

The Power Of A Family Blessing

Genesis 48:1 - 49:27

I. How God Blesses Us (48:1-4)

II. How We Can Bless Our Family (48:5-22)

- A. Affirm Their _____ And Importance (48:5-9)
- B. Demonstrate A Meaningful _____ (48:10-14)
- C. Acknowledge God's Sovereign _____ (48:15-16)
- D. Assure God's Future _____ (48:17-20)
- E. Impart A Meaningful _____ (48:21-22)

III. How A Family Blessing Impacted A Nation (49:1-27)

- A. Reuben – Lost His Birthright Because Of Immorality (49:1-4)
- B. Simeon And Levi – Scattered Because Of Their Angry Violence (49:5-7; cf. 34:25-31)
- C. Judah – The Line For Christ The King (49:8-12)
- D. Zebulun – Shipping Industry (49:13)
- E. Issachar – Faithful laborers of the land (49:14-15)
- F. Dan – Serpent-like Judges (49:16-19)
- G. Gad – Victorious Over Raiders (49:19)
- H. Asher – Happy With Great Food (49:20)
- I. Naphtali – The Cool Hipsters (49:21)
- J. Joseph – Shepherded By God, Shot At, Stood Strong And Didn't Shoot Back (49:22-26)
- K. Benjamin – Fierce Wolf (49:27)

Conclusion:

- 1. How will you intentionally bless your family?
- 2. Have you received the blessing of salvation from Christ from Abraham, Jacob and Judah?

The Power Of A Family Blessing

Genesis 48:1 - 49:27

I. How God Blesses Us (48:1-4)

II. How We Can Bless Our Family (48:5-22)

- A. Affirm Their Belonging And Importance (48:5-9)
- B. Demonstrate A Meaningful Affection (48:10-14)
- C. Acknowledge God's Sovereign Presence (48:15-16)
- D. Assure God's Future Purpose (48:17-20)
- E. Impart A Meaningful Gift (48:21-22)

III. How A Family Blessing Impacted A Nation (49:1-27)

- A. Reuben – Lost His Birthright Because Of Immorality (49:1-4)
- B. Simeon And Levi – Scattered Because Of Their Angry Violence (49:5-7; cf. 34:25-31)
- C. Judah – The Line For Christ The King (49:8-12)
- D. Zebulun – Shipping Industry (49:13)
- E. Issachar – Faithful laborers of the land (49:14-15)
- F. Dan – Serpent-like Judges (49:16-19)
- G. Gad – Victorious Over Raiders (49:19)
- H. Asher – Happy With Great Food (49:20)
- I. Naphtali – The Cool Hipsters (49:21)
- J. Joseph – Shepherded By God, Shot At, Stood Strong And Didn't Shoot Back (49:22-26)
- K. Benjamin – Fierce Wolf (49:27)

Conclusion:

1. How will you intentionally bless your family?
2. Have you received the blessing of salvation from Christ from Abraham, Jacob and Judah?

The Power Of A Family Blessing

Genesis 48:1 - 49:27

I. How God Blesses Us (48:1-4)

48 After this, Joseph was told, "Behold, your father is ill." So he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. 2 And it was told to Jacob, "Your son Joseph has come to you." Then Israel summoned his strength and sat up in bed. 3 And Jacob said to Joseph, "God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me, 4 and said to me, 'Behold, I will make you fruitful and multiply you, and I will make of you a company of peoples and will give this land to your offspring after you for an everlasting possession.'

Genesis 12:2-3 2 And I will make of you a great nation, and I will **ble**ss you and make your name great, so that you will be a **ble**ssing. 3 I will **ble**ss those who **ble**ss you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be **ble**ssed.

- "bless" = Heb. *barak*
- in the OT, it was a spiritual, material and familial blessing
- Abraham would be blessed with great faith, great wealth and a great nation
- Bruce Waltke: "The three nuances of bless— prosperity (13:2, 5; 14:22– 23; 24: 35; 26:12– 13; 30:43; 32:3– 21), potency/ fertility (1:28; 13:16; 15:5; 22:17; 26:4; 28:3,14; 35:11), and victory (cf. 1:22)— are spelled out in 22:17. Horst says, 'Blessing brings the power for life, the enhancement of life, and the increase of life.'" (Waltke, Bruce K.; Waltke, Bruce K. (2016-11-22). *Genesis: A Commentary* (p. 205). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.)
- Abraham transferred the blessing of the Abrahamic Covenant to Isaac (Gen 24)
- Isaac wanted to bless Esau after his favorite meal, but it was God's plan for Jacob to have the birth rite – though Jacob schemed for it (Gen 27)
- Now it was time for Jacob to pass on this blessing – he does to Jacobs sons Manasseh and Ephraim, instead of Reuben
- Jacob adopts Joseph's sons

II. How We Can Bless Our Family (48:5-22)

- Blessing = parental acceptance
- Gary Smalley and John Trent: A family blessing begins with *meaningful touching*. It continues with a *spoken message of high value*, a message that pictures a *special future* for the individual being blessed, and one that is based on an *active commitment* to see the blessing come to pass." (*The Blessing*, Thomas Nelson, 1986, p. 24)
- Five parts of a family blessing:
 - Meaningful Touch
 - A Spoken Message
 - Attaching "High Value" to the One Being Blessed
 - Picturing a Special Future for the One Being Blessed

- An Active Commitment to Fulfill the Blessing (ibid)
- Five parts of a family blessing:
 - Meaningful Touch
 - Gen 27:26 "Come near now and kiss me, my son"
 -
 - A Spoken Message
 - Attaching "High Value" to the One Being Blessed
 - Picturing a Special Future for the One Being Blessed
 - An Active Commitment to Fulfill the Blessing (ibid)

A. Affirm Their Belonging And Importance (48:5-9)

5 And now your two sons, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, **are mine**; Ephraim and Manasseh **shall be mine**, as Reuben and Simeon are. 6 And the children that you fathered after them shall be yours. They shall be called by the name of their brothers in their inheritance. 7 As for me, when I came from Paddan, to my sorrow Rachel died in the land of Canaan on the way, when there was still some distance to go to Ephrath, and I buried her there on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem)."

8 When Israel saw Joseph's sons, he said, "Who are these?" 9 Joseph said to his father, "They are my sons, **whom God has given me here.**" And he said, "Bring them to me, please, that I may **bless** them."

- John H. Walton: "A literal translation of the Hebrew reads: 'Like Reuben and Simeon they will be to me.' That is, they become the firstborn sons of Jacob. This, in effect, provides the double portion of the firstborn's inheritance to Joseph, though in a roundabout way. Theoretically, Joseph receives his portion, while Ephraim and Manasseh receive the portions of Reuben and Simeon, giving Joseph three shares." (*Genesis: The NIV Application Commentary*, p. 710, Zondervan. Kindle Edition)
- V. 5 – Jacob adopts Ephraim and Manasseh – they would take Simeon and Levi's place
- V. 7 connects Jacob's affinity to Ephraim and Manasseh to his love for Rachel, who died earlier
- V. 8 "Who are these?" – Walton points out that this doesn't mean Jacob is blind, but that he is initiating a ceremony – (i.e., a minister at a wedding asking "Who gives this woman to this man?")
 - Though v. 10 points out Jacob was going blind
- V. 9 Joseph acknowledges his fatherhood but especially God's Fatherhood – God has given them

B. Demonstrate A Meaningful Affection (48:10-14)

10 Now the eyes of Israel were dim with age, so that he could not see. So Joseph brought them near him, and he **kissed** them and **embraced** them. 11 And Israel said to Joseph, "I never expected to see your face; and behold, God has let me see your offspring also." 12 Then Joseph removed them from his knees, and he bowed himself with his face to the earth. 13 And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near him. 14 And

Israel **stretched out his right hand and laid it on the head of Ephraim**, who was the younger, and **his left hand on the head of Manasseh**, crossing his hands (for Manasseh was the firstborn).

C. Acknowledge God's Sovereign Presence (48:15-16)

15 And he blessed Joseph and said, "The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been my shepherd all my life long to this day, 16 the angel who has redeemed me from all evil, bless the boys; and in them let my name be carried on, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth."

- V. 15 – God has been faithful to Abraham, Isaac and now to Jacob – "my shepherd all my life long to this day"
- V. 16 God will use Joseph's boys to carry on His name
- The birthright is now being transferred from Reuben to Joseph

- Q: How many of you have saved parents? Grandparents? Great grandparents?
- Q: How many generations back does your family go in Christ?
- Q: How did they first hear the Gospel?
- Q: Do you have this story of God's faithfulness to your family memorialized?

D. Assure God's Future Purpose (17-22)

17 When Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand on the head of Ephraim, it displeased him, and he took his father's hand to move it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. 18 And Joseph said to his father, "Not this way, my father; since this one is the firstborn, put your right hand on his head." 19 But his father refused and said, "I know, my son, I know. He also shall become a people, and he also shall be great. Nevertheless, his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his offspring shall become a multitude of nations." 20 So he blessed them that day, saying, "By you Israel will pronounce blessings, saying, 'God make you as Ephraim and as Manasseh.'" Thus he put Ephraim before Manasseh.

- God deliberately is choosing the younger brother Ephraim over Manasseh
- This is the 5th time in Genesis that the birth order was reversed:
 - Abel over Cain
 - Isaac over Ishmael
 - Jacob over Esau
 - Joseph over Reuben

E. Impart A Meaningful Gift (21-22)

21 Then Israel said to Joseph, "Behold, I am about to die, but God will be with you and will bring you again to the land of your fathers. 22 Moreover, I have given to you rather than to your brothers one mountain slope that I took from the hand of the Amorites with my sword and with my bow."

- Jacob is giving Joseph

- V.2 – this mountain slope won through Jacob’s military exploits is the lone indicator in the Scriptures that Jacob, the mama’s boy, was also a successful warrior with the sword and the boy
 - This could have been the situation in Shechem in Gen 34
 - This will be the land that Jesus will meet the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4)

III. How A Family Blessing Impacted A Nation (49:1-27)

A. Reuben – Lost His Birthright Because Of Immorality (1-4)

49:1 Then Jacob called his sons and said, “Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you what shall happen to you in days to come. 2 “Assemble and listen, O sons of Jacob, listen to Israel your father. 3 “**Reuben**, you are my firstborn, my might, and the firstfruits of my strength, preeminent in dignity and preeminent in power. 4 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!

- Vv. 3-15 – Jacob blesses the sons of Leah, his first wife
- V. 3 – Reuben is his firstborn
- Reuben is praised for his responsibility as a firstborn, being the strength of the family, demonstrating dignity and power
- V. 4 – yet he was as unreliable as water
 - Warren Wiersbe: “Water is certainly weak in itself, but turbulent water can be very destructive.” (*Be Authentic, Gen 25-50*, p. 164)
- Future: “**you shall not have preeminence**”
- Reason: he had an affair with his father’s concubine, Bilhah (Gen 35:22)
- V. 4 – he defiled his father’s bed
- Because of his betrayed trust, Reuben would not carry the mantle of the firstborn
- Birth order may open the door for opportunities, but we have to be faithful with the opportunities we have
- As predicted, Reuben’s tribe during the wilderness wanderings with Moses declined from the 7th most to the 9th most when entering the Promised Land (Num 1:20-21)
- In Numbers 16, Reuben’s descendants, Dathan and Abiram, joined Korah in a rebellion against Moses – God judged thousands
- In Judges 5:15-16, the Reubenites ignored the call of Deborah and Barak to join the war effort against the Canaanites
- They didn’t help David in battle either at Hebron (1 Chron 12:37)

B. Simeon And Levi – Scattered Because Of Their Angry Violence (5-7; cf. 34:25-31)

5 “**Simeon** and **Levi** are brothers; weapons of violence are their swords. 6 Let my soul come not into their council; O my glory, be not joined to their company. For in their anger they killed

men, and in their willfulness they hamstrung oxen. 7 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.

- When their sister Dinah was molested, Simeon and Levi exacted a revenge that went beyond an appropriate response. Instead of restricting vengeance to the guilty party, in their unrestrained anger, they massacred many of the Shechemite people (Gen 34)

Genesis 34:25-27 ²⁵ On the third day, when they were sore, two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brothers, took their swords and came against the city while it felt secure and killed all the males. ²⁶ They killed Hamor and his son Shechem with the sword and took Dinah out of Shechem's house and went away. ²⁷ The sons of Jacob came upon the slain and plundered the city, because they had defiled their sister.

- Jacob was upset with Simeon and Levi

Genesis 34:30-31 ³⁰ Then Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, "You have brought trouble on me by making me stink to the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites and the Perizzites. My numbers are few, and if they gather themselves against me and attack me, I shall be destroyed, both I and my household."

- Jacob purposed that these 2 scoundrels could not team up to do damage again
- 49:5 "I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel."
- He scattered them within the other tribes of Israel
- Simeon was absorbed into Judah (Josh 19:1,9)
- Levi was scattered throughout the Promised Land to 48 assigned cities

C. **Judah – The Line For Christ The King (8-12)**

8 "**Judah**, your brothers shall praise you; your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; your father's sons shall bow down before you. 9 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? 10 The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples. 11 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. 12 His eyes are darker than wine, and his teeth whiter than milk.

- "Judah" = the name is similar to the Hebrew word for "praise"
- Judah wasn't perfect – he had sinned like Reuben, Simeon and Levi
 - It was Judah's idea to sell Joseph as a slave (Gen 37:26-27)
 - But this sale of Joseph also kept him from being killed
 - Judah was also involved in an immoral relationship with Tamar (Gen 38)
- Judah was trusted by Jacob
 - Jacob offered his own life if he couldn't protect Benjamin
 - Jacob entrusted Judah in preparing the family move to Egypt (46:28)

- His family line would be royal
- Like a lion is the King of the beasts, Judah's tribe was compared to a cub, lion and lioness (v.9)
- "Scepter" – indicates the King's power

Genesis 49:10 "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh comes; and to Him shall be the obedience of the people"

- "Shiloh" = Messiah
- **Numbers 24:17** "I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near; A Star shall come out of Jacob; A Scepter shall rise out of Israel"
- **Matthew 2:2** "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews.?"
- **Revelation 19:16** "He has on His robe... 'King of Kings and Lord of Lords'"

Genesis 49:11 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.

- V. 11 – a picture of the future Millennium where there is so much prosperity, you could hitch your ride (donkey) to a vine (not really secure) but it didn't matter because life is good
- So good that you could wash your clothes in wine

D. Zebulun – Shipping Industry (13)

13 "**Zebulun** shall dwell at the shore of the sea; he shall become a haven for ships, and his border shall be at Sidon.

- Zebulun didn't receive coastal property, but was close enough to do import/export on the Sea of Galilee to Damascus (Deut 33:19; Josh 19:10-16) and with the Phoenicians
- Zebulun also produced brave soldiers who fought with Deborah against Sisera (Jdg 5:14-18)

1 Chronicles 12:33 Of Zebulun 50,000 seasoned troops, equipped for battle with all the weapons of war, to help David with singleness of purpose.

- Elon was a judge from Zebulun (Judg 12:11-12)

E. Issachar – Faithful laborers of the land (14-15)

14 "**Issachar** is a strong donkey, crouching between the sheepfolds. 15 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.

- A strong donkey – a faithful beast of burden
 - While modern day elitists look down on those who road donkeys, in the ancient days, Kings demonstrated themselves as tough and able to carry burdens like donkeys
 - They will do much of the physical labor in the land – farming, herding

- Produced Tola – judge (Judg 10:1-2)
- Produced soldiers who joined Deborah and Barak against Sisera (Judg 5:15)

1 Chronicles 12:32 Of Issachar, men who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do,

- The sons of Issachar studied their culture so they knew how to be strategic

F. Dan – Serpent-like Judges (16-19)

16 “**Dan** shall judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel. 17 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. 18 I wait for your salvation, O Lord.

- Dan is Jacob’s son through Bilhah who was Rachel’s maid when Rachel was barren
- “Dan” means “to judge”
- Jacob makes the play on words “Dan shall judge his people”
- Samson the judge came from Dan
- He is compared to a serpent – crafty, striking attacks
- Dan was a place of idolatry during Jeroboam’s reign (1 Kings 12:28-30)
- Maybe that’s the reason Dan is not mentioned in the genealogies of 1 Chronicles 2-10, though Ezekiel (48:1-2) includes Dan in the Millennial Kingdom

G. Gad – Victorious Over Raiders (19)

19 “Raiders shall raid **Gad**, but he shall raid at their heels.

- Gad & Asher belong to Zilpah
- “Gad” means “good fortune” (30:11) and “troop”
- Jacob, a punster, talks about Troops raiding the troop
- Being on the East side of the Jordan River, they were vulnerable to attack from enemies, but they would fight them off
- Gad will get the Raiders from Oakland

H. Asher – Happy With Great Food (20)

20 “**Asher's** food shall be rich, and he shall yield royal delicacies.

- “Asher” means “happy” (30:13)
- They were agriculturalists and were successful in producing olive oil
- Asher will produce great foods that kings would love

I. Naphtali – The Cool Hipsters (21)

21 “**Naphtali** is a doe let loose that bears beautiful fawns.

- Naphtali is Bilhah's son, full brother of Dan
- Naphtali produced great soldiers (Judg 5:18)
- "doe let loose" = "free-spirited people, not bound to tradition" (Wiersbe)
- "bears beautiful fawns" – or beautiful words

J. Joseph – Shepherded By God, Shot At, Stood Strong And Didn't Shoot Back (22-26)

22 "**Joseph** is a fruitful bough, a fruitful bough by a spring; his branches run over the wall. 23 The archers bitterly attacked him, shot at him, and harassed him severely, 24 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), 25 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 breasts and of the womb. 26 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.

- "fruitful bough" – main vine of the grape – branches spread out fruitfully
- Joseph survived the attacks of archers – a picture of his brothers selling him out as a slave
- He remained unmoved, strengthened by the Almighty God
- V. 24 – God is our Shepherd – led Joseph through various land mines
- V. 24 – Stone of Israel – God is our ROCK
- Joseph's descendants would be blessed by the land through farming fertile land in what would be Northern Israel
-

K. Benjamin – Fierce Wolf (27)

27 "**Benjamin** is a ravenous wolf, in the morning devouring the prey and at evening dividing the spoil."

- Benjamin means "son of his right hand"
- Ravenous wolf – brave and ruthless warriors
- Benjaminites helped defeat Sisera (Jdg 5:14)
- Saul, first king of Israel, was from Benjamin – he was ruthless
- Benjaminites were faithful, for the most part, to Judah (Southern Kingdom)
- Saul (Paul) was from Benjamin