

Genesis 49:1-12

Human Destiny (Including Yours/Mine) is God's Design

Jacob (as in Abraham...Isaac...and Jacob) Gathers His Sons to Share Prophetic Insights about the Trajectories of Them and Their Tribes v1-2

Then Jacob summoned his sons and said, assemble yourselves that I may tell you what will befall you in the days to come. ² Gather together and hear, O sons of Jacob; and listen to Israel your father.

Principle: God Knows and Can Reveal the Future

As we read about Jacob's prophecies concerning his sons and the tribes that will come from each of them remember two things. 1: Each believer's particular bent-our general tendencies including our specific weaknesses are NOT EXCUSES for us to sin but they can HELP TO EXPLAIN why we would be especially tempted to sin in specific areas and/or in particular circumstances. Which is why the Apostle Paul tells believers to walk in the Spirit and we will not carry out the bent/the tendencies of our sinful/selfish nature.

2: Ezekiel 18 emphasizes that individuals are NOT morally responsible for the sins of their parents or of their children-but certain types of sin can tend to characterize family units over generations. The McCoy family engaged in a multi-generation feud with the Hatfield family which resulted in deaths on both sides. However this does not doom all subsequent generations of McCoy's or Hatfield's to continue the ruckus.

Jacob Prophecies to/about His 1st Son Reuben v3-4

Reuben, you are my firstborn; my might and the beginning of my strength, preeminent in dignity and preeminent in power. ⁴ [Yet] uncontrolled 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.

Reuben's bad choices included serious sexual sin with Bilhah (one of his father's wives-Genesis 35:22) and this led to the loss of his birthright as the 1st born. Interestingly no major figure-prophet, judge or king came from his tribe in the history of OT Israel.

Principle: Sinful Actions Can Rob Believers from Special Blessing and Lead to Them Being Removed from Positions of Spiritual Leadership

Jacob Prophecies to/about His 2nd and 3rd Sons Simeon and Levi v5-7

Simeon and Levi are brothers; their swords are implements of violence. ⁶ Let my soul not enter into their council; let not my glory be united with their assembly; because in their anger they murdered men, and in their lack of self-will they lamed oxen. ⁷ Cursed be their anger for it is fierce and their wrath for it is cruel. I will disperse them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel.

Simeon and Levi made a bad situation very much worse by overreacting, faking an attempt at reconciliation and then murdering the males of Shechem (Genesis 34)

Principle: Lack of Self-Control Including Out of Control Physical Violence are Incompatible With Legitimate Spiritual Authority

Jacob Prophecies to/about His 4th Son Judah v8-12

Judah, your brothers shall praise you; your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; your father's sons shall bow down to you. ⁹ Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He couches, he lies down as a lion, and as a lion, who dares rouse him up? ¹⁰ ***The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until Shiloh [the One who brings peace] comes,*** and to him *shall be* the obedience of the peoples. ¹¹ He ties *his* foal to the vine, and his donkey's colt to the choice vine; he washes his garments in wine, and his robes in the blood of grapes. ¹² His eyes are dull from wine and his teeth white from milk.

- 1: Judah/His Tribe will have authority over his brothers/their Tribes v8
- 2: Judah/His Tribe will be the one through which Israel's Kings will come v9
- 3: Judah/His Tribe....will ultimately produce the Ultimate King who will rule over the Ultimate Kingdom v10-12

Principle: God's Plan from All Eternity (with God the Father as the Author of the Plan, God the Son as the Active Agent of the Plan and God the Holy Spirit as the Activating Agent of the Plan) was for Jesus: as the God-Man-Savior, a Human Being Not an Angel or an Alien, a Male not a Female, a Jew not a Gentile, a Member of the Tribe of Judah/Family of David to be Savior of the World in Two Roles and in Two Advents First as the Lamb of God and Second as and the Lion of the Tribe of Judah.

Believers like us living in the Inter-Advent Period (the time between the 1st and the 2nd Coming of Christ) Have Unique Privileges and Special Responsibilities That We Should Appreciate and Actively Embrace.