

Genesis 49 Jacob Blesses His Sons

Then Jacob called for his sons and said: "Gather around so I can tell you what will happen to you in days to come.

2 "Assemble and listen, sons of Jacob;
listen to your father Israel.

3 "Reuben, you are my firstborn,
my might, the first sign of my strength,
excelling in honor, excelling in power.

4 Turbulent as the waters, you will no longer excel,
for you went up onto your father's bed,
onto my couch and defiled it.

5 "Simeon and Levi are brothers—
their swords^{ab} are weapons of violence.

6 Let me not enter their council,
let me not join their assembly,
for they have killed men in their anger
and hamstrung oxen as they pleased.

7 Cursed be their anger, so fierce,
and their fury, so cruel!

I will scatter them in Jacob
and disperse them in Israel.

8 "Judah,^{ab} your brothers will praise you;
your hand will be on the neck of your enemies;
your father's sons will bow down to you.

9 You are a lion's cub, Judah;
you return from the prey, my son.
Like a lion he crouches and lies down,
like a lioness—who dares to rouse him?

10 The scepter will not depart from Judah,
 nor the ruler's staff from between his feet,^[a]
until he to whom it belongs^[a] shall come
 and the obedience of the nations shall be his.

11 He will tether his donkey to a vine,
 his colt to the choicest branch;
he will wash his garments in wine,
 his robes in the blood of grapes.

12 His eyes will be darker than wine,
 his teeth whiter than milk.^[a]

13 "Zebulun will live by the seashore
 and become a haven for ships;
his border will extend toward Sidon.

14 "Issachar is a rawboned^[a] donkey
 lying down among the sheep pens.^[a]

15 When he sees how good is his resting place
 and how pleasant is his land,
he will bend his shoulder to the burden
 and submit to forced labor.

16 "Dan^[a] will provide justice for his people
 as one of the tribes of Israel.

17 Dan will be a snake by the roadside,
 a viper along the path,
that bites the horse's heels
 so that its rider tumbles backward.

18 "I look for your deliverance, LORD.

19 "Gad^[a] will be attacked by a band of raiders,
 but he will attack them at their heels.

20 "Asher's food will be rich;
he will provide delicacies fit for a king.

21 "Naphtali is a doe set free
that bears beautiful fawns.[¶]

22 "Joseph is a fruitful vine,
a fruitful vine near a spring,
whose branches climb over a wall.[¶]

23 With bitterness archers attacked him;
they shot at him with hostility.

24 But his bow remained steady,
his strong arms stayed[¶] limber,
because of the hand of the Mighty One of Jacob,
because of the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel,
25 because of your father's God, who helps you,
because of the Almighty,^[m] who blesses you
with blessings of the skies above,
blessings of the deep springs below,
blessings of the breast and womb.

26 Your father's blessings are greater
than the blessings of the ancient mountains,
than[¶] the bounty of the age-old hills.

Let all these rest on the head of Joseph,
on the brow of the prince among^[a] his brothers.

27 "Benjamin is a ravenous wolf;
in the morning he devours the prey,
in the evening he divides the plunder."

28 All these are the twelve tribes of Israel, and this is what their father said to them when he blessed them, giving each the blessing appropriate to him.