

## Genesis 49

Jacob is on his deathbed in chapter 49 and has called his sons to give them a final blessing and/or prophecy relative to their future. All the news is not good. The word “blessing” is found 6 times in this context; “to bless” is found 3 times. This suggests the theme of his last words to his sons. Jacob has blessed Pharaoh (47:7, 10) and Joseph (48:15) as well as Joseph’s sons, Ephraim and Manasseh (48:20). Now he will bless the rest of his sons before he passes away (49:28-33). The blessing of Judah (48:8-12) and then of Joseph (48:22-26) will dominate the text. Five verses are given to each so that the two take up ten of the 24 lines of poetry.

### TRANSLATION - 49:1-2:

**1** Then Jacob called to his sons and he said, “You all gather together and I will announce to you all what will happen to you in the end of the days. **2** Be assembled and listen, sons of Jacob. And listen to Israel, your father.

### COMMENTS:

Some have suggested this passage might be better understood as a “testament” of the old patriarch. He has gathered his sons together for one final word.

### APPLICATION:

*Contemporaries in the text* - Jacob will die at the end of this passage: 49:33.

### TRANSLATION - 49:3-4:

**3** “Reuben, my firstborn you [are]. My might and the beginning of my strength, a remnant of dignity and a remnant of power. **4** Unstable as water, you will not remain because you went up to the beds of your father, then you profaned my couch, [to which] he went up.

### WORDS:

“Might” (verse 3) means “strength, power” and is used 125 times; in Genesis at: 4:12; 31:6; here. “Strength,” a synonym for “might,” is found fewer times, 16, and means “vigor, manhood, wealth.” This is its only use in Genesis. “Dignity” is used 13 times, and means “raising, lifting up, sovereignty, majesty, dignity.” “Power” is used 76 times and is a synonym for “strength, might.” It is found in Genesis in this context only (49:3, 7). “Unstable” (verse 4) is only used here. In some way, the concept resembles water, as the context indicates. “To remain” (106 times) is the verb related to “remnant” used twice in verse 3. “To profane” is used 135 times but only here in Genesis.

### COMMENTS:

Jacob starts with his firstborn, Reuben. But, as in previous examples, the oldest son does not receive the highest blessing of his father, such as Cain, Ishmael, Esau, and Er. Verse 3 begins with positives: might, strength, dignity, power. Reuben had so much potential. But adultery kept him from reaching his highest potential. He is “unstable as water.” Reuben will not be preeminent as the firstborn because he “went up to the beds” of his father and profaned his couch. This, of course, references Reuben’s adulterous relationship with Bilhah (35:22).

### APPLICATION:

*Contemporaries in the text* - Reuben had relations with Bilhah in 35:22. His mistake *then* has consequences *now*. He will lose the birthright of the oldest son.

*Contemporaries of Moses* - The tribe of Reuben will provide the infamous Dathan and Abiram in Numbers 16 (cf. 26:5-10).

*Later Hebrew writers* - The wise man will wisely warn against adultery (Prov. 6:32-33).

#### TRANSLATION - 49:5-7:

**5** “Simeon and Levi, brothers, utensils of violence [are] their swords. **6** In their council should not come my soul, in their assembly, let my soul not join, my honor, because in their anger, they killed a man and in their pleasure they hamstringed ox. **7** Being cursed, their anger, because [it is] powerful and their outburst that it was hard and I will divide them in Jacob and I will scatter them in Israel.

#### WORDS:

“Utensils” (verse 5) is used 325 times with a broad range of meaning from “vessels and implements” to “weapon.” “Violence” was seen before the flood of Noah (6:11, 13) and in 16:5. See under “Words” in chapter 6. “Sword” is only used here in the OT. “Council” (verse 6; 21 times) may refer to a confidential conversation or a circle of confidants. “Assembly” was seen at 28:3; 35:11; 48:4. “To join” is only used twice in Scripture: here and Isaiah 14:20. “Honor” is used 200 times, meaning “glory, splendor, honor, abundance.” See 31:1; 45:13 for other uses in Genesis. “Anger” was first seen at 27:45; 30:2; 39:19; 44:18. It is found here in verses 6-7. “To kill” was seen in chapter 4 extensively (4:8, 14-15, 23, 25) and other passages. “Pleasure” is found 56 times and means also “acceptance, favor.” “To hamstring” is used only 7 times and can mean to “uproot.” When used with animals, it means to “cut the hamstring” or “cripple.” “Ox” is used 79 times, found especially in Exodus and Deuteronomy, and can mean a bull or cow. “To curse” (verse 7) was first seen in 3:14, 17. “Outburst” is “wrath, anger, fury,” used 34 times but only here in Genesis. “It was hard” was first found at 35:16-17. It is used 28 times in the OT. “To divide” is the verb related to the word “portion” or “inheritance.” “To be scattered” is used 65 times, first in 10:18.

#### COMMENTS:

Simeon and Levi are here considered “brothers” in the sense that they were partners, companions, in what they did against the people of Shechem. Their sword was an instrument of violence. Jacob will not sit among their assembly or allow his honor to be defiled by their council. They are cursed because of their anger. Their anger was powerful and their outbursts of wrath were cruel (34:25-30). Therefore, Jacob predicts their division within the family of Jacob, within the tribal inheritance of Israel.

#### APPLICATION:

*Contemporaries in the text* - Simeon and Levi attacked the Shechemites in 34:25-30. That was *then*; this is the consequences. Each will lose out on the birthright.

*Contemporaries of Moses* - Simeon’s allotment of land would be within the land belonging to Judah (Josh. 19:1-9). The tribe seems to have lost its importance; it is not mentioned in Deuteronomy 33 nor Judges 5. Levi would receive 48 cities scattered throughout the land (Num. 35:7; Josh. 21:1-42). They will become priests, likely because the tribe stood with Moses when Israel made the golden calf (Exo. 32:26ff). Simeon will be involved in the sins at Peor (Num. 25:1-14).

#### TRANSLATION - 49:8-12:

**8** “Judah, you your brothers shall praise, your hand [will be] on the neck of your enemies; the sons of your father will bow down to you. **9** A cub of a lion [is] Judah, from the prey, my son, you went up. He knelt, he lay down as a lion and as a lioness, who will rouse him? **10** The staff from Judah will not turn aside nor that which rules from between his feet until when Shiloh comes and to him [will be] obedience of the peoples. **11** Clinging to the vine his foal and to the choice vine, a colt of a donkey, he washes in wine his garments and in blood of grapes his robes. **12** Darker the eyes more than wine and whiter the teeth more than milk.

#### WORDS:

“To praise” (verse 8) means to “thank, praise, confess” and is used 111 times; first at 29:35. “Enemy” is found 285 times. In Genesis, it is only found elsewhere at 22:17. “To bow down” is the verb generally denoting worship. It was first seen at 18:2. That is not its connotation here. “Cub” (verse 9) is only found a few times, only here in Genesis. “Lion” and “lionesse” are found 47 times and 12 times respectively; each is found only here in Genesis. “Prey” may be translated “food;” it is used 22 times and is related to the verb “to tear,” found 25 times. “To kneel” is found 36 times, only here in Genesis. “To lay down” was first seen at 4:7. “To arouse” is the verb “to raise up.” Here, it carries the connotation of arousing.

“Staff” (verse 10) is only used here in Genesis, out of 190 times. It can be translated “rod, scepter, or tribe.” “The one ruling” translates a participle of a verb used infrequently but denoting one who makes decrees, that is, a king. “Shiloh” is a transliteration of the word, used only here in Genesis, out of 33 times, most often referring to the town “Shiloh.” “Obedience” is found only here and at Prov. 30:17. “To cling” (verse 11) was first found in 40:3, 5 meaning to “bind” or “imprison.” That’s not its meaning in the context of “vines.” Here, it means to “cling.” It is used 73 times. “Vine” probably refers to the grapevine. It was seen in 40:9-10 and it used 55 times. “Foal” was found first at 32:16. This is its only other use in Genesis, out of a total of 9 times. “Choice vine” is found only here and at Isa. 5:2 and Jer. 2:21. “Colt” is the word for “son” but referring to the offspring of a donkey, “colt” would be appropriate. “Donkey” is a female donkey, found 34 times. “To wash” is found only here in Genesis, of 47 occurrences. “Wine” was first seen in 9:21, 24. Here, it likely refers to fresh grape juice as it is used parallel with another poetic phrase: “blood of the grape.” This word for “garments” is used only here in Genesis, out of 32 times. “Blood” was first seen at 4:10-11. “Grapes” were first seen at 40:10-11. “Robe” is used only here in the OT. “Darker” (verse 12) is used only here and Prov. 23:29. “Teeth” is used only here in Genesis. “Milk” is used here and at 18:8.

#### ARCHAEOLOGY:

Shiloh is a few miles north of Jerusalem. The place is spelled slightly differently than this word here.

#### COMMENTS:

Jacob promises Judah a number of different elements. He will be praised by his brothers, making a play on his name as “praise” is related to the word “Judah” (see 29:35). He predicts Judah ruling over his enemies. He predicts the other brothers bowing down to Judah. These promises will be fulfilled most immediately in the persons of Kings David and Solomon. Ultimately, they are fulfilled in the person of King Jesus.

There are three references to lions in verse 9. The lion traditionally has pictured strength, power, dignity, majesty. Then, in verse 10, we have the promise that royalty will come from Judah. We would argue that this promise illustrates Jacob’s guidance by the Spirit of God in his prophecy. Not only did Jacob have a partiality to Joseph but it was Joseph who was most likely in a position to become a king. Yet, Jacob predicted that honor would come from Judah. The “scepter” or “staff” as a royal staff, was the instrument of royalty. The rod or staff would not be removed from between the feet of Judah, where it would be leaning while the king was sitting on his throne, “until Shiloh comes.”

Verse 10 is clearly a Messianic prophecy but a question revolves around the phrase “until Shiloh comes.” Shiloh is the name of a village but what connection it has with kingship is unknown. No king ever reigned in Shiloh and Jesus is never called “Shiloh” in any text. If we understand the phrase to mean “Judah comes to Shiloh,” then the question arises as to what that means and how it relates to kingship. Jews changed the text somewhat so that it reads: “so tribute comes to him.” We are hesitant to accept interpretations based on changing the text, even the vowel system. This particular interpretation has not been widely accepted. There is another reading found in the Samaritan Pentateuch and an alternate reading of the Massoretic Text and finds some collaboration with Ezekiel 21:27. This last reading says, “Until he comes to whom it (the scepter) belongs.” This fits the theological context of the Bible as

well as making sense of the text itself. Jacob is predicting that a (The) king will come from the tribe of Judah.

Along with the promise of royalty, verse 10 also promises a universal rule: “to him will be obedience of the peoples.” The anticipated king would rule over more than simply the nation of Israel.

Verses 11-12 bring the anticipation back closer to home. Judah’s tribe will be prosperous, which is the meaning behind the foal being tied to a vine. He does not have to worry about the foal nor the vine because he is prosperous. So abundant are his blessings that he can wash his garments in wine, even dipping his robes in the “blood of grapes.” This might also suggest the idea of dyeing clothing which would also be an indication of wealth. That wealth is illustrated in the wine which darkens his eyes (this should be understood in a positive sense) and milk whitens his teeth. Neither of these should be taken literally since this is poetry. They are references to Judah’s abundant blessings.

#### APPLICATION:

*Contemporaries in the text* - Judah’s name is related to the verb “to praise” (cf. 29:35). Jacob makes a play on the name / verb here. Judah had also sinned (chapter 38) but he exhibited a penitent heart (38:26) so that he could experience positive repercussions. Abraham (17:6, 16) and Jacob (35:11) had already been promised royal descendants. Now, the promise is passed on to Judah.

*Contemporaries of Moses* - Moses will extend the prayer of blessing for the tribe of Judah in Deuteronomy 33:7. Judah will be the largest tribe both as it exits Egypt (Num. 1:27) and as the nation enters the Promised Land forty years later (Num. 26:22).

*Later Hebrew writers* - Israel, as a whole, would bow down to “Judah” in the person of King David (Psa. 72:8-11; 2 Sam. 5:1-5; Isa. 2:2-4). Balaam will also predict the coming of a dynasty out of Israel, although he does not specify the tribe of Judah (Num. 24:17-19). Ezekiel 37:15-19, 24-25 develops Genesis 49:8. Zechariah 9:9 will connect the Messiah with riding on a donkey. The psalmist will state that God rejected the “tents of Joseph” but chose the tribe of Judah. The psalmist will also see the reign of David as universal (2:8) as will Daniel (7:13-14). This passage might provide the source of imagery relative to the fruitfulness of the Messianic age: Isa. 25:6; Joel 2:24; Amos 9:13.

*NT writers* - Jesus is known as the “Lion of the tribe of Judah” (Rev. 5:5; see also 7:5 for the priority of Judah). Some see “Siloam” (John 9:7; “Shiloh” in Hebrew) as a reference to Gen. 49:10 but it is hard to see a theological connection. Jesus rides into Jerusalem on the foal of a donkey (Matt. 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-10; Luke 19:29-38).

#### TRANSLATION - 49:13:

**13** “Zebulun, to the shore of the waters he will dwell and he, to the shore for ships and his territory to Sidon.

#### WORDS:

“Ships” is found only here in Genesis, out of 32 occasions. “Territory” can be “side, hip, thigh.” Here, it carries the idea of border or territory. “Sidon” is found almost two dozen times; in Genesis, at 10:15, 19 and here.

#### ARCHAEOLOGY:

Zebulun did not receive a land inheritance on the border of the Mediterranean Sea (Josh. 19:10-16). Yet, as the Kishon River ran through the plain of Esdraelon along the south western corner of Zebulun, it still had access to the sea and carried on maritime trade. Sidon was a major city of the Phoenicians.

#### COMMENTS:

Zebulun will become prosperous as he engages in maritime trade.

#### APPLICATION:

*Contemporaries of Moses* - Moses refers to Zebulun on Deut. 33:19. Zebulun seemed to have courageous men who fought at various times for Israel: Judges 5:18; 6:35; 1 Chron. 12:23-40.

*NT writers* - While Jesus was from the tribe of Judah, growing up in Nazareth, He lived in the territory of Zebulun (cf. Matt. 4:12-17).

#### TRANSLATION - 49:14-15:

**14** "Issachar, a donkey, a bone lying down between the sheepfolds. **15** And he saw a resting place that [it was] good and the land that [it was] pleasant then he stretched out his shoulder to bear and it will be a forced laborer.

#### WORDS:

"Donkeys" (verse 14) have been seen several times in Genesis; see 12:16. "Bone" is found only here in Genesis, of 5 uses. "To lie down" was seen in verse 9. "Sheepfolds" is only used here and at Judges 5:16. "Pleasant" (verse 15) is only found here in Genesis, of 8 uses. "To stretch out" is used 216 times; it can specifically refer to spreading out a tent. "Forced" laborer translates two words: "forced" is used 23 times and carries the idea of "forced labor." The word we have translated "laborer" is a participle of the verb "to serve."

#### COMMENTS:

Continuing his use of metaphors (see "Judah is a cub of a lion," 49:8), Jacob comments that Issachar is a "donkey." "A bone" refers to the donkey which is strong. It lies among the sheepfolds because they provide great protection against wild animals. His resting place was good; his land was pleasant. He even bore others' burdens and worked as a laborer. The idea of "forced laborer" suggests slavery.

#### APPLICATION:

*Contemporaries of Moses* - Issachar would fight with Barak (Judges 5:15). Yet when Gideon called area tribes to fight against the Midianites, he did not call on Issachar (6:33-35).

*Later Hebrew writers* - Tola, the judge, was from Issachar (Judges 10:1) as were two kings of Israel: Baasha and Elah (1 Kings 15:27; 16:8).

#### TRANSLATION - 49:16-18:

**16** "Dan will judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel. **17** And it will be Dan, a serpent on the path, a viper on the way. The one biting the heel of the horse and the rider will fall backward. **18** For your salvation, I wait, Jehovah.

#### WORDS:

As we noted when Dan was born, his name is related to the verb "to judge" (verse 16). "Tribes" is found in this context (49:16, 28) and 190 times total in the OT. This is the first time the phrase "tribes of Israel" is used in Scripture. "Serpent" was seen previously in chapter 3 (3:1-2, 4, 13-14) and here. See comments on 3:1. This is the only use of "viper." "Way" is a synonym with "path." The former word is used 59 times and can mean "road, path, way." The latter word is used far more frequently, 712 times. "To bite" is used 11 times. The word "heel" is only used 5 times. This is the first time (verse 18) the eminently biblical word "salvation" is found in the Bible. It is found 78 times, meaning "salvation, help, deliverance." It does not always carry spiritual or moral connotations. It is related to the personal name "Joshua," which is translated into Greek as "Jesus." This is also the first time the word "to wait" is found. It can mean "to wait (for), to wait with eagerness, to hope." It is used 47 times.

#### ARCHAEOLOGY:

There are some 20 different species of venomous snakes in Palestine. This one has “horns,” scales above its eyes that resembles horns, perhaps the Field Horned Viper, *Pseudocerastes fieldi*.

COMMENTS:

As he did with Judah (49:8), Jacob makes another play on the name “Dan,” which is related to the word “judge.” Dan will judge. He will also be like a serpent on the path, like a horned viper, which is small but can startle a war horse so that it rears and throws off its rider.

Verse 18 is a brief prayer of Jacob, directed at Jehovah God. It will be the last time “Jehovah / Lord” will be used in Genesis. Jacob says he will wait on the salvation that comes from Jehovah God, perhaps a subtle message to his sons who are standing around listening.

APPLICATION:

*Contemporaries in the text* - When Bilhah gave birth to Dan, Rachel made a play on the verb “to judge, vindicate” when she named him (30:6).

*Later Hebrew writers* - Samson, from the tribe of Dan, ruled over Israel (Judges 13-15). Later, tribal members of Dan will slaughter the town of Laish and change its name to “Dan” and give themselves to idolatry (Judg. 18:1-30). The town will exist until Assyria invades in 722 B. C.

TRANSLATION - 49:19:

**19** “Gad, a troop shall attack him and he will attack the heels.

WORDS:

“Troop” is a band of raiders or military troops, found 31 times. It is related both to the name “Gad” as well as “to overcome” (used here twice and Hab. 3:16). “Heel” was seen first at 3:15.

GRAMMAR:

Verse 19 is somewhat unique as Jacob (perhaps Moses under inspiration) makes use of assonance, the repetitive sounds of “g” and “d.” Four out of the six words, in Hebrew, have the “gd” sound. We have transliterated the Hebrew sentence so that you might see the sounds: *Gd gdwd yegudenu hw’ yagud ‘qb*.

COMMENTS:

Jacob offers a brief comment about Gad. Troops will attack him but he will attack in return.

APPLICATION:

*Later Hebrew writers* - Gad did provide brave troops (1 Chron. 12:8-15).

TRANSLATION - 49:20:

**20** From Asher, fat his food and he will give dainties to the king.

WORDS:

The word “fat” (verse 20) or “rich” is only used 10 times; only here in Genesis. “Dainties” is only found here, Prov. 29:17 and Lamentations 4:5. “King” is found 2,530 times in the OT, first at 14:1. Its related verb “to reign as king” is found 350 times. The feminine form, queen, is found 35 times. “Dominion” is found 117 times; “royal power,” 91 times, and “royalty,” 24 times.

COMMENTS:

The blessing on Asher relates to his wealth in blessings and that he shares his wealth with the king, perhaps the royalty which will come from Judah (49:10).

APPLICATION:

*Contemporaries in the text* - One has to wonder what each of these men thought as they heard Jacob's blessings on them as well as on each brother. When and how would these thoughts be fulfilled?

TRANSLATION - 49:21:

**21** "Naphtali, a doe sent out, giving out branched antlers.

WORDS:

"Doe" (verse 21) is used 11 times, only here in Genesis. "Branched" and "antlers" are only found here in all of the OT.

COMMENTS:

We do not know what the connection is between a "doe" and "branched antlers" or, as some read it: "beautiful words." Jacob has compared Judah to a lion (49:9) and Issachar to a donkey (49:14). Now he compares Naphtali to a doe. We also do not know why the doe is sent out or let loose. Perhaps it conveys the idea of freedom and that stimulates Naphtali to utter beautiful words.

APPLICATION:

*Later Hebrew writers* - Barak was from the tribe of Naphtali, who fought aided by Deborah, against Sisera (Judges 4-5).

TRANSLATION - 49:22-26:

**22** "A son of a fruitful bough [is] Joseph, a son of a fruitful bough on the spring, his branches ran along the wall. **23** They bitterly attacked him and they shot and they harassed him the archers' arrows. **24** His bow remained in strength, and his arms were agile, his hands as the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob, from there, the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel. **25** By the God of your father even let him help you and the Almighty even let Him bless you [with] blessings of the heavens above, blessings [of] the deep lying below, blessings of the breasts and womb. **26** Blessings of your father prevailed over blessings of my ancestors as far as the hills forever, may they be on the head of Joseph and on the crown of his head, distinguished from his brothers.

WORDS:

"Fruitful bough" (verse 22) is found twice here in Genesis, out of 6 occasions. "Spring" is used 900 times but this is also the word "eye." "Branches" is also the word for "daughter." It is used 587 times. "To run" is used only here in Genesis, out of 8 uses. "Wall" is only used 4 times in the OT. "To bitterly attack" (verse 23) is the verb of the adjective "bitter." It is used 16 times. The context suggests "bitterly attack" here. "To shoot" is only found here. "To harass" is found only 6 times; three times in Genesis: here, 27:41; 50:15. "Archers" translates the word for "owner, husband" or *Baal*; see its first use at 14:13. "Arrows" are found 55 times in the OT.

"Strength" means "ever-flowing," "constant," or "enduring," as it refers to water. It is used 14 times, only here in Genesis. "Bow" was seen in 9:13-14, 16. It could be the weapon or the rainbow. "To be agile" is only found here and 2 Sam. 6:16. "Arms" is found 91 times and can refer to the arm or forearm or, metaphorically, to strength or power. "Mighty One" is used 17 times, meaning "mighty, strong, powerful." Here, it is a designation for Jehovah. "Shepherd" was seen first at 4:2. "Stone" or "Rock" is another name for God; the Hebrew word is found 276 times. "To help, assist" (verse 25) is found 82 times. "The deep" was found first at 1:2 and 7:11; 8:2. "To prevail" (verse 26) was seen at 7:18-20, 24. It is the verbal form of the word for

“warrior.” “Ancestors” is used only 6 times; its first use was 16:11. “Distinguished” is used only here in Genesis, out of 16 times. Transliterated, the word would be “Nazirite.” It refers to one who is devoted or consecrated.

#### COMMENTS:

Jacob turns to horticulture for Joseph’s blessings, making a play on the name of his son, Ephraim. Joseph is a “fruitful bough” by a spring whose branches run all along the wall. Not only is Joseph blessed but the blessings flow out from him in all directions.

We believe the reference to the archers in verses 23-24 are a reference to the calamities that have happened to Joseph since he left home at 17 years old. Perhaps Jacob does not have his other sons directly in mind as he speaks these words but Joseph was bitterly attacked and harassed by archers but he, himself, remained firm and agile.

The reason for Joseph’s strength is that he found it in Jehovah God. Jacob gives a number of epithets for God: “Mighty One of Jacob,” “Shepherd,” “Stone of Israel,” “God of your father,” and “Almighty” (see comments at 17:1, where “God Almighty” is first used). God is “mighty” is the sense that He is powerful. He is a “Shepherd” in the sense that He cares and provides for His people. He is the “Stone of Israel” in the sense that He is dependable, reliable, faithful. He is the God of Jacob, as well as the God of Abraham and Isaac, so that He is consistent and endures. He is “Almighty” as the God of power. He helps Joseph (49:25).

Verses 25 and 26 are saturated with the word “blessing.” The Almighty will bless Joseph with blessings from heaven above and the deep below, a figure of speech called a *merism*, using two opposites to indicate totality. If “womb” refers to animals while “breasts” refer to humans, then that blessing is also a *merism*, suggesting totality of family and animal blessings. The blessings Jacob shares have surpassed the blessings his fathers had experienced as unlimited as the hills surrounding them. Jacob wishes these blessings would be on the head of Joseph, on the crown of his head as he has distinguished himself among his brothers.

Again, it seems to us that Jacob had to have been inspired by the Holy Spirit in uttering these words as his behavior and the context would have suggested Joseph would receive the promise of royalty instead of Judah (49:10). Yet, Jacob did give Joseph an exalted blessing.

#### APPLICATION:

*Contemporaries of Moses* - Moses will identify God as a “Rock” in Deut. 32:4, 15, 18, 31.

*Later Hebrew writers* - Other writers will identify God as a “Rock” or “Stone:” 2 Sam. 23:3; Psalm 118:22; Isa. 8:14-15; 28:16; 30:29. God is also referred to as the “Mighty One” by Isaiah (1:24; 49:26; 60:16) and the psalmist (132:2, 5).

*NT writers* - The “stone of stumbling,” that is the stone that *causes* stumbling is the deity of Jesus Christ: Matt. 21:42; Eph. 2:19-22; 1 Pet. 2:6-8.

#### TRANSLATION - 49:27:

**27** “Benjamin, a wolf he will savage. In the morning, he will eat prey. In the evening, he will divide that which [is] plundered.”

#### WORDS:

“Wolf” (verse 27) is found 7 times; only here in Genesis. “To savage” was seen first at 37:33 and 44:28. It is related to the word “prey” at verse 9. See comments there. On “to divide,” see comments at verse 7. “To plunder” means to “plunder, spoil, capture, rob.” It is used 14 times.

#### COMMENTS:



In yet another animal metaphor, Jacob says Benjamin is a “wolf.” Benjamin will be a savage tribe from sun up until sun down and they will work as a tribe, all together, sharing what they have plundered.

#### APPLICATION:

*Later Hebrew writers* - Ehud was from the tribe of Benjamin (Judg. 3:15-30). The tribe also led a civil war (Judg. 20:14-21). They were mighty warriors (1 Chron. 8:40; 12:2). King Saul was from the tribe of Benjamin (1 Chron. 8:33, 40; 12:2).

*NT writers* - The apostle Paul was from the tribe of Benjamin (Phil. 3:5).

#### TRANSLATION - 49:28-33:

**28** All these [are] the tribes of Israel, twelve, and this was what he spoke to them, their father and he blessed them, a man each according to his blessing, he blessed them. **29** Then he commanded them and said to them, “I will be gathered to my people. Bury me with my fathers, at the cave which [is] in the field of Ephron the Hittite. **30** In the cave which [is] in the field of Machpelah, which at the entrance of Mamre in the land of Canaan which Abraham bought the field from Ephron the Hittite, for a site of a grave. **31** There they buried Abraham and Sarah, his wife. There they buried Isaac and Rebekah, his wife. And there I buried Leah. **32** A property of the field and the cave which [is] in it, from the sons of Heth.”

**33** Then Jacob finished to command his sons then he gathered his feet to the bed and he breathed and he was gathered to his people.

#### WORDS:

“To be gathered” (verse 29) was used at verse 1.

#### ARCHAEOLOGY:

For the discussion about Ephron and the cave of Machpelah, see chapter 23 (and 25:9; 50:13).

#### COMMENTS:

Here is the first time the phrase “twelve tribes of Israel” is found. Jacob blessed them each according to his own blessing. This suggests to us Jacob was led by the Spirit to say what was proper for each of the sons. Finally, Jacob anticipated being “gathered to his people” (see comments at 25:8), a phrase which argues for some belief in an afterlife. Yet, he wanted to be buried in the cave of Machpelah. Here, we are informed that not just Abraham (25:9) and Sarah (23:19) but also Isaac (cf. 35:28-29), Rebekah, and Leah were buried in the cave. Rebekah died on the way to Ephrath (35:16-19). Now, Jacob wishes to be buried in the grave of the patriarchs.

Once he finished his final words, he pulled his legs up into the bed, gave one last breath, and was “gathered to his people:” Abraham, Isaac, Ishmael, and the matriarchs.

#### APPLICATION:

*Contemporaries in the text* - The first half of Genesis 50 will be devoted to relating the preparations for the burial of Jacob and transporting his body back to Machpelah (50:1-14).

*NT writers* - Stephen refers to Jacob’s death and burial in his defense in Acts 7:15-16. The Hebrew writer says Jacob blessed his sons “by faith” (Heb. 11:21).