

Genesis 49-50

May 8, 2011

49:1-27: As you read **verses 1 to 27 of chapter 49**, you need to realize that this section is poetry. It uses poetic language. **Verse 1** tells us that Jacob is predicting the future of his sons and their ancestors.

49:3-4: What do we know about Reuben from previous chapters?

- In **35:22** Reuben had sex with one of Jacob's concubines. In **37:21-22** Reuben tried to rescue Joseph when his brothers were planning to kill him. In **42:37** Reuben was willing to be responsible for Benjamin's safety when the disguised Joseph told them to bring their youngest brother to Egypt.

49:5-7: What do we know about Simeon and Levi from previous chapters?

- In **34:25-31** they slaughtered the men of Shechem to avenge their sister's rape. In **42:24**, Simeon was kept in prison while the other brothers returned to Canaan to bring Benjamin to Egypt. Levi's descendants became Israel's tribe of priests.

49:8-12: What do we know about Judah from previous chapters?

- In **chapter 38** Judah has sex with a prostitute who turns out to be his scorned daughter-in-law. Judah is the family through which Jesus would one day be born (**Matthew 1:3 & Luke 3:33**). In **Revelation 5:5** Jesus is called the "Lion of Judah".

49:13-21: In **verses 13 to 21** Jacob blesses Zebulun, Issachar (*IZZ-uh-car*), Dan, Gad, Asher, and Naphtali (*NAF-tuh-lie*). We hardly know anything about these men. We do know that even though they are not mentioned in **chapters 37 and 42** but they were a part of the ten brothers who threw Joseph in the pit, sold him as a slave, and then went to Egypt to get grain during the famine.

49:22-26: Jacob blesses Joseph, speaking of his strength and success.

49:27: What do we know about Benjamin from previous chapters?

- Benjamin was Jacob's youngest son. He and Joseph had the same mother (Rachel). Rachel died giving birth to Benjamin. After Joseph was supposedly dead, Benjamin seemed to be the favorite son of Jacob (**42:38**).

49:28: Look at **verse 28**. Jacob blessed his children with the *appropriate blessing* to each one. How do you treat your children the same and how do you treat them differently?

- You obviously should love your children the same. You may discipline them differently; children respond differently to various types of correction. Because it's your job to teach your children about choices and consequences, your children will be rewarded or disciplined each according to what he or she does. Realizing that you are the Lord's, therefore, all that you have is the Lord's; you should only leave an inheritance to children who are walking with the Lord. Otherwise, you are turning God's money/resources over to someone who doesn't belong to or follow Him. If Christ is your Lord, then you are not leaving them your money; you are stewarding *HIS* money upon your death.

49:29-33: What do you find to be interesting about Jacob's request in **verses 29 to 33**?

- Jacob wants to be buried in the Cave at Machpelah where Abraham and Isaac are buried with their wives. The surprise here is that **Leah** is buried there, not **Rachel**.

Why do you think that Leah was buried in Machpelah instead of Rachel?

- Over time, it would seem that Jacob, even though his greater attraction was toward Rachel, realized that Leah is the one he was to marry. Their father Laban had to deceive Jacob to get him married to Leah (29:16-28). Rachel is the one who stole and hid her father's idols (31:33-35). Leah was the mother of Judah through whose family Jesus would be born into the world.

Why do you think that so many individuals do a poor job of choosing whom to marry?

- Too often decisions are made on the basis of **infatuation or lust**. Most people think that love is a feeling and they *have* that feeling toward others when they want to be in love and when they get **sexually involved with someone of the opposite sex**. Many people think that their love can heal the brokenness or fix the emotional "**baggage**" of people who display **undesirable behaviors**. Some have self-esteem and security issues and fear never finding a better person so they settle for a "**fixer-upper**". Emotional/sexual "chemistry" matters, but as you mature, you come to realize that **character** matters more. You learn that "love" (feelings) is not enough; you must have shared values and direction.

50:1-14: Who can tell us what takes place in verses 1 to 14 of chapter 50?

- The people mourn the death of Jacob. Jacob's body is embalmed and later taken to be placed in the Cave at Machpelah. Just a note: embalming began in Egypt. The Hebrews almost never embalmed their dead.

50:15-21: What takes place in verses 15 to 21?

- After they return to Egypt, Joseph's brothers come to Joseph and tell him that Jacob instructed them to tell Joseph to be kind to his brothers after he was gone. Joseph told them not to be afraid of him.

50:17: Why do you think that Joseph wept in verse 17?

- We don't know for sure. Maybe he wept because it reminded him of the pain of rejection by his brothers, the years he lost with Jacob and Benjamin, and the **13 years** he spent in slavery and prison. Maybe he wept because he was grieved that his brothers mistrusted his character, thinking that he would avenge himself for their actions. Did he possibly want to avenge himself but knew that his commitment to God and his character would not permit it?

50:20: What do we learn from verse 20?

- Even when others mean evil against us, God uses it for good *if we trust Him*. See **Deuteronomy 23:5 & Romans 8:28-29**.

Can you think of any other Biblical examples of this truth?

- Those who hated Him crucified Jesus. God used His death to pay for our sins, and exalted Him to the highest place (**Philippians 2:3-11**). Satan gave the Apostle Paul a "thorn in the flesh". God used it to humble Paul and to make him spiritually strong.

What are some of the great lessons we learn from the life of Joseph?

- God has an individual plan for our lives. Joseph was going to be a ruler.
- Father's shouldn't show favoritism to any of their children.
- The story is not over until it's over.
- Sometimes God uses detours and delays to get us where He wants us to be.
- God can be with us, even where we are slaves or in jail.
- The Lord can be blessing our lives, even where we are slaves or in jail.
- God's presence and blessing in our lives does not mean that our circumstances are ideal or even desirable.

- It's our job to humble ourselves and be a servant; it's God's job to exalt us at the proper time (1 Peter 5:6).
- God can take care of His people, even in a worldwide famine.
- Giftedness and talent should be used to bless the lives of others. Joseph saved Egypt *and* Israel.
- If you're going to enjoy life, you have to forgive those who hurt you...even if they meant to hurt you.
- Even when others mean us evil, God can turn it to good.