

JACOB'S PROPHETIC BLESSING ON JOSEPH

GENESIS 49:22–26

Introduction

A person reaps what he sows in life. This is one of the great laws of life. God has decreed it to be so. Whatever we sow, we shall reap. If we do good, we shall reap good; if we do bad, we shall reap bad.

Usually the principle holds true in this life; that is, we usually reap in this life exactly what we sow. But not always. Many people sin and do wrong in this life yet never suffer the consequences. But God declares that a day of judgment is coming, a terrifying judgment, a judgment where perfect justice will be executed. But note: God is loving as well as just. He is perfect love. He is never moved by emotion but rather by pure and perfect love and knowledge. Therefore, no person will ever be judged for anything for which he is not guilty. God will execute perfect justice. We will not reap anything other than exactly what we have done. We will never suffer a single thing other than that for which we are truly guilty. But we will reap exactly what we have sown.

This is the subject of this passage of Scripture: *Jacob's Prophetic Blessing: Reaping What We Sow in Life.*

There was the prophecy concerning Joseph. Remember that Jacob was splitting the family's birth right between Judah and Joseph.

=> Judah had been assigned the leadership of Israel and appointed to be the line of the very special promised seed, the Saviour of the world (see note, Gen 49: 8-12).

=> Joseph had been given the double portion of the birthright that usually went to the firstborn son; that is, Joseph received the inheritance which included a double portion of the promised land. This is seen in the fact that his first two sons were to receive an equal portion with the other sons of Israel. Joseph himself was not personally assigned a part of the inheritance, but his two sons each received an equal share. Thus Joseph was represented in his two sons. (See note, Gen 48:1-6.)

The prophetic blessing that is pronounced upon Joseph is very descriptive. Just keep in mind that the prophecy refers to his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh.

1. Joseph was to be like a fruitful vine sitting near a spring that has fruitful branches climbing all over a wall (v. 22). This is a picture of fruitfulness. The tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh were to bear large numbers of people and strong leaders. As an example, these two tribes produced such leaders as Joshua and five of the fifteen judges of Israel: Gideon, Abimelech, Jair, Jephthah and Samuel.
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2. Joseph was, however, to be harassed and hated by his enemies (v. 23). The attacks against him would be like an archer shooting at him with bitter hatred and hostility. History would later show that Ephraim and Manasseh, along with Judah, would have to bear the major thrust of the opposition against Israel.
3. But note: Joseph was to stand firm and steady. God Himself was to make him strong (vv. 24-25). The tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh were to be like bows that would stay firm, and God was to make their arms strong so that they could just keep on letting the arrows fly against their enemies. Again, history has shown that the two tribes, especially Ephraim, were often victorious in battle.

But note why: because of God. The descendants of Joseph were to be made strong and victorious because of God. This fact is stressed five different times. Five different names or titles are given to God declaring that the strength of Joseph's descendants was due to God and to God alone.

- a) *The mighty One (God) of Jacob* (v. 24): God had strengthened Jacob time and again. Jacob had sometimes been weak, but when he called upon God, God had strengthened him. Therefore, he knew that God — the mighty God — would strengthen Joseph and his descendants.

But there is more here. Note that God is “the mighty God of Jacob.” This is personal: Jacob had a personal relationship with God, a very close relationship. He knew God personally: walked and talked with God and experienced the strength of God day by day. Jacob had such a close relationship with God that Scripture often refers to *the God of Jacob*, especially in the Psalms and Prophets.

Psa 46:7, 11 *The LORD Almighty is with us; the GOD of Jacob is our fortress....The LORD Almighty is with us; the GOD of Jacob is our fortress.*

Psa 132:2-5 *He swore an oath to the LORD, he made a vow to the Mighty One of Jacob: “I will not enter my house or go to my bed, I will allow no sleep to my eyes or slumber to my eyelids, till I find a place for the LORD, a dwelling for the Mighty One of Jacob.”*

Isa 2:3 *Many peoples will come and say, “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the temple of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths.” The law will go out from Zion, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. (see 29:23; 41:21; 49:26; 60:16; Mica 4:2)*

- b) *The Shepherd* (v. 24): this is a picture of God as the Guide, Provider and Protector. The Shepherd would guide, provide and protect Joseph and his descendants. This is the first time God is called *The Shepherd* in Scripture.

Psa 23:1-4 *The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. He guides me in*

paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

Isa 40:11 *He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young.*

John 10:11 *“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.”*

Heb 13:20 *May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep.*

1 Pet 2:25 *For “you were like sheep going astray,” but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.*

1 Pet 5:4 *And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.*

- c) *The Stone or Rock of Israel* (v. 24): this is the picture of God as the *Foundation and Support* of life. Jacob (Israel) had built his life upon God: he had made God the very foundation and support of his life, and God had held him up and given him a sure and lasting foundation. His life had been built upon God; therefore, God was going to fulfil His great promises to him. God was going to allow him — his life, the building and structure of his life — to endure forever and ever. And God was going to do the same thing for Joseph. This, too, is the first time God is called *the Rock* or *Stone* in Scripture.

Deu 32:4 *He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he.*

Deu 32:31 *For their rock is not like our Rock, even our enemies concede.*

1 Sam 2:2 *“There is no one holy like the LORD; there is no one besides you; there is no Rock like our God.”*

2 Sam 22:47 *“The LORD lives! Praise be to my Rock! Exalted be my God, the Rock, my Saviour!”*

Psa. 18:31 *For who is God besides the LORD? And who is the Rock except our God?*

Psa. 28:1 *To you, LORD, I call; you are my Rock, do not turn a deaf ear to me. For if you remain silent, I will be like those who go down to the pit.*

Psa 62:2 *Truly he is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will never be shaken.*

Psa 94:22 *But the LORD has become my fortress, and my God the rock in whom I take refuge.*

d) *The God of Jacob or the God of your father who helps you* (v. 25): God had always helped Jacob. Time and again Jacob had faced problems, sometimes terrible circumstances, but God had helped him through them all. The personal relationship between God and Jacob is again being stressed. The God of Jacob was the true God; therefore, He was able to really help Jacob. Joseph was following the God of his father; therefore, the true God would really help Joseph and his descendants.

Psa 28:7 *The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and I am helped. My heart leaps for joy and I will give thanks to him in song.*

Psa 40:17 *Yet I am poor and needy; may the Lord think of me. You are my help and my deliverer: O my God, do not delay.*

Isa 41:10 *So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.*

Heb 13:5-6 *Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?"*

e) *The Almighty (El Shaddai)* (v. 25a): this name stresses that God is the God of all might and strength, the true God of heaven and earth. He is the God who can do all things for His people. The almighty God is, therefore, the One who will strengthen Ephraim and Manasseh against their enemies.

4. But Joseph will not only be strengthened against his enemies; he will be richly blessed with three things:

=> with the blessings of heavenly rain and fertile soil (v. 25b).

=> with the blessings of springs and streams (v. 25b).

=> with the blessings of many offspring or descendants (v. 25c).

5. But even that is not all: Joseph was to be blessed above all his brothers (v. 26). Jacob declared that he had been blessed above his own fathers, Abraham and Isaac. Therefore Joseph, as the recipient of the birth right, was to be blessed above all his brothers. Jacob actually called out for his own great blessings to rest upon the head of Joseph, for the great blessings he had known to be experienced by Joseph.

Thought 1. The blessings that God pours out upon His true follower are unlimited. To stir thought, just a few are listed here.

1) There is the blessing of the necessities of life.

Mat 6:33 *"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."*

Psa 68:19 *Praise be to the Lord, to God our Saviour, who daily bears our burdens.*

2) There is the blessing of joy.

John. 15:11 *“I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.”*

3) There is the blessing of health.

Exo 23:25 *Worship the LORD your God, and his blessing will be on your food and water. I will take away sickness from among you.*

Isa 53:5 *Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.*

4) There is the blessing of all provision.

Psa 23:1-5 *The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.*

5) There is the blessing of spiritual fullness.

Mal 3:10 *“Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the LORD Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.”*

Eph 3:19 *And to know this love that surpasses knowledge — that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.*

Eph 5:18 *Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.*

Col 1:9 *For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray and make request for you, that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding. ■*