

# Glimpse of the Future

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Preacher: Lee Roberts

[ 0 : 00 ] In Genesis 48, we saw Jacob adopt Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, as his own.

And that brought the two boys who were half Egyptian fully into the covenant with God's people. That reminded us of a few things the last time we were here. Just as a recap, we saw that God's ways often are different than our ways.

Ephraim the Younger received the greater blessing. We also saw that non-Jews are welcomed as God's adopted children. And we as believers have been adopted into the family of God because of Christ's atonement for our sins.

Tonight we'll cover Genesis chapter 49. The chapter closes with Jacob's death. Before he dies, Joseph has his father and the other brothers with him.

And Jacob gives his 12 biological sons a glimpse of the future by prophesying what God has in store for them and their descendants. That's the main idea of the chapter. Jacob gives his 12 biological sons a glimpse of the future by prophesying what God has in store for them and their descendants.

[ 1 : 14 ] Let's read all of chapter 49 and then we'll dig into it. It says, Then Jacob called his sons and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you what shall happen to you in the days to come.

Assemble and listen, O sons of Jacob. Listen to Israel your father. Reuben, you are my firstborn, my might, and the firstfruits of my strength, preeminent in dignity and preeminent in power.

Unstable as water, you shall not have preeminence, because you went up to your father's bed.

Then you defiled it. He went up to my couch. Simeon and Levi are brothers.

Weapons of violence are their swords. Let my soul come not into their counsel. O my glory, be not joined to their company. For in their anger they killed men, and in their willfulness they hamstrung Opsin.

Cursed be their anger for its fear, and their wrath for it is cruel. I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel. Judah your brother shall praise you.

[ 2 : 20 ] Your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies. Your father's son shall bow down before you. Judah is a lion's cub. From the prey, my son, you have gone up.

He stooped down. He crouched as a lion and as a lioness. Who dares rouse him? The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until the tribute comes to him.

And to him shall be the obedience of the peoples. Binding his foal to the vine, and his donkey's colt to the choice vine, he has washed his garments in wine, and his vesture in the blood of grapes.

His eyes are darker than wine, and his teeth whiter than milk. Zebulun shall dwell at the shore of the sea. He shall become a haven for ships, and his border shall be at Sidon.

Issachar is a strong donkey, crouching between the sheepfolds. He saw that a resting place was good, and that the land was pleasant, so he bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant at forced labor.

[ 3 : 22 ] Dan shall judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel. Dan shall be a serpent in the way, a viper by the path that bites the horse's heels, so that his rider falls backwards.

I wait for your salvation, O Lord. Raiders shall raid Gad, but he shall raid at their heels. Asher's food shall be rich, and he shall yield royal delicacies.

Naphtali is a doe let loose that bears beautiful fawns. Joseph is a fruitful bough, a fruitful bough by a spring. His branches run over the wall.

The archers bitterly attacked him, shot at him, and harassed him severely. Yet his bow remained unmoved. His arms were made agile by the hands of the mighty one of Jacob.

From there is the shepherd, the stone of Israel. By the God of your Father, who will help you. By the Almighty, who will bless you with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that crouches beneath, blessings of the breast and of the womb.

[ 4 : 25 ] The blessings of your Father are mighty beyond the blessings of my parents, up to the bounties of the everlasting hills. May they be on the head of Joseph, and on the brow of him who was set apart from his brothers.

Benjamin is a ravenous wolf, in the morning devouring the prey, and at evening dividing the spoil. All these are the twelve tribes of Israel. This is what their father said to them as he commanded and blessed them, blessing each with the blessing suitable to him.

Then he commanded them and said to them, I am to be gathered to my people. 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 at Machpelah, to the east of Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham brought with the field from Ephron the Hittite to possess as a burying place.

There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife. There they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife. And there I buried Leah. The field and the cave that is in it were bought from the Hittites.

When Jacob finished commanding his sons, he drew up his feet into the bed and breathed his last and was gathered to his people. Before we dig into the verses, consider what we know about Jacob's life.

[ 5 : 44 ] His years have been splattered with sorrow, but he's been getting right with the Lord for decades. He's finishing strong, and so in that regard, he shows us all how to die.

We're going to look at chapter 49 in three sections, starting with just verses 1 and 2. And these verses set up the remainder of the chapter. So in these verses, we see Jacob's prologue.

Jacob's prologue is the first section. So here are verses 1 and 2 again. They say, Then Jacob called his sons and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you what shall happen to you in the days to come.

Assemble and listen, O sons of Jacob. Listen to Israel, your father. Jacob calls his sons together to hear his last words, and these words will give the sons a long-term view of what will happen.

These words tell us about how one family turns into the nation of Israel, and the words also tell us the tribe from which the future Messiah will come.

[ 6 : 53 ] We already know where the Messiah will come from because we looked ahead when we studied chapter 38. We also have read these verses many times before that. Keep in mind, though, that when Jacob told his sons, they were hearing the news for the first time, at least as far as we know from what is documented in Scripture.

We've discussed in every lesson that the main point of the book of Genesis is to show the progression of redemptive history or how God will redeem his people from the curse of sin.

Throughout Genesis, God shows that he's faithful to preserve the line of the seed who's going to redeem God's people, and chapter 49 reveals much more about God's plan of redemption.

Israel is going to become a nation composed of 12 tribes who will one day inherit the promised land. Each of Jacob's sons, except Levi, will be the forerunner of one of the land-possessing tribes. Levi's also going to head a tribe, but Levi's descendants will be priests. The priests will be scattered about, owning no area of land by themselves. The tribe of Joseph will actually be comprised of two tribes, and those are the tribes formed by the descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh.

[ 8 : 09 ] And so as we dig into the chapter tonight, we'll see how all of that is going to unfold. So in the second section of the lesson, we're going to see Jacob's prophecies.

So Jacob's prophecies are what comes next. Jacob calls out each of his 12 biological sons. Except for Simeon and Levi, who receive a combined prophecy, each son is going to get an individual word from his father.

And in verses 3 through 28, we'll look at each of these prophecies, and we'll also look at how these prophecies have played out over the years. When we first started this study, we saw that Jacob's sons came from four different mothers.

The prophecies start with the sons of Leah and end with the sons of Rachel. And the prophecies about the sons from Leah and Rachel's handmaids come between the ones about the sons from the wives.

So verses 3 and 4 get the prophecy started and they have the prophecy about Reuben. Jacob says, Reuben, you are my firstborn, my might, and the firstfruits of my strength, preeminent in dignity and

preeminent in power.

[ 9 : 24 ] Unstable as water, you shall not have preeminence because you went up to your father's bed, then you defiled it. He went up to my couch. The prophecy starts off well in verse 3.

However, the good things about Reuben are quickly overshadowed by his sin that's summarized in verse 4. Genesis 35, 22 is where we first heard about that sin.

So here is Genesis 35, 22. It says, While Israel lived in that land, Reuben went and lay with Bilhah, his father's concubine, and Israel heard of it.

Jacob and God remembered the seriousness of Reuben's sin and the consequences of that sin erased Reuben's birthright and whatever dignity and majesty he might have had.

His tribe received scant mention in Israelite history and it produced no judge, no prophet, no military leader, or no other important person. In fact, Moses actually prayed for this tribe not to die out.

[ 10 : 30 ] When Jacob says that Reuben is unstable as water, it literally means boiling, and so in that way he shows instability. Even Moses' prayer for Reuben's tribe not to die out is less than a rousing request.

Here is that short prayer in Deuteronomy 33, 6. Moses prayed, let Reuben live and not die, but let his men be few. So in other words, Moses didn't want him to die off completely or his tribe to die off completely, but he didn't want them to be blessed like the other tribes either.

The combined prophecy for Simeon and Levi comes next and that's in verses 5-7 of Genesis 49. Those verses say Simeon and Levi are brothers, weapons of violence are their swords.

Let my soul come not into their counsel. O my glory, be not joined to their company. For in their anger they killed men and in their willfulness they hamstrung oxen.

Cursed be their anger for it is fierce and their wrath for it is cruel. I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel. Jacob certainly is referring here to what happened in the city of Shechem after Shechem himself raped Jacob's daughter Dinah.

[ 11 : 51 ] Remember that instead of punishing just Shechem Simeon and Levi first lied and then later killed all the males in that city. Those things are documented in Genesis 34.

We looked at that chapter a few times during other lessons so we'll skip looking at it again tonight and just go to what became of Simeon and Levi's descendants.

Simeon became the smallest tribes in the second census of Moses so he turned out to be the smallest and he was omitted from the blessing of Moses and later had to share territory with Judah. Levi was scattered throughout Israel and as we mentioned in the introduction through God's grace Levi's descendants became priests because of their loyalty to God.

The priestly tribe also became residents of the cities of refuge but neither Simeon nor Levi possessed their own designated region in the land although Levi's priestly position was certainly a privileged one considering where that tribe came from.

[ 12 : 57 ] Judah comes next in the prophecies but before we look at what Jacob says about him put yourself in Judah's place. The prophecies he's heard his father pronounce so far have included significant penalties for the sins of the sons involved and we know that Judah also committed a major sin when thinking that she was a prostitute.

Judah fathered twins by his daughter-in-law Tamar. So Judah probably was more than a little uncomfortable when he heard his name called but let's see what Jacob says about Judah.

Here are Genesis 49 8-12 Jacob said Judah your brothers shall praise you your hands shall be on the neck of your enemies your father's son shall bow down before you.

Judah is a lion's cub from the prey my son you have gone up. He stooped down he crouched as a lion and as a lioness who dares rouse him. The scepter shall not depart from Judah nor the ruler staff from between his feet until the tribute comes to him and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.

Binding his foal to the vine and his donkey's colt to the choice vine he has washed his garments in wine and his vesture in the blood of grapes. His eyes are darker than wine and his teeth whiter than milk.

[ 14 : 24 ] So this prophecy is much different than the ones that came before it and at least four things are worth noting from it. First we see the preeminence of Judah.

Vodibachum says the blessing of Judah is first and foremost evidence of God's work in Jacob's life. Remember Jacob picked his favorite from among his sons.

More importantly Jacob's choice was based on his feelings about his wives Rachel and Leah. Judah is a son of Leah not Rachel. As such he was not one of the favorite sons.

However Jacob though his eyes are dim sees better now than he ever has. Clearly Judah's preeminence is a direct result of God's grace in Judah's life.

We remember what we talked about earlier that Judah was responsible for Joseph being sold into slavery and of course we just mentioned how Genesis has an entire chapter devoted to his inappropriate relationship with his daughter-in-law whom he thought was a prostitute.

[ 15 : 29 ] The second thing we see in this blessing for Judah is the praise of Judah. Jacob offers a play on words with Judah's name. Judah's name means to praise.

However in this case the meaning goes much deeper. This is the greatest theological truth in the redemptive history that we've been talking about because this is the promise of the Messiah. Judah's descendants will see family members bow down before them. At first this sounds a lot like what happened to Joseph with his brothers. After all Joseph's brothers bowed down to him. But this is a major difference between what happened with Joseph and what is going to happen with Judah's descendants. The brothers bowed down to Joseph out of fear because of his position. Their descendants will bow down to Judah's descendants because of praise for the Messiah that comes from that tribe. Judah's line is going to produce a great king by the name of David and he and his line will rule the nation of Israel and they'll also receive praise from other tribes in that regard.

[ 16 : 38 ] But the great king, David, will have a greater son and that we know is going to be the king of kings and unlike David though, this king will be God incarnate and therefore truly worthy of the praise that Jacob forecast here.

A third thing we see about Judah and his descendants is the power that they will have. Judah's line will be as strong as a young lion and as entrenched as an old lion.

That's quite a combination to have and if you can be entrenched like an old lion and still be as strong as a young lion at the same time. He's going to have a lot of national prominence in that line. We mentioned some of it already including David but we know about Solomon as well. And of course when it references the one to whom the scepter belongs and references Shiloh, it's also talking about the Messiah who's referred to in Revelation as the lion of the tribe of Judah.

In addition to the image of the lion, the picture of the scepter helps round out the idea of Judah's power. The lion's power is seen in his stature and strength.

[ 17 : 49 ] The image of the scepter carries with it the idea of a powerful office. So again the idea is of Judah's kingly descendants and his greater son Jesus when it talks about this.

John Calvin noted though this passage is obscure, it would not have been very difficult to elicit its genuine sense. It is certain that the Messiah who was to spring from the tribe of Judah is here promised.

The fourth thing we see about Judah and his descendants is the prosperity of Judah. Judah. That comes from verses 11 and 12. Those verses talk about wine and vineyards so plentiful that you hit your donkeys to them.

In that regard they're talking about you're so unconcerned about the vineyards because you have so many of them you don't care if your donkey eats as much as he wants. You've got plenty more to replace that.

So all of these images point to wealth and prosperity. Many of Jacob's remaining sons also will receive a blessing of prosperity but this blessing of prosperity to Judah is the most comprehensive forward looking blessing that Jacob offers in these prophecies.

[ 18 : 59 ] It also solidifies Judah's place in the line of the Messiah. And if there's any doubt up to this point as to upon whom the promise rests that doubt is removed in Genesis 49 when Jacob makes it clear that the Messiah is going to come from Judah.

Judah. So let's spend a little bit more time on the prosperity promise to Judah and his descendants. Here are verses 11 and 12 again. It says, Binding his foal to the vine and his donkey's colt to the choice vine, he has washed his garments in wine and his vesture in the blood of grapes.

His eyes are darker than wine and his teeth whiter than milk. So like we talked about earlier, this language describes prosperity so great that people will tie a donkey to the choice vine, letting it eat because there's such abundance.

Wine is going to be as plentiful as water, so instead of washing their clothes in water, they're going to wash their clothes in wine because they have so much of it. Unless you think we're going the route of Joel Osteen here, this is likely a millennial prophecy that has yet to come to pass. We already have mentioned the more important aspects of how this prophecy about Judah has come to pass, and that of course is the earthly king that we talked about along with David and Solomon, but also the Messiah himself.

[ 20 : 25 ] But even before those kings came along, the tribe of Judah assumed a leadership position in the Old Testament. On the march through the wilderness during the Exodus, Judah went first, and Judah also had the largest population in Moses' census that he took in Numbers chapter 1.

We'll move through the remaining prophecies now, and these prophecies, except for the one about Joseph, are short. Verse 13 records what Jacob said about Zebulun.

He said, Zebulun shall dwell at the shore of the sea. He shall become a haven for ships, and his border shall be at Sidon. Although Zebulun's territory bordered neither the Mediterranean nor the sea of Galilee, the tribe was situated to benefit from the important trade route, the Via Maris, and it was traversed by sea traders moving through her territory.

So we see how this prophecy came to pass as well. Issachar's prophecy comes next. He gets two verses. Verses 14 and 15 say, Issachar is a strong donkey crouching between the sheepfolds. He saw that a resting place was good and that the land was pleasant, so he bowed his shoulder to bear and became a servant at forced labor. So how did this one turn out?

[ 21 : 49 ] Well, like a strong donkey, the tribe of Issachar would be forced to work for others. Issachar's tribe located in the fertile, broad, pleasant plain of Estralon and was often subject to invading armies.

So those armies then made Issachar's tribe subject to working for them. And Dan, the first son of Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid, comes next.

Verses 16 and 17 have the prophecy. And then verse 18 has a prayer from Jacob about the tribe of Dan. So here are verses 16 through 18.

Jacob says, Dan shall judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel. Dan shall be a serpent in the way, a viper by the path that bites the horse's heels so that his rider falls backward.

I wait for your salvation, O Lord. Dan's name meant judge and he fathered an aggressive tribe who would judge the nation, but it would be known neither for moral stature nor religious faithfulness.

[ 22 : 54 ] Dan actually later abandoned its land allotment and migrated to the extreme north of Israel. And verse 18 really is a cry from Jacob where he expressed hope for Dan in a day when salvation would come to Israel.

But Dan is omitted from the list of the 12 tribes in Revelation 7, 4 through 8. You remember that Revelation 7, 4 through 8 is where John lists the sources of the 144,000 messengers in Revelation. And that 144,000 is composed of 12,000 from each of the 12 tribes. Dan is the only tribe from which none of the messengers come.

So if you're doing the math in your head, you may wonder how we get 12,000 from each of the 12 tribes if Dan's tribe supplied nobody. But remember that two tribes came from Joseph and those were the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh.

So the second tribe of Joseph essentially takes the place of Dan's tribe and so that gets us back to the total of 12. Going back to tonight's text, the prophecy for Gad comes next.

[ 24 : 04 ] Gad was the son of Zilpah, Leah's handmaid. And that prophecy for him is in verse 19. It says, Raiders shall raid Gad, but he shall raid at their heels.

Gad settled in the Transjordan and that exposed Gad's people to invasions and they became valiant fighters worthy of victory and commendations. So you're seeing a pattern where all of these prophecies are being fulfilled as we look further out into history.

Asher, the second son of Zilpah, comes next and that's in verse 20. It simply says, Asher's food shall be rich and he shall yield royal delicacies. Asher's tribe settled in the agriculturally rich coastal region north of Carmel and that region provided gourmet delights for the palace.

So again, that prophecy came true. Naphtali's prophecy comes next in verse 21. He was the second son of Bilhah and verse 21 says, Naphtali is a doe let loose that bears beautiful fawns. The characteristics of that tribe were deer-like speed and agility and that led them to have military prowess. If you remember Deborah and Barak in Judges, they came from the tribe of Naphtali and

the song that they sang was representative of the eloquent words that came from that tribe as well. [ 25 : 32 ] And that song of Deborah and Barak is in Judges 5. They sang it after God allowed them to defeat the invading army of Sisera. Jacob's prophecies for Rachel's son come last.

Verses 22 through 26 cover Joseph. So here are those verses again. They say, Joseph is a fruitful bough, a fruitful bough by a spring.

His branches run over the wall. The archers bitterly attacked him, shot at him, and harassed him severely. Yet his bow remained unmoved. His arms were made agile by the hand of the mighty one of Jacob.

From there is the shepherd, the stone of Israel. By the God of your father who will help you. By the Almighty who will bless you with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that crouches beneath, blessings of the breast and of the womb.

The blessings of your father are mighty beyond the blessings of my parents up to the bounties of the everlasting hills. May they be on the head of Joseph and on the brow of him who was set apart from his brothers.

[ 26 : 41 ] The first two verses concerning Joseph are mainly a biography of him. He's managed to be fruitful and persevere despite difficult circumstances. If you see in verse 23, it talks about Joseph being attacked by archers who harassed him severely.

Remember who those archers were? Well, they of course were Joseph's brothers, the slave traders, Potiphar, and then Mrs. Potiphar. And of course, they shot at Joseph with hostility and bitterness, but he did not fall.

His bow remained steady. His strong arms stayed limber. He remained constant despite the pit, the caravan, the slavery, the temptation, the prison, and even the cupbearer's forgetfulness.

The end of verse 24 and the first part of verse 25 tell us why Joseph was able to persevere. In that verse, and those two verses actually, Jacob uses multiple names for God.

Jacob refers to God as the mighty one of Jacob, the shepherd, the stone of Israel, the God of your father, and the almighty. The relationship with God has been Joseph's key throughout.

[ 27 : 58 ] It's been his ticket to spiritual freedom, even during physical captivity. We've seen God bless Joseph abundantly. He's given Joseph blessings of the heavens, blessings of the deep.

By that, Jacob is talking about gifts such as an obedient heart, spiritual insight, the ability to interpret dreams, of course, the wisdom to run a kingdom, the desire to serve, a consistent character, and an ability to remain faithful to God's purpose.

Jacob also highlights how God granted Joseph children, and Ephraim and Manasseh become the special joys in Joseph's life. Anticipating the future, Jacob prays that Joseph's descendants will experience blessing upon blessing, blessings that exceed those shown to Abraham, Isaac, and even Jacob himself.

The word translated set apart in ESV is the word also used for Nazarites, and both Joseph and later Nazarites were separated from others to serve God's holy purposes.

The tribes that came from Joseph produced other key leaders who were set apart for God. Samuel was from Ephraim. Gideon came from Manasseh.

[ 29 : 14 ] The prophecies about each son then conclude with Benjamin, and that comes in verse 27. Verse 27 says, Benjamin is a ravenous wolf in the morning devouring the prey, and at evening dividing the spoil.

Like the descendants of Jacob's other sons, the descendants of Benjamin lived up to this prophecy. The warlike nature of the small tribe of Benjamin became well known, and it was exhibited in their archers and slingers.

It also was exhibited in their brazen defense of the wickedness of Gibeah, and you can read about that in Judges 19 and 20. Interestingly, both Saul's in the Bible were from this tribe, and of course the first Saul was the first king in Israel, and the second Saul became the apostle Paul.

Verse 28 summarizes this section. It says, Some of the prophecies contained here obviously are blessings.

Some of the prophecies, particularly the ones for Reuben, Simeon, and Levi, sound nothing like blessings to us. Why do you think Moses refers to these prophecies as blessings three times in verse 28?

[ 30 : 44 ] Well, there's a reason for that. Although some of the tribes descending from Jacob's twelve sons are less significant, all twelve sons have a role in the development of God's chosen

nation.

That is why the prophecies are rightly considered blessings. So let's dive a little deeper into that comment and see what we mean there. The summary statements in verse 28 make three points. First, all the sons received recognition, including the discredited sons and even the less significant sons. Second, the blessing had the authority of their father Jacob, who alone could pass on the blessings promised to the fathers.

Third, the blessing each son received was appropriate to each tribe's role in the nation. The blessing of Jacob, therefore, reinforces the unity of the future nation, but it also discriminates among the tribes.

Each tribe is going to have its own distinctive story as they move forward. So far, we've seen Jacob's prologue and Jacob's prophecies. We have one more section to cover tonight.

[ 31 : 48 ] In the final verses of the chapter, we see Jacob's passing. Jacob's passing is what comes last. That comes in verses 29 through 33, and we'll read those again here.

And as we start the section, Jacob is the one who is speaking. Starting in verse 29, it says, Then he commanded them and said to them, I am to be gathered to my people.

Bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephraim the Hittite, in the cave that is in the field at Machpelah, to the east of Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field from Ephraim the Hittite to possess as a burying place.

There they buried Abraham and Sarah, his wife. There they buried Isaac and Rebekah, his wife.

And there I buried Leah. The field and the cave that is in it were bought from the Hittites.

When Jacob finished commanding his sons, he drew up his feet into his bed and breathed his last, and was gathered to his people. In our last study, we saw Jacob ask Joseph to commit to burying Jacob in Canaan.

[ 33 : 02 ] Here, Jacob commands all 12 of his sons to bury him there. Jacob takes special care to make sure his sons know exactly where he is to be buried, and he throws in enough details so that the sons have no doubt where their father means.

In verse 32, Jacob even reminds them that his burial place already has been bought and paid for.

He wants none of his sons to spend money unnecessarily on the funeral.

Surrounded by his sons, then, Jacob dies with dignity. He draws his feet up into his bed and breathes his last. He's gathered unto his people the relatives who have preceded him in death.

Jacob has discharged his stewardship. He said the things that needed to be said. He summarized both family life and Israel's future as a nation. Leadership of the nation is going to rest with the tribe of Judah.

Joseph will retain the rights of the firstborn, replacing Reuben. And so, Joseph will receive all which is due the firstborn. And that brings us back to the main idea.

[ 34 : 09 ] Jacob gave his 12 biological sons a glimpse of the future by prophesying what God has in store for them and their descendants. In addition to that main idea, we can take some other things from this chapter.

Things that we've talked about before, but also things that we must remember because of the glory that those things give to God. First, God is faithful to his word.

As we went through each prophecy, we talked about how it has come true. The best part is that some of the prophecies have more to come in the future. A second thing we can take away is that Jesus Christ is the lion of the tribe of Judah who is going to come again to rule and reign.

On his deathbed, Jacob revealed the glimpse of the future glory that we'll witness when that happens. Listen to Revelation 5 where that is talked about more.

Revelation 5 only has 14 verses, so we'll actually go through all of those. And John wrote there, Then I saw in the right hand of him who was seated on the throne a scroll written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals.

[ 35 : 20 ] And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals? And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it.

And I began to weep loudly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it.

And one of the elders said to me, Weep no more. Behold, the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, has conquered so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.

And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders, I saw a lamb standing as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

And he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne. And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the lamb, each holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying, Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals. For you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.

[ 36 : 38 ] And you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth. Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders, the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.

And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea and all that is in them, saying, To him who sits on the throne and to the lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever.

And the four living creatures said, Amen, and the elders fell down and worshipped. The third reminder we see from this passage is that God's grace changes repentant sinners.

If we were reading these verses in Genesis 49 for the first time, we would be very surprised to learn that Judah's line, rather than Joseph's, is the line through which the Messiah would come.

But the Judah on the day of Jacob's death was a much different person than the Judah who suggested selling his brother into slavery and the Judah who fathered twins with his daughter-in-law.

[ 38 : 03 ] God's selection of Judah for the line of the Messiah instead of Joseph also reminds us of the fourth thing that we can take from this passage. This one seems to come up nearly every chapter.

We won't spend much time on it tonight other than to remind ourselves that God often does things differently than we would expect. So chapter 49 fills in more details about God's plan for redeeming his people from the curse of sin.

We now know more about how every believer will one day join in the song of the elders in Revelation. And of course, that is the song where the elders told Jesus, Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.

And you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God and they shall reign on the earth. Let's close in prayer. Father, we thank you for the reminder of how you are faithful to your word.

And we see from this passage how the prophecies have come true for each of the tribes. That gives us hope and confidence that the things that remain in the future also will come true exactly as you have said.

[ 39 : 23 ] Let us use that to be more bold in telling about you to others. Help us be strong and witness to you to everyone on earth. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Thank you.