall be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties. ²¹ Naphtali is a hind let loose: he giveth goodly words. ²² Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall: ²³ The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him: ²⁴ 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:) ²⁵ Even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb: ²⁶ 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. ²⁷ Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf: in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil. ²⁸ All these are the twelve tribes of Israel: and this is it that their father spake unto them, and blessed them; every one according to his blessing he blessed them. ²⁹ And he charged them, and said unto them, I am to be gathered unto my people: bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, ³⁰ In the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite for a possession of a buryingplace. ³¹ There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah. ³² The purchase of the field and of the cave that is therein was from the children of Heth. ³³ And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people." . . . Genesis 49:16-33

INTRODUCTION

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE TEXT

Jacob continues to prophesy over his sons: Dan, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Joseph, and Benjamin. He delivers a rather lengthy word concerning Joseph, who has been given the rights of the

firstborn. Yet, in prominence, he must yield to Judah, who would be praised by his brethren, among whom Joseph himself was numbered. The degree to which any person can be acceptably praised or honored is strictly determined

by God Himself. No man can take this honor upon Himself, not even "the Man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim 2:5). Thus it is written, "And no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ

glorified not Himself to be made an High Priest; but He that said unto Him, Thou art My Son, to day have I begotten thee" (Heb 5:4-5).

A KINGDOM TRAIT

This aspect of the Kingdom of God – God Himself choosing who participates in His purpose – is not after the manner of men, who are prone to exalt themselves. In fact, schools of advanced learning often instruct their students in how to do this – promoting themselves. **However, when it comes to the Kingdom of God, it is God who determines where a person is to be positionally and functionally.** This is confirmed in God's appointments of the following.

- ➔ Abraham as the progenitor of the Jewish nation, and the father of the promised "Seed" (Gen 12:3).
- ➔ Isaac, as the one through whom the Abrahamic promise was continued (Gen 17:19).
- ➔ Jacob as the one through whom the Abrahamic promise was again extended (Gen 25:23-26; Psa 105:6).
- ➔ Joseph as the one to save many people alive (Gen 45:7; Psa 105:17-22).
- ➔ Moses, as the one to lead Israel out of Egypt, and through whom the Ten Commandments given and the Old Covenant confirmed (Ex 3:13-15).
- ➔ Israel, as a people (Isa 41:8).
- ➔ Aaron, as the high priest (Ex 28:1-3; Psa 105:26).
- ➔ The Levites as the general priesthood (Num 1:50-51; Deut 18:1-3).
- ➔ Joshua, as the successor of Moses, and the one through whom Canaan was taken (Josh 1:1-2).
- ➔ The Prophets (2 Kgs 17:13; 1 Chron 16:22; Jer 26:9).

- ➔ David, as the one through whom the reign of Jesus would be established (Psa 132:11; Jer 23:5; John 7:42).
- ➔ John the Baptist to prepare the way for the Savior (Isa 40:3; Matt 3:1-3).
- ➔ The apostles, as those through whom the Gospel was given and expounded (Lk 6:13; 1 Cor 12:228).
- ➔ The various ministering gifts in the church (Rom 12:1-6; 1 Cor 12:1-18).
- ➔ Elders, or the overseers of the church (Acts 20:18).
- ➔ Official ministries established for the edifying of the body (Eph 4:11-16).
- ➔ The elect themselves, who are given to Jesus (Eph 1:4; 2 Thess 2:13; Rev 17:14).

All of this is being confirmed in the book of Genesis. Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Judah – they were all chosen by God. That, in fact, is what made them distinct from other people. In nature, Cain was first, but the choice of God was Abel. According to the flesh, Ishmael was first, but the choice of God was Isaac. By nature, Esau was first, but God chose Jacob. In the flesh, Reuben was first, but the birthright was given to Joseph. According to the order of birth, Judah was fourth, but God appointed him to be the one who was praised.

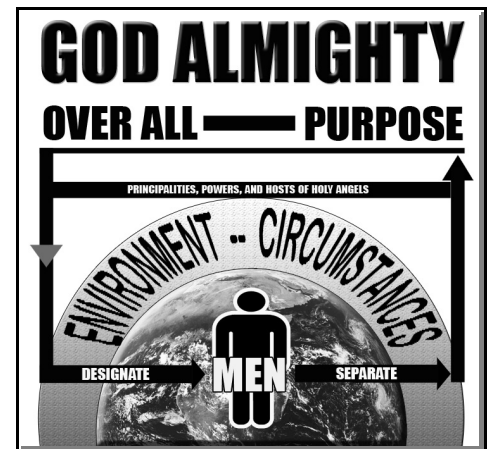
A good acquaintance with, and understanding of, the book of Genesis will prepare an individual for some of the doctrinal declarations of Christ Jesus and the apostles. They speak to us of God:

- ➔ **Electing** (Matt 24:22,24,31; Mk 13:20,22,27; Lk 28:7; Rom 8:23; 9:11; 11:5,7,28; Col 3:12; 1 Thess 1:4; 1 Tim 5:21; 2:10; Tit 1:1; 1 Pet 1:2; 2:6; 5:13; 2 Pet 1:10; 1 John 1:1,13)
- ➔ **Chosing** (Matt 20:16; 22:14; Mk 13:20; Lk 6:13; John 6:70;

13:18;15:16,19; Acts 1:2,24; 9:15; 10:41; 13:17; 22:14; Rom 16:13; Eph 1:4; 2 Thess 2:13 James 2:5; 1 Pet 2:9; Rev 127:14)

- ➔ **Predestinating** (Rom 8:29,30; Eph 1:5,11).
- ➔ **Foreordaining** (1 Pet 1:20)
- ➔ **Raising up certain people** (Acts 13:22; Rom 9:17)

When men have properly digested the things made known in Genesis, none of these teachings will be troublesome for them. They will see that no man has the power in himself to come to the Lord, be harmonious with the Lord, or be employed by Him for noble purposes.



The truth of the matter is that God is "over all" – "above all, and through all, and in you all" (Eph 4:6). He does whatsoever He wills "in the army of heaven and among he inhabitants of the earth" (Dan 4:35). There is "no restraint" with Him (1 Sam 4:16). He can scatter people at will, confusing their language. He can destroy a world, cause an impotent man to have offspring, and a barren woman to bear that son. He can cause whomever He wills to increase and prosper. He can save a great body of people with one man. He can cause despised people to be favored by their natural enemies.

All of this has been demonstrated in revealed history – and, so far as our text is concerned we are only in the

initial phases of God making His will known.

Jacob affirms that his own blessings have exceeded the blessings of his fathers: Abraham and Isaac. This refers particularly to the number of his immediate children that were blessed

through the Abrahamic covenant.

He also confers that kind of blessing upon Joseph, who was considered separate from his own brethren.

In the matter of immediate progeny the last of the “fathers” Jacob was first. He also was required to

endure all manner of hardships during his life, as was Joseph. **This confirms that the blessing of God is not without experiential difficulty.** The experience of trouble attended the lives of Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. That pattern continues with Moses, and the Prophets. **Believers should not think of difficulty and trouble as strange or unusual.**

THE PROPHECY TO DAN

Gen 49:16 ***“Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel. ¹⁷ 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. ¹⁸ I have waited for thy salvation, O LORD.”***

DAN SHALL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE

“Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel.” Other versions read, *“will provide justice for his people,”* ^{NIV} *“will settle disputes for his people,”* ^{CEB} *“will hand down decisions”* ^{GWN} *“shall achieve justice”* ^{NAB} *“will govern his people,”* ^{NJB} *“shall govern his people like any other tribe in Israel,”* ^{LIVING} and *“will handle matters of justice for his people.”* ^{MESSAGE}

The only judge from the tribe of Dan was Samson (1 Sam 16:1-31). Aside from Samson, no other judge was from the tribe of Dan. Some have made this the fulfillment of the prophecy, but I am not inclined that is a proper view of the text. It seems to me that this is related to Rachel’s response to the birth of Dan, her firstborn through her handmaid Bilhah. Here is what she said at that time, *“And Rachel said, God hath judged me, and hath also heard my voice, and hath given me a son: therefore called she his name Dan”* (Gen 30:6). Others versions read, *“God has vindicated me.”* ^{NASB} It appears that the trait of judgment, vindication, and discernment would particularly be found in Dan and his progeny. We do not have extensive records of the employment of such judgment. This may have been partially fulfilled during the twenty years Samson judged Israel.

DAN SHALL BE AS A SERPENT BY THE WAY

“ . . . 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. . . ”

This depicts the shrewdness of Dan in warfare. It was not always good. Some of the descendants of Dan came to the city of Laish, a quiet, secure, and unsuspecting people. Then, stealthily, they *“smote them with the edge of the sword, and burned the city with fire”* (Judges 18:25-27) – like a serpent biting at *“the horse heels.”* They then renamed the city *“Dan, after the name of Dan their father, who was born unto Israel”* (Judg 18:29). They also *“set up the graven image”* there (Judges 18:30).

I HAVE WAITED FOR THY SALVATION

“ . . . I have waited for thy salvation, O LORD.” Other versions read, *“I look for Your deliverance, O Lord,”* ^{NIV} and *“I long for your deliverance, O LORD!”* ^{NAB}

The word delivered to Dan must have been a difficult one for Jacob, for it is as though he pauses here to gain his strength in his heart, so that he may continue to deliver the prophecies without distraction. Even though he foresaw things about Dan that were not pleasing, he knew that the salvation of God would finally triumph over all. That was where his expectation was, not in his children.

It is of interest that in the

Revelation, when the conversion of Israel is depicted as 144,000 standing with the Lamb, 12,000 from each tribe, **Dan is omitted.**

Students will notice not only the omission of Dan, but also the deletion of Ephraim, and the insertion of Joseph in his place. While there may very well be additional reasons, I cite the following two reasons for the exclusion of Dan and Ephraim from the listing in the Revelation.

➔ **DAN:** The tribe was given over to idolatry, as stated in Judges 18:30. At least at that time, that appears to have been a

distinguishing mark. They also failed to route the Amorites from the territory given to them (Judges 1:34-35). Deborah upbraided this tribe for remaining in ships during the time of battle (Judges 5:17).

➔ **EPHRAIM:** This tribe did not expel the Canaanites from their territory (Josh 16:10). They chided Gideon for not asking them to help him route the Midianites (Judges 8:1). They also chided Jephthah for not

Revelation 7:5-8	
TRIBE	COUNT
Judah	12,000
Reuben	12,000
Gad	12,000
Asher	12,000
Naphtali	12,000
Manasseh	12,000
Simeon	12,000
Levi	12,000
Issachar	12,000
Zebulun	12,000
Joseph	12,000
Benjamin	12,000
TOTAL	144000

calling them to fight against the children of Ammon (Judges 12:1). This tribe worshiped Baal (Hosea 13:1). The wayward ten tribes of Israel were called “Ephraim” (2 Chron 25:6-7; Isa 7:8-9; Isa 11:12-13; Jer 31:18-20; Hos 4:17; 5:3-5; 6:4,10; 8:11; 12:14;13:12). This was a particularly rebellious tribe. That is why the revolting ten tribes were referred to as “*Ephraim*.” They

had his characteristics.

We learn from this that certain expressions of iniquity are especially noted by the God of heaven. This has much to do with WHEN they were committed, the CIRCUMSTANCES under which they were committed, and the IMPACT of their sins upon others.

This is not an area where we are

free to speculate and theorize. There are examples that confirm these things, like the transgression of Adam and Judas.

JACOB CASTS HIS EYES UPWARD

Even though the prophecy to Dan had a downward pull about it, yet Jacob cast his eyes upward, looking for the deliverance of the Lord from such circumstances.

THE PROPHECY TO GAD

“¹⁹ Gad, a troop shall overcome him: but he shall overcome at the last.”

A TROOP SHALL OVERCOME HIM

Other versions read, “a troop shall tramp upon him,” ^{NKJV} “raiders shall raid him,” ^{NASB} “will be attacked by a band of raiders,” ^{NIV} “an host of men shall overcome him,” ^{GENEVA} “a plundering troop shall plunder him,” ^{SEPTUAGINT} and “A marauding band shall stamp upon Gad.” ^{LIVING}

The Gadites were among those who chose to reside on “the other side of Jordan,” instead of in the promised land. They were required, however, to join their brethren in the conquest of the land of Canaan, as Joshua told them to do. They had to continue this help until the people realized rest from their enemies. Having done so, Joshua dismissed them to return to the other side of Jordan, admonishing them to keep the commandments of God (Joshua 1:12-18; 4:12,13; 22:1-4).

Later they, together with the

(who had joined them in choosing to dwell on the other side of Jordan), were reduced in size by Hazael, a Syrian king, whom God sent against them (2 Kgs 10:32-33). These tribes were also carried away captive by Tilgathpilneser., king of Syria (2 Chron 5:26). All of this was the Lord dealing with them.

THE DIVINE MANNER

There is such a thing as being overcome by Divine appointment. The Revelation makes known the appearance of a “beast” that rose up out of the turbulent sea. This is the “beast” upon which the great “whore,” “Babylon the Great,” rode (Rev 17:3). It is said of this “beast,” **“And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world”** (Rev 13:7-8).

Daniel ,also refers to the “saints”

ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time” (Dan 7:24-25).

Without spending an inordinate amount of time on these texts, the same principle is involved here that caused Israel to be overcome by their enemies.

- Overcome by and served Chushanrishathaim for a period of eight years (Judges 3:8).
- Overcome by and served Eglon, king of the Moabites for eighteen years (Judged 3:12-140).
- Overcome by and served Jabin king of Canaan for twenty years (Judges 4:1-3).
- Overcome by and served the Midianites for seven years (Judges 6:1).
- The Philistines “vexed and oppressed the children of Israel” for eighteen years (Judges10:7-8).
- The Lord delivered them into the hand of the Philistines for forty years (Judges 13:1).

Without spending an inordinate amount of time on these texts, the same principle is involved here that caused Israel to be overcome by their enemies.

Reubenites and half-tribe of Manasseh

being worn out by a despot: “*And the*

- ➔ Smitten by the Philistines, with 30,000 footmen of Israel being slain (1 Sam 4:10).
- ➔ Overcome by the Babylonians, going into captivity for 70 years (Jer 25:11-12; 29:10; Dan 9:2).

THE TYPE

Having failed to learn from their Hebrew brethren, the Gentile church has defected from the faith throughout history. It all began in the first century, while the apostles were still alive (Acts 20:29; 2 Cor 11:4; Gal 1:6; Rev 2:4,14,20; 1 Tim 4:1; 2 Tim 3:1-5; 2 Pet 2:1). It does appear that the presence of the apostles, and the *"sound doctrine"* they delivered kept this apostasy from, breaking out exponentially. **However, in due time, error became more dominant than truth, and the traditions of men overshadowed the truth of the Gospel and sound doctrine.** It is for this reason that the church has been taken into captivity – described as the saints being worn out (Dan 7:25; overcome by its

foes (Rev 13:7).

HE SHALL OVERCOME AT LAST

Other versions read, *"shall triumph at last,"* ^{NKJV} *"shall raid at their heels,"* ^{NASB} *"will attack them at their heels,"* ^{NIV} *"shall press upon their heel,"* ^{ASV} *"but he'll attack their back,"* ^{CEB} *"he shall plunder him, pursuing him closely,"* ^{SEPTUAGINT} *"but he will attack them when they retreat,"* ^{NLT} *"But he assaulteth last,"* ^{YLT} *"but he shall rob and pursue them!"* ^{LIVING} *"shall invade at the last,"* ^{JUB} and *"shall raid at their heels and assault them [victoriously]."* ^{AMPLIFIED}

The idea of the text is not the manner in which Gad will attack its enemies – such as striking at their heel. **Rather, the thought is that although Gad is harassed and attacked by its enemies, it will launch the last attack, and overcome its foes.** They will endure opposition, and even some setbacks, but in the end, they will be triumphant.

THE MARVELOUS TYPE

This, of course, is a marvelous

depiction of the nature of the saints tenure in this world. They do experience warfare. Sometimes it is more fierce than at others, and there comes a time when they are actually overcome. It is then that truth falls in the street (Isa 59:14), and fails (Isa 59:14). By way of contrast, the early church was opposed and persecuted, but it was not overcome. When they were opposed by the Jewish leaders, believers were *"multiplied,"* and great numbers were added to the church (Acts 4:4; 6:1,7; 7:17; 9:31; 12:24). When they were scattered, they *"went everywhere preaching the Word"* (Acts 8:6). As the years passed, the church was overrun with error and tradition, and the Lord was subjected to disgrace and shame. This continues until now.

But the church will not ultimately fail! It is going to triumph, and truth will prevail. The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord (Isa 11:9; Hab 2:14). The time will come when the saints will judge the world, and will be seen clearly as the children of the Lord.

THE PROPHECY TO ASHER

²⁰ *Out of Asher his bread shall be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties."*

HIS BREAD SHALL BE FAT

"Out of Asher his bread shall be fat . . ." Other versions read, *"shall be rich,"* ^{NASB} *"grows fine foods,"* ^{CEB} *"will dine on rich foods,"* ^{NLT} *"plentiful his bread,"* ^{ABP} *"eat food fancy,"* ^{CEV} *"grow much good food,"* ^{ERV} *"food will be delicious,"* ^{ISV} *"will become famous for rich foods, candies and sweet,"* ^{MESSAGE} and *"food [supply] shall be rich and fat."* ^{AMPLIFIED}

The land of Asher would be so rich, the people would not have to depend on others for their food. Historians confirm the richness of the land, and how it abounded with choice and superior fruit.

The word *"fat"* means "rich and plenteous." ^{STRONG'S} When Jacob and his

HISTORICAL COMMENTARY ON ASHER'S TERRITORY

" . . . REACHING FROM GREAT ZIDON TO CARMEL OF THE SEA, A SPACE OF TWENTY MILES IN LENGTH; AND IN BREADTH, FROM THE GREAT SEA TO ASOR, AND EVEN TO NAASON, A SPACE OF NINE MILES; THE LAND OF THIS TRIBE IS VERY FAT, HE SAYS, AND EXCEEDING FRUITFUL IN WINE AND OIL, ESPECIALLY IN THE BEST WHEAT: AND IN THIS TRIBE, AS THE SAME WRITER OBSERVES, AMONG OTHER VERY FRUITFUL PLACES WAS THE VALLEY OF ASHER, CALLED THE FAT VALLEY, WHICH BEGAN FIVE MILES FROM PTOLEMAIS, AND REACHED TO THE SEA OF GALILEE, AND CONTAINED MORE THAN TEN MILES IN LENGTH; THE SOIL OF WHICH WAS EXCEEDING FAT AND FRUITFUL, AND PRODUCED THE MOST DELICATE WINE AND WHEAT, AND MIGHT BE TRULY CALLED THE FAT VALLEY."

ANDRICHOMIUS: THEATRUM TERRAE SANCTAE, P. 1

household were assigned to the land of Goshen, Pharaoh ordered Joseph to tell them, *"I will give you the good of the land of Egypt, and ye shall eat the fat of the land"* (Gen 45:18). It implies unusual nourishment, pleasing taste, and a superabundance.

The same word is used in the expression *"fat and plenteous,"* found in Isaiah 30:23. Ezekiel spoke of God causing His people to lie down in a *"fat pasture"* (Ezek 34:14). **Thus the word depicts both quality and quantity.**

HE SHALL YIELD ROYAL DAINTIES

" . . . and he shall yield royal dainties." Other versions read, *"delicacies fit for a king,"* ^{NIV} *"food fit for kings."* ^{NLT}

This speaks of unusual variety, richness, and nourishment. The table spread by Solomon serves as an excellent example of *"royal dainties."* This was the provision of a single day – all of the time: *"And Solomon's provision for one day was thirty measures of fine flour, and threescore measures of meal, ten fat oxen, and twenty oxen out of the pastures, and an hundred sheep, beside harts, and*

roebacks, and fallowdeer, and fatted fowl" (1 Kgs 4:22-23). When the Queen of Sheba was exposed to his table, it is written, *"And when the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon's wisdom, and the house that he had built, and the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cupbearers, and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the LORD; there was no more spirit in her"* (1 Kgs 10:5).

That is something of what is involved in *"royal dainties"* – vast variety, excellence, and abundance – all served daily!

A TYPE

When it comes to the things of the Lord, the saints are to develop palates for rich food. As it is written, *"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). And again, *"My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips:"* (Psa 63:5). Again Isaiah reasoned, *"Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight*

Many saints throughout the earth are deprived of this kind of spiritual nourishment. Baby food and meager portions are so common in the churches that people have grown accustomed to it.

itself in fatness" (Isa 55:2).

Many saints throughout the earth are deprived of this kind of spiritual nourishment. Baby food and meager portions are so common in the churches that people have grown accustomed to it. They offer all manner of explanations for the paltry table being set before the people of God. Some tell us they are trying to reach the lost. Others would have us believe that the new creation cannot digest very much, and prefers simplistic spiritual food and very small portions.

However, this is wrong thinking. Spiritual life cannot be maintained or brought to its intended maturity without being brought to a point where *"strong meat"* can be ingested (Heb 5:12-14). In fact, that is the particular point that is made in the fifth and six chapter of Hebrews. **A failure to meet this**

objective will cause a falling away – possibly one from which recovery will not be possible (Heb 5:12-6:6). If this is true, then those preachers and teachers that continue to lisp to the people in infantile talk are actually setting them up for a fall. In such a case, "going to church" becomes dangerous, throwing the soul into jeopardy. If that seems a bit too strong, people do well to spend some time exposing their hearts and minds to what the Spirit has to say on the subject.

At some point in human history, there will be a universal outcry against the transgression of starving the people of God – depriving them of spiritual nourishment. God Himself prophesies of such a time, *"And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding"* (Jer 3:15). May God hasten the day when this taker place!

THE PROPHECY TO NAPHTALI

²¹ *Naphtali is a hind let loose: he giveth goodly words."*

A HIND LET LOOSE

"Naphtali is a hind let loose . . ." Other versions read, *"a deer let loose,"* NKJV *"a doe let loose,"* NASB *"a doe set free,"* NIV *"a wild doe that gives birth to beautiful fawns"* CEB *"a spreading stem"* SEPTUAGINT *"a free running doe,"* NET *"a swift hind,"* NJB *"a hind sent away,"* YLT *"a trunk springing up,"* ABP *"a spreading stem,"* Brenton *"a wild deer."* CEV and *"a hind set loose."* AMPLIFIED

Once again, the translators

confirm the weakness of arriving at the meaning of Scripture etymologically. Several translators, unaware they are dealing with Scripture, and using the same available "original language" resources, arrive at radically different conclusions. Some see Asher as a *"hind let loose,"* others as a *"wild doe,"* others as a *"swift hind,"* others as a *"trunk springing up,"* and still others as a *"spreading stem."*

Keep in mind, these are prophetic sayings, not casual observations. If prophecy, they are inspired by God. Ought not care be taken in handling

them? Any individual or group of individuals who translate Scripture should place faith and spiritual understanding above linguistic and etymological expertise.

It appears to me that fleetness of foot is contrasted with fierceness in combat. That is, Naphtali would not be noted for ruggedness, but shrewdness that exhibited wisdom and cunning more than brute strength and ferocity.

The blessing pronounced upon Naphtali by Moses seemed to accent this kind of nature: *"And of Naphtali he*

said, O Naphtali, satisfied with favor, and full with the blessing of the LORD: possess thou the west and the south" (Deut 33:23).

GOOD WORDS

" . . . he giveth goodly words." Other versions read, "uses beautiful words," NKJV "gives beautiful words," NASB "bears beautiful fawns or utters beautiful words," NIV "bears lovely fawns," NRSV "bears comely fawns," RSV "giving fair young ones," BBE "bestowing beauty on its fruit," SEPTUAGINT "speaks

delightful words," NET "giving beautiful young ones," YLT "producing lovely fawns," LIVING "bestowing beauty on its fruit," BRENTON "his words are beautiful," ERV "produces eloquent literature," ISV "give forth a good word," JUB "giving one beautiful sayings." LITV

Again, the translators use their words to paint radically different pictures: "giving goodly words," bears beautiful fawns or utters beautiful words," "Bears comely fawns," "bestowing beauty on its fruit," "giving

fair young ones," "produces eloquent literature," "give forth a good word," and "beautiful sayings."

Although I will not be contentious about it, I choose to see this as an emphasis on comforting and conciliatory words, perhaps even poetic and eloquent words – like the words Barak (who was from the tribe of Naphtali, Judges 4:6), who sang together with Deborah when staggering inimical forces were defeated by the army he led (Judges 5:1-31).

THE PROPHECY TO JOSEPH

" ²² Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall: ²³ The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him: ²⁴ 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:) ²⁵ Even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb: ²⁶ 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."

The blessing pronounced upon Joseph reflects Divine compensation for the grief he endured when he was sent by God down to Egypt. Even though, after he was there for thirteen years, Pharaoh "made him lord of his house, and ruler of all his substance: To bind his princes at his pleasure; and teach his senators wisdom" (Psa 105:21-22), those first thirteen years were attended by considerable grief and discomfort. Yet, Joseph maintained an excellent spirit, and faithfully did good. It is written that "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love,



which ye have showed toward His name" (Heb 6:10). This is certainly confirmed in Joseph.

Those who are in Christ must learn to labor in the expectation of being honored by the Lord they serve. It is also written of faithful stewards, "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: **and then shall**

every man have praise of God" (1 Cor 4:5). Joseph will receive a foretaste of this in the words of his father, Jacob the patriarch.

A FRUITFUL BOUGH

"Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall . . ."

Early in Joseph's life, while he was still at home, and during his first thirteen years in Egypt, it certainly did not appear as though he would be noted for fruitfulness, or productivity: prolific, reproducing, or abounding. The increase that he brought in Potiphar's house belonged to Potiphar, not himself. His improvement of prison life was not his own, but belonged to the prison keeper. Even his tenure as the head over Egypt was not his own, but belonged to Pharaoh.

Now, however, Jacob addresses Joseph and speaks of what he himself would become. At the time of this prophecy he had only two sons in the flesh. Jacob, however, will now address Joseph in view of the covenant made with Abraham, Isaac, and himself.

A Lesson to Be Learned

In our assessment of the people of God, it is important that we do not focus the attention upon what can be seen. It is comely that we speak of them in light of what they are in Christ

Jesus, and the inheritance they are scheduled to enjoy. It is to be understood that their outward lives must not be in conflict with these higher assessments.

A Fruitful Bough

"Joseph is a fruitful bough . . ."
Other versions read, *"fruitful vine,"* ^{NIV} *"a young ox,"* ^{BBE} *"a young bull,"* ^{CEB} *"a growing son,"* ^{DOUAY} *"a fruitful tree,"* ^{GWN} *"a son increased,"* ^{SEPTUAGINT} *"a wild colt,"* ^{NAB} *"the foal of a wild donkey,"* ^{NLT} *"a wild ass,"* ^{TNK} *"a fruitful son,"* ^{YLT} *"a son increasing, zealous,"* ^{ABP} *"a wild donkey,"* ^{ERV} and *"descended from a fruitful vine."* ^{ISV}

Here we once again have the translation-dilemma. This is a prophecy – something inspired by God. Most versions depict Joseph as a *"fruitful bough,"* or *"vine."* Then, there are the others, which have absolutely no association with any kind of growing and flourishing plant.

- ➔ "A young ox."
- ➔ "A young bull."
- ➔ "A growing son."
- ➔ "A son increased."
- ➔ "A wild colt."
- ➔ "The foal of a wild donkey."
- ➔ "A wild ass."
- ➔ "A fruitful son."
- ➔ "A son increasing, zealous."
- ➔ "Descended from a fruitful vine."

The formula that produced these contradicting purported translations is as follows:

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> "For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness." (1 Cor 3:19) </div>	FLESH
	+ MAN'S WISDOM
	+ IGNORANCE OF GOD'S PURPOSE
	= MAN'S VERSION

The three-fold description of this figure confirms it is a growing and productive plant. It was *"a fruitful bough,"* yielding an abundance of fruit. It was positioned *"by a well"* from which it derived nourishment. It's branches grew and ran *"over the wall"* that fenced in the vineyard.

This depicted the massive expansion of Joseph's offspring through Ephraim and Manasseh. They would occupy the largest portion of the promised land. (SEE CHART ON PREVIOUS PAGE).

THE ARCHERS HAVE SORELY GRIEVED HIM

" . . . The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him . . ." Other versions read, *"bitterly grieved him,"* ^{NKJV} *"bitterly attacked him, And shot at him and harassed him"* ^{NASB} *"With bitterness archers attacked him; they shot at him with hostility"* ^{NIV} *"fiercely attacked him; they shot at him and pressed him hard,"* ^{NRSV} *"Skilled archers have bitterly attacked and sorely worried him; they have shot at him and persecuted him."* ^{AMPLIFIED}

According to the record, no one actually attacked Joseph militantly – but with God it was no different than if they did. It would be true that the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, his progeny, would be opposed by those who were occupying the land given to them (Judges 17:16-18; Judges 12:4-6).

bow remained firm," ^{NASB} *"his bow remained steady,"* ^{NIV} *"his bow remained taunt,"* ^{NRSV} *"their bows were broken by a strong one,"* ^{BBE} *"his bow remained unmoved"* ^{ESV} *"his bow stayed steady"* ^{GWN} *"But their bow and arrows were mightily consumed"* ^{SEPTUAGINT} and *"But his bow remained strong and steady and rested in the Strength that does not fail him."* ^{AMPLIFIED}

The idea here is that Joseph was not weakened by the opposition he faced. Rather, when the battle was over, so to speak, he was standing, his bow was taunt, and he had not been moved.

THE ARMS OF HIS HAND WERE MADE STRONG

" . . . and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob . . ."

Here Joseph's strength is traced to *"the mighty God of Jacob."* That, and that alone, is what enabled him to survive being thrown into a pit. It rendered him capable of surviving all of

Some have endured great sorrows, that normal people are not able to bear, and yet the saints of God survived so remarkably, that if they did not testify of their trouble, we would never have known they passed through it.

However, I do not believe that is the focus of Jacob's words. He speaks of the aggression in the past tense: *"grieved him . . . shot at him . . . hated him."*

Jacob is doubtless referring to Joseph's own brothers, present at this time, who hated him, mocked him, plotted to kill him, and finally sold him. What they did was equated to an aggressive and hostile physical attack.

HIS BOW ABODE IN STRENGTH

" . . . But his bow abode in strength . . ." Other versions read, *"his*

the things associated with being sold to merchant-men, being transported by them to Egypt, and being sold to Potiphar. Divine strength is how he survived the encounter with Potiphar's wife. It is how he survived thirteen years in prison. The God of Jacob sustained Him, and he remained alert, strong, and able, even when he was in prison.

A Lesson to Be Learned

It is my persuasion that enough is not made these days of survival – spiritual survival in the Lord. Some have passed through trying waters where

their faith was sorely trusted. Others passing through the same waters fainted, while they survived. Some have endured great sorrows, that normal people are not able to bear, and yet the saints of God survived so remarkably, that if they did not testify of their trouble, we would never have known they passed through it. God is deserving of more glory for keeping His people strong in adversity and trial.

FROM THENCE IS THE SHEPHERD

" . . . (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel . . ." Other versions read, "From there is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel," ^{NASB} "because of the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel," ^{NIV} and "for the arms of his hands were made strong and active by the hands of the Mighty God of Jacob, by the name of the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel." ^{AMPLIFIED}

The idea here is that from God Joseph became the one through whom

birth of Jesus, you would think this word was about the Savior of the world. How fitting the description is of Jesus: *"the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel"* – **the means of spiritual sustenance and solidity**. Thus God continues to teach men that his work depends upon one man, not a group of men: first Adam, then Noah, then Abraham, then Isaac, then Jacob – and ultimately, Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

THE GOD OF THY FATHER SHALL HELP THEE

" . . . Even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee . . ." It is the same God, acting in the same manner, who sustained Jacob, and would help Joseph. Notice, this is not a mere desire, but a prophecy: *"SHALL help thee"* – assisting, upholding, and sustaining.

THE ALMIGHTY SHALL BLESS THEE

" . . . and by the Almighty, who

translates into a phenomenal increase in livestock and cattle, and the multiplication of children (Deut 28:4).

BLESSINGS PREVAILING THE PROGENITORS

" . . . *The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills . . .*" Other versions read, *"The blessings of your father Have surpassed the blessings of my ancestors Up to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills,"* ^{NASB} and *"The blessings of your father [on you] are greater than the blessings of my forefathers [Abraham and Isaac on me] and are as lasting as the bounties of the eternal hills."* ^{AMPLIFIED}

From the experiential point of view, Jacob experienced more blessings than Abraham and Isaac. **In other words, the realization of the promise of God in human experience grew and multiplied as time progressed.**

From the experiential point of view, Jacob experienced more blessings than Abraham and Isaac. In other words, the realization of the promise of God in human experience grew and multiplied as time progressed. This is the manner of the Kingdom of God.

This is the manner of the Kingdom of God. The lesser is at the beginning, and the greater is at the end – like a small stone that becomes a mountain filling the whole earth (Dan 2:34-35).

HE WAS SEPARATE FROM HIS BRETHREN

" . . . *they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren.*" Another version reads, *"May they be on the head of Joseph, And on the crown of the head of the one distinguished among his brothers."* ^{NASB}

Joseph was distinguished from his brothers by Jacob, being his favorite son. But above this, although he was despised by his brothers, he was also distinguished from them by the God of heaven. **He** was chosen to be ruler of Egypt, not them. **He** was selected to sustain Jacob's household, not them.

Now, before them all, Jacob makes this distinction clear, doing so by the inspiration of the Almighty. He does not consider the reaction of the brothers, but focuses solely on the working of the Lord.

the people of Israel were sustained. Concerning Egypt, he became the source of wisdom and sustenance. As it is written, *"The king sent and loosed him; even the ruler of the people, and let him go free. He made him lord of his house, and ruler of all his substance: To bind his princes at his pleasure; and teach his senators wisdom"* (Psa 105:21-22).

But , especially to Israel, he was endued by God with the ability to be used to keep the people alive during a famine, and to enable them to multiply during his rule (Gen 47:27; 50:20).

A Type of Christ

Especially in this matter, Joseph was a type of Christ. In fact, if you did not know the lineage leading to the

shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb . . ."

A Plentitude of Blessing

" . . . *shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above.*" Blessings that come down from heaven, the source of all true benefit. In the earth, that translates into rain and refreshing showers (Gen 27:28; Deut 11:11-12).

Particular Blessings

" . . . *blessings of the deep that lieth under*" – in the earth, that is brooks, rivers, and springs (Deut 8:7).

" . . . *blessings of the breasts, and of the womb . . .*" In the earth this

THE PROPHECY TO BENJAMIN

"²⁷ Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf: in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil."

RAVIN AS A WOLF

"Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf . . ."
Other versions read, *"ravenous wolf,"* NKJV *"a wolf, searching for meat,"* BBE *"a wolf who hunts,"* CEB and *"as a wolf will he tear to pieces."* DARBY

Benjamin would be noted for having an aggressive militant stance. This was made known in Ehud (Judges 3:15-30) the Judge, and king Saul (1 Sam 11:6-15, 47-48) – both of whom were from their tribe of Benjamin.

In one battle, the tribe of Benjamin (26,000 men) went up against "the

men of Israel (400,000), and soundly defeated them – like a ravenous wolf. Searching out and defecating its prey (Judges 20:15-25).

This prophecy was also fulfilled in a great spiritual warrior who cast down imaginations in the establish the truth of Christ, uniquely revealed to him – the apostle Paul, who was also of the tribe of Benjamin (Phil 3:5; 1 Cor 15:10).

HE SHALL DEVOUR AND DIVIDE THE PREY

" . . . in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil."

Depicted as a conquering wolf that divided, or doled out his victim to

its hungering offspring, Benjamin was a type of the conquering Christ, of whom it is written, *"Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong; because He hath poured out his soul unto death: and He was numbered with the transgressors; and He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors"* (Isa 53:12). Yes, the spoils of Christ's triumph are being divided to the strong.

We must never forget that the numberless benefits we receive in Christ are really the spoils of Christ's triumph. He has divided them with those who are strong in the Lord, and have not withdrawn in the good fight of faith.

ACCORDING TO HIS BLESSING, HE BLESSED THEM

"²⁸ All these are the twelve tribes of Israel: and this is it that their father spake unto them, and blessed them; every one according to his blessing he blessed them."

THESE ARE THE TWELVE TRIBES OF ISRAEL

"All these are the twelve tribes of Israel . . ."

Here is a nation whose existence is absolutely miraculous. It was commenced by a man who was impotent and a woman who was

barren. The second generation began with a son whose wife was barren. The third generation was initiated by a son whose wife was also barren. After over two-hundred and fifteen years, there were only seventy people in this nation (Gen 46:27). Now, blessings were pronounced upon them that would result in them expanding into a nation of millions of people, surviving a global famine, and eventually being delivered from a four-hundred year period of bondage and extensive oppression.

THEIR FATHER SPAKE TO THEM

" . . . and this is it that their father spake unto them, and blessed them; every one according to his blessing he blessed them."

Now the heads of all of the tribes have been blessed with prophetic words delivered by their father under the inspiration of the Almighty. Their role in Divine history has been made known. These words will further solidify the fact of the Abrahamic covenant in the minds of his sons, who will also pass this information on to future generations.

JACOB CHARGES THEM CONCERNING HIS BURIAL

"²⁹ And he charged them, and said unto them, I am to be gathered unto my people: bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, ³⁰ In the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan,

which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite for a possession of a buryingplace. ³¹ There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah. ³² The purchase of the field and of the cave that is therein

was from the children of Heth."

HE CHARGED THEM

"And he charged them . . ." Other versions read, *"he gave them these instructions,"* NIV *"gave orders to them,"* BBE *"ordered them,"* CEB *"commanded*

them," ^{CSB} and "he told them." ^{LIVING}

The word translated "*charged*" is a strong word meaning, "TO COMMAND, CHARGE, GIVE ORDERS, LAY CHARGE, GIVE CHARGE TO, ORDER . . . APPOINT." ^{STRONG'S} This was not a suggestion, or a mere expression of Jacob's desire. He will speak as one of the fathers (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob), and with the covenant made with Abraham in mind. **The lives of these patriarchs were shaped by God's covenant with Abraham, which included Him giving them a specific land.**

I AM GATHERED UNTO MY PEOPLE

" . . . and said unto them, *I am to be gathered unto my people . . .*" Other versions read, "*I am about to be gathered,*" ^{NASB} "*I am soon to join,*" ^{CEB} "*I am now going to be gathered,*" ^{DOUAY} "*I am about to join,*" ^{GWN} "*I am added,*" ^{SEPTUAGINT} "*I am about to go,*" ^{NET} "*Soon I will die and join,*" ^{NLT} "*I am being gathered,*" ^{YLT} "*Soon I will die.*" ^{LIVING}

This is a unique Scriptural reference to dying: "*gathered unto my people.*" This same statement was made concerning **Abraham** (Gen 25:8), **Ishmael** (Gen 25:17), **Isaac** (Gen 35:29), **Jacob** (Gen 49:33), **Moses** (Num 27:13; 31:2; 32:50), and **Aaron** (Num 27:13; 32:50).

The word "*gathered*" has the following lexical meaning: "TO GATHER, RECEIVE, REMOVE, GATHER IN . . . COLLECT . . . TO GATHER AN INDIVIDUAL INTO COMPANY OF OTHERS . . . TO GATHER AND TAKE AWAY, REMOVE, WITHDRAW . . . TO BE BROUGHT IN OR INTO (ASSOCIATION WITH OTHERS . . . TO GATHER (HARVEST))." ^{STRONG'S}

The "*gathering*" is not something Jacob himself will do, but will be accomplished by someone else. The Lord will do this through the ministry of angels, who are "the reapers" (Matt 13:39), not only in the end of the world, but at the point an individual dies. We have an example of this in the death of a man named "*Lazarus,*" a certain beggar full of sores. Jesus said of him, "*And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried*" (Luke 16:22). The phrase, "*was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom,*" equates

to "*was gathered unto his people.*"

Those who have accepted the soul-sleeping heresy imagine that this means Jacob joined his father's in the grave. However, if that was the case, he would also have been gathered to all the heathen as well. Further, the gathering was not the carrying of his body to the tomb. His body is what was left after he was "*gathered unto his people.*"

Jesus made a particular point of this when confronting the Sadducees, who did not believe there were angels, spirits, or the resurrection of the dead (Matt 22:23; Acts 23:8). After being asked a hypothetical question concerning the resurrection, He said to them, "*But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living*" (Matt 22:31-32). In

Although some contemporary "Christians" have a difficult time understanding this, Jacob, living in spiritually primitive times, appeared to have a fairly good grasp of the situation. He was about to instruct his sons on what to do with his body. But he knew very that he himself would soon be joined to his own people, who had left the world long ago.

BURY ME WITH MY FATHERS

" . . . bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, In the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite for a possession of a buryingplace . . ."

Does it make any difference what is done with the bodies of those who die? Some scoff at the very idea that it does, for they imagine that after the spirit has left the body, what we do with it is of no consequence.

It is important to note the kind of things the patriarchs remembered, and what was important to them. It differs significantly from the values of the contemporary professing Christian. Their milestones of memory were things relating to the interposition of the Living God in their lives.

saying this, Jesus was telling them that there was a sense in which Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were NOT dead, for God is said to be their God, even though they have died – and that cannot be said of people who are unconscious. We have examples of four people who left this world, yet were conscious, having knowledge of their surroundings, and could speak: Abraham (Lk 16:23-30), Moses (Lk 9:31-31), Elijah (Lk 9:31-32), and Lazarus (Lk 16:20,23-25). They were all "*gathered unto their people.*"

There was a particular place that had been purchased for the burial of the covenanted people. It was a "*cave . . in the field of Ephron the Hittite,*" in the larger "*field of Machpelah,*" which was "*in Mamre,*" which was "*in the land of Canaan.*" It was property that Abraham "*bought*" to be "*a burying place.*" **Even though that purchase took place about 175 years before this, yet Jacob expected his sons to know that precise location.** The record of that purchase is found in Genesis 23:8-18.

It is important to note the kind of things the patriarchs remembered, and what was important to them. It differs significantly from the values of the contemporary professing Christian. Their milestones of memory were things relating to the interposition of the Living God in their lives.

THERE THEY BURIED

“ . . . There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah. The purchase of the field

and of the cave that is therein was from the children of Heth.”

There was a certain godly tradition that had been in place concerning the burial those related to Abraham by God’s covenant. Here Jacob names them. Abraham (Gen 23:18), Sarah (Gen 23:19-20), Isaac (Gen 25:9-10), Rebekah (Gen 49:30-31), and his own wife Leah (there is no record of Leah’s burial, only this report by Jacob). Rachel was buried near Bethlehem because she had died en route to the

place in which they would reside in Canaan (Gen 35:19; 48:7).

How diligent *“the fathers”* were in maintaining a lively awareness of the promises of God to Abraham, and then confirmed to them by God. **Even though those in Christ Jesus have many pivotal spiritual epoch’s to remember–i.e., the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, and what was accomplished by them – many have elected make other temporal recollections their focus.** This is a sad circumstance, indeed.

JACOB YIELDED UP THE GHOST

“³³ And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people.”

MADE AN END OF COMMANDING HIS SONS

“And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons . . .” Other versions read, *“finished commanding,”* NKJV *“finished charging,”* NASB *“finished giving instructions,”* NIV and *“giving orders to his sons.”* CEB

I again draw your attention to the culture that was being developed by the patriarchs. There was a certain respect for everything relating to ones association with God – particularly a covenantal association. Those who had an understanding of that covenant could command their children, and, in most cases, they listened, giving heed to their father. To this point, the covenantal seed of the fathers included Isaac, Jacob, and the twelve sons of Jacob. There is no record of them refusing to heed the word of their fathers, repudiating them, or scoffing at them. **This is the framework within which the purpose of God was being developed.** The same may be said of John the Baptist, and of the Lord Jesus as He was growing up under the care of Mary and Joseph.

Jacob’s sons were middle-aged

men at this time, and yet they registered no objection to his prophecies or commandments concerning his burial.

HE GATHERED UP HIS FEET INTO THE BED

“ . . . he gathered up his feet into the bed . . .” Other versions read, *“drew his feet up into the bed,”* NKJV *“stretching himself on his bed,”* BBE *“put his feet up on the bed,”* CEB *“plucked up his feet into the bed”* GENEVA *“pulled his feet into his bed”* GWN and *“lay back in the bed.”* LIVING

When Joseph came, Jacob had raised himself up, probably being in a seated position on the bed. Having said what was appointed, he assumed a recumbent position on the bed.

Now, mind you, even though death is the *“last enemy”* (1 Cor 15:26), and is often attended by many distractions and discomfort, yet Jacob has delivered his last words with clarity of mind and strength – all with death knocking at the door.

In a display of some degree of strength, Jacob gathers his feet into the bed, and assumes a dying posture, since he has finished what required a prophetic posture. Knowing the time has come, he calmly and serenely submits to the last thing anyone does in the body.

HE YIELDED UP THE GHOST

“ . . . and yielded up the ghost...” Other versions read, *“breathed his last,”* NKJV *“gave up his spirit,”* BBE *“took his last breath”* CEB *“and died,”* CSB *“and expired,”* DARBY and *“he failed.”* ABP

To me, there is a depiction here of the a resignation to the appointment of death that is comely and to be coveted. The words *“yielded up the ghost”* are translated from a single word – and it is rather complex. Lexically it is defined as follows: **“TO EXPIRE, DIE, PERISH, GIVE UP THE GHOST, YIELD UP THE GHOST, BE DEAD, BE READY TO DIE . . . TO BE ABOUT TO DIE . . . TO BREATHE OUT, I.E. (BY IMPLICATION) EXPIRE.”** STRONG’S

It seems to me that expressions like *“breathed his last,”* *“took his last breath,”* and *“expired”* are too impersonal. The real identity of the individual is not accented. This is a purely physiological view of death, as though the death of one created in the image of God is no different than that of a beast.

I am persuaded that death must be viewed differently than simply the termination of biological life. Paul referred to it as *“departing”* from the body (Phil 1:23), and being *“absent from the body”* (2 Cor 5:8). Peter referred to it as *“putting off this my tabernacle”* (2 Pet 1:14).

I see these words as wholly

proper: *"yielded up the ghost."* That is, he yielded to the appointment of the Almighty, doing so in peace and confidence.

HE WAS GATHERED TO HIS PEOPLE

" . . . and was gathered unto his people." Other versions read, *"went the way of his people,"* ^{BBE} *"joined his people,"* ^{CEB} *"went to his people"* ^{NET}

"joined his ancestors in death" ^{NLT} *"was added to his people,"* ^{ABP} *"was gathered to his ancestors,"* ^{ISV} and *"was gathered to his [departed] people."* ^{AMPLIFIED}

Once again, the word *"gathered"* means, "TO GATHER, RECEIVE, REMOVE, GATHER IN . . . COLLECT . . . TO GATHER (AN INDIVIDUAL INTO COMPANY OF OTHERS) . . . TO ASSEMBLE, BE GATHERED . . . TO BE BROUGHT IN OR INTO (ASSOCIATION WITH OTHERS)." ^{STRONG'S}

This is something accomplished by someone other than the one who died. Jacob himself was gathered to *"his people"* – those who had lived by faith before him. **From his standpoint, he was taken to His people. From the standpoint of his people, Jacob was brought to them.** What a marvelous reunion that must have been – and it is still going on, for "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 5/16./14. We will continue our series of lessons in the book of Genesis. The eighty-first lesson will cover verses 1 thru 15 of Chapter 50: "JOSEPH BURIES JACOB." Immediately following Jacob's departure from his body, Joseph fell on his father's face, wept, and kissed him. The last of the three "father's had left this world. Joseph commanded that Jacob's body be embalmed, and he was. According to their custom, they mourned the passing of Jacob for forty days. The Egyptians mourned for seventy days. After the days of mourning had passed, Joseph told Pharaoh of Jacob's request to be buried in Canaan, and asked for permission to do so. Pharaoh consented, and Joseph went up to bury his father. All the servants of Pharaoh went with him, the elders of his house, all the elders of Egypt, all the house of Joseph, his brothers, and his father's house. Only their little ones and their flocks and herds remained in Goshen. A great company of chariots and horsemen went with him as well. After arriving at the place of burial, they mourned for seven more days. The Canaanites were so impressed with the mourning that they called the name of the place "Abelmizraim." Joseph and company then returned to Egypt. Joseph's brothers reasoned among themselves that now, since Jacob was dead, Joseph would requite them for all the evil they did to him. 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.

CONCLUSION

NAME	MEANING	SIN	RANK	COUNT MOSES	COUNT MOSES	COUNT DAVID
REUBEN	Behold, a son! The vision of the son.	X	Lost Birthright	43,700		
SIMEON	Hearing; that hears and obeys	X	Divided/Scattered	22,000		
LEVI	Wreathed, associated with him	X	Divided/Scattered	0		
JUDAH	Praised, the praise of the Lord		Given priority	76,500		
ZEBULUN	Habitation, dwelling			60,500		
ISSACHAR	Hired, reward, recompense			64,300		
DAN	Judge, he that judges			64,400		
GAD	Fortune, a band, a troop			40,500		
ASHER	Happiness			53,400		
NAPHTALI	My Wrestling, that struggles or fights			45,400		
JOSEPH– Seed in Ephraim/Manasseh	Remover or Increaser, addition		Given Birthright	0		
BENJAMIN	Son of my right hand			45,600		
EPHRAIM	Double Fruitfulness, increasing		Adopted as Son	32,500		
MANASSEH	Who makes to forget, forgetfulness		Adopted as Son	52,700		
TOTALS				601,500		
Count by Moses	At Sinai – Exodus 38:26				603,500	
Count by David	800,000 soldiers in Israel, and 500,000 in Judah (2 Sam 24:9)					1,300,000

THE JUDGES OF ISRAEL

1. **Othneil**, 40 years (Judges 3:9-11), **Judah**, Chushanrishathaim defeated
2. **Ehud**, 80 years (Judges 3:15-30), **Benjamin**, Moab subdued
3. **Shamgar**, (?), (Judges 3:31), **Naphtali**, slew 600 Philistines with an ox goad
4. **Deborah**, 40 years, Judges 4:1-5:31, **Ephraim**, Defeated Canaanite king
5. **Gideon**, 40 years (Judges 6:11-8:35), **Manasseh**, Midianites defeated
6. **Abimelech**, ? (Judges 9:1-54), **Manasseh**
7. **Tola**, 23 years, (Judges 10:1-2), **Issachar**, Defended Israel
8. **Jair**, 22 years, (Judges 10:3-4), **Gileadite** (possibly associated with Manasseh). He and his sons had thirty cities.
9. **Jephthah**, 6 years, (Judges 12:1-7), **Manasseh**. Fought against Ammon, and they were delivered into his hand.
10. **Ibzan**, 7 years, (Judges 12:8-10), **Zebulun**. Had 30 sons and 30 daughter. No record of exploits.
11. **Elon**, 10 years, (Judges 12:11-12), **Zebulun**. No record of exploits.
12. **Abdon**, 8 years, (Judges 12:13-15), **Ephraim**. Had forty sons and thirty nephews.
13. **Samson**, 20 years, (Judges 16:1-31), **Dan**. Slew man Philistines – more in his death than in his life.
14. **Eli**, 40 years, (Judges 1 Sam 4:1-22), **Judah**. Raised Samuel from the time of his weaning.
15. **Samuel**, Judged Israel all the days of his life, **Ephraim**, (1 Sam 7:15-17). Organized the tabernacle service (1 Chron 9:22). Through his prayers the Philistines were subdued (1 Sam 7:7-14).

TRAITS OF 12 TRIBES

NAME	MEANING
REUBEN	Behold, a SON! The vision of the son.
SIMEON	Hearing; that hears and obeys
LEVI	Wreathed, associated with him
JUDAH	Praised , the praise of the Lord
ZEBULUN	Habitation , dwelling
ISSACHAR	Hired, reward , recompense
DAN	Judge , he that judges
GAD	Fortune , a band, a troop
ASHER	Happiness
NAPHTALI	My Wrestling, fight s
JOSEPH	Remover or Increaser , addition
BENJAMIN	Son of my right hand
EPHRAIM	Double Fruitfulness, increasing
MANASSEH	Who makes to forget
A COMPOSITE PICTURE OF CHRIST	

THE BLESSING OF MOSES UPON THE TRIBES

1. "Let **REUBEN** live, and not die; and let not his men be few." (Deut 33:6)
2. "And this is the blessing of **JUDAH**: and he said, Hear, LORD, the voice of Judah, and bring him unto his people: let his hands be sufficient for him; and be thou an help to him from his enemies." (Deut 33:7)
3. "And of **LEVI** he said, Let thy Thummim and thy Urim be with thy holy one, whom thou didst prove at Massah, and with whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah; Who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children: for they have observed thy word, and kept thy covenant. They shall teach Jacob thy judgments, and Israel thy law: they shall put incense before thee, and whole burnt sacrifice upon thine altar. Bless, LORD, his substance, and accept the work of his hands: smite through the loins of them that rise against him, and of them that hate him, that they rise not again." (Deut 33:8-11)
4. "And of **BENJAMIN** he said, The beloved of the LORD shall dwell in safety by him; and the LORD shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between his shoulders." (Deut 33:12)
- 5-7. "And of **JOSEPH** he said, Blessed of the LORD be his land, for the precious things of heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that coucheth beneath, And for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, and for the precious things put forth by the moon, And for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills, And for the precious things of the earth and fulness thereof, and for the good will of him that dwelt in the bush: let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph, and upon the top of the head of him that was separated from his brethren. His glory is like the firstling of his bullock, and his horns are like the horns of unicorns: with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth: and they are the ten thousands of **EPHRAIM** , and they are the thousands of **MANASSEH**." (Deut 33:17)
- 8-9. "And of **ZEBULUN** he said, Rejoice, Zebulun, in thy going out; and, **ISSACHAR** , in thy tents. They shall call the people unto the mountain; there they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness: for they shall suck of the abundance of the seas, and of treasures hid in the sand." (Deut 33:18-19)
10. "And of **GAD** he said, Blessed be he that enlargeth Gad; he dwelleth as a lion, and teareth the arm with the crown of the head. And he provided the first part for himself, because there, in a portion of the lawgiver, was he seated; and he came with the heads of the people, he executed the justice of the LORD, and his judgments with Israel." (Deut 33:20-21)
11. "And of **DAN** he said, Dan is a lion's whelp: he shall leap from Bashan." (Deut 33:22)
12. "And of **NAPHTALI** he said, O Naphtali, satisfied with favor, and full with the blessing of the LORD: possess thou the west and the south." (Deut 33:23)
13. "And of **ASHER** he said, Let Asher be blessed with children; let him be acceptable to his brethren, and let him dip his foot in oil." (Deut 33:24)