



The Scepter Shall Not Depart From Judah

Genesis 48-49

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Overview: The final days of Jacob's life are an act of worship where he pronounces blessings on his sons and predicts the future for their posterity. He first encounters the sons of Joseph, whom he receives and blesses as though they were his own children. He pronounces a special blessing on Ephraim, the younger of Joseph's sons, which is consistent with previous examples of the younger taking precedence over the older. He then offers a prophetic word for each of his sons and their descendants, which is based partly on their past actions and provides insight into their character and habits. Of all the sons, Judah is singled out as the tribe through which the Messiah will come. This prophecy provides thrust to the narrative beyond Genesis as the Lord continues to work through human history to provide salvation and blessings forevermore.

01. God's adoptive blessings are a gift, not of merit; therefore, let us come humbly to Him and receive His mercy.

02. God's protective blessings are based on His character, not our circumstances; therefore, let us trust the Lord in difficult times.

03. God's temporal blessings can be forfeited for a time or missed altogether; therefore, let us live in such a way as to please the Lord.

04. God's eternal blessings cannot be exhausted in this lifetime; therefore, let us look forward to the kingdom that is still to come.

Go to the Land I Will Show You

1. What details of his life does Jacob share with Joseph in Genesis 48:1-7? What does he reflect upon in his final days? If you knew your time on earth was coming to a close, what personal memories or remembrances of God's faithfulness would you share with your loved ones?

2. What standing did Ephraim and Manasseh have in Jacob's family according to Genesis 48:8? How does this act of grace point to our standing in God's family because of the work of Christ? If we are adopted as God's children, is there anything we lack? See Romans 8:15-16; Galatians 4:1-7.

3. What does Jacob predict about the future of each of his sons in Genesis 49? In what way can it be said that Reuben got what he deserved? In what way can it be said that Judah did not get what he deserved? How does the prophecy about Simeon and Levi differ with regard to their eventual outcomes?

4. What is meant by the phrase, "the scepter shall not depart from Judah" (verse 10)? How does this prophecy turn our eyes to Jesus instead of Judah? What other prophecies of the coming Messiah are found in Genesis? How does the Old Testament as a whole point to Jesus?

5. How does the prophecy about Joseph in Genesis 49:22-26 help us to focus on the faithfulness of God in difficult times? What names of God are encouraging to you in this section?

For Further Reading: Edmund Clowney, *The Unfolding Mystery: Discovering Christ in the Old Testament* (P&R Publishing; first edition, 1988; second edition, 2013).

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