GENESIS Lesson 53 – 11/17/19

Zebulun and Issachar

49:13: Zebulun shall dwell at the haven of the sea; and he shall be for an haven of ships; and his border shall be unto Zidon.

49:14: Issachar is a strong ass couching down between two burdens:

49:15: And he saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant; and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute.

Judah was Leah's 4th son, but Jacob now doesn't speak about the 5th son but continues with Leah's sons. Zebulun was Jacob's 10th son and Leah's 6th son. He is listed ahead of Issachar.

We are told that the tribe Zebulun would dwell at the haven at the sea and that his border would be all the way to Zidon. A haven is a harbor or a port. Zidon (Sidon) today is a city on the country of Lebanon. But if you look at Bible maps of the twelve tribes you will always find Zebulun sandwiched between Asher and Issachar. Why is that?

Well they follow a map produced by Franz Delitzsch (1813-1890 AD), a German Lutheran theologian and Hebraist. It's amazing how certain teachings get passed down.

If you study the inheritance that was divided among the tribes of Israel you will find many overlapping cities! Their territories often overlapped.

They don't neatly fit within the areas outlined by the maps in the back of your Bible.

Josh. 17:11: And Manasseh had in Issachar and in Asher Bethshean and her towns, and Ibleam and her towns, and the inhabitants of Dor and her towns, and the inhabitants of Endor and her towns, and the inhabitants of Taanach and her towns, and the inhabitants of Megiddo and her towns, even three countries.

When David became king, the tribe of Zebulun supplied him with the largest number of soldiers of any single tribe.

1 Chr. 12:33: Of Zebulun, such as went forth to battle, expert in war, with all instruments of war, fifty thousand, which could keep rank: they were not of double heart.

One verse on Zebulun, now onto Issachar.

Issachar is a strong donkey; he will crouch between two burdens. This is not a flattering prophecy: Donkeys are considered pack animals; they are a beast of burden. A donkey can carry 1/3 of its weight on its back and pull twice its weight on level ground.

So Issachar buckles from the load that is placed upon him. Two burdens, one on each side.

Issachar would enjoy their inheritance for a while (…the land that it was pleasant …), but it is likely that Issachar failed to drive out the Canaanites and like the Ephraimites were eventually placed under tribute by the Canaanites.

Jos. 16:10: And <u>they drave not out the Canaanites</u> that dwelt in Gezer: but the Canaanites dwell among the Ephraimites unto this day, <u>and serve under tribute</u>.

Let us quickly review the story behind the conception of Issachar. If you recall the story, Rachel makes a deal with her sister. “Give me the mandrakes Reuben found and I will let you spend the night with Jacob.”

The mandrake plant was used as a hallucinogen, as a painkiller, as an aphrodisiac and a as fertility agent for thousands of years. Rachel was hoping that by consuming the mandrake she would become fertile and conceive and bear a child. Leah though was the one who conceived

again from this deal and gave birth to Issachar. Could this be why Issachar was the only tribe mentioned that would be put to tribute?

But Issachar as a tribe plays almost no role in the history of Israel.

Only one good thing is said about the tribe of Issachar: they were advisers to David.

1 Chr. 12:32: And of the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do; the heads of them were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their commandment.

The blessing on Issachar seems more like a curse.

Dan

49:16: Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel.

49:17: Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward.

49:18: I have waited for thy salvation, O LORD.

Dan will rule Israel in the future through the person of the Antichrist. We have spent a great deal on this tribe in Lesson 33 when we studied Bilhah's sons. He shall be a serpent!

The Antichrist will come from the tribe of Dan. Dan was the first tribe of Israel to go into idolatry and remained in idolatry until the day of their captivity. We believe that the Antichrist's mother will be from the tribe of Dan and his father from the ME. Dan is not mentioned in Revelation 7. Verse 18 is clearly a reference the Second Coming.

MAP OF CANAAN - TWELVE TRIBE PORTIONS

Gad, Asher, and Naphtali

49:19: Gad, a troop shall overcome him: but he shall overcome at the last.

49:20: Out of Asher his bread shall be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties.

49:21: Naphtali is a hind let loose: he giveth goodly words.

We need to keep in mind that the prophecies of the sons of Jacob have to do with the end times.

It was during Jeremiah's day that the southern kingdom of Judah went into captivity. But the diminishing of Israel had began long before that.

2 Kings 10:32: In those days the LORD began to cut Israel short: and Hazael smote them in all the coasts of Israel;

2 Kings 10:33: From Jordan eastward, all the land of Gilead, the Gadites, and the Reubenites, and the Manassites, from Aroer, which is by the river Arnon, even Gilead and Bashan.

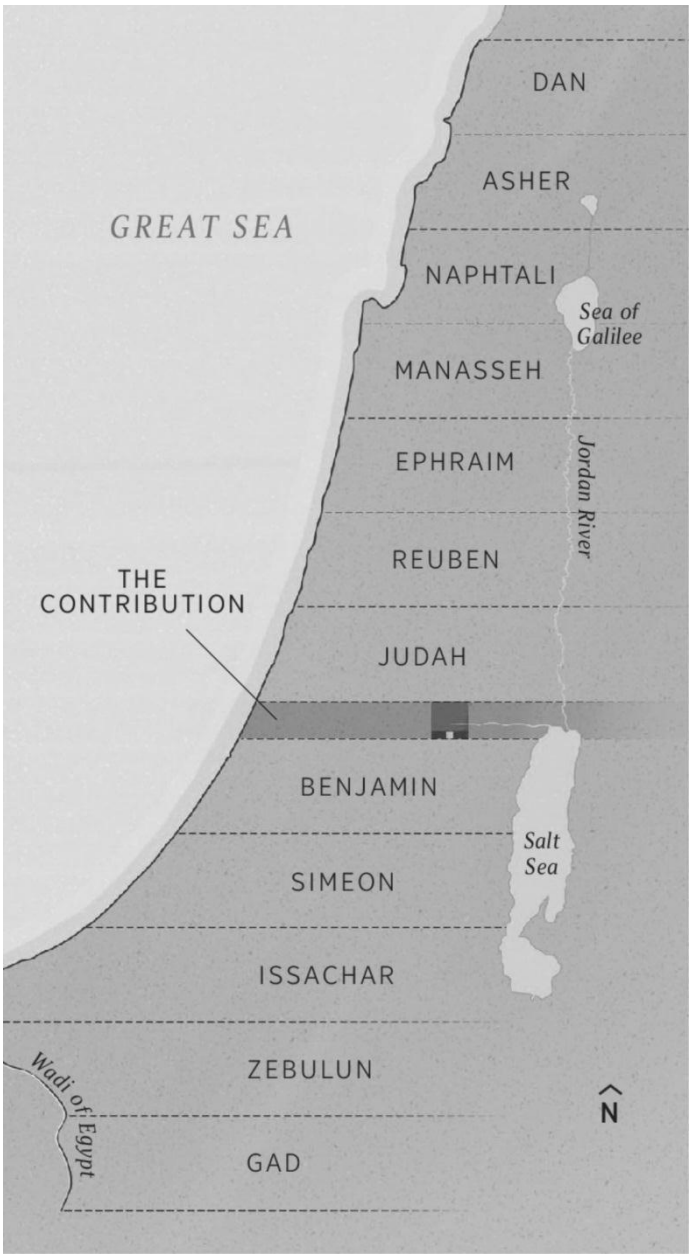
And during Jeremiah's days, Jeremiah tells us that the Ammonites had inherited the land of Gad.

Jer. 49:1: Concerning the Ammonites, thus saith the LORD; Hath Israel no sons? hath he no heir? why then doth their king inherit Gad, and his people dwell in his cities?

If you look at the map of the twelve tribe portions, you will notice that Gad borders the Ammonites. Rabbath or Rabbah was the capitol city of the Ammonites, take a look at the map for its location.

So this short prophecy of Gad tells us that in the end he will recover what he lost.

During the millennial kingdom God will rearrange the inheritance of each tribe.



Map of Israel during the Millennium

Asher inherited land that was ideal for farming. It is a region with comparatively low temperature and much rainfall, making it some of the most fertile land in Canaan. It possesses rich pasture lands, wooded hills, and orchards and Asher was known for its olive oil.

The other area in Israel known for its productivity is the Jezreel Valley, often known as Israel's breadbasket.

But they like several other tribes couldn't drive out the Canaanites.

Judges 1:31: Neither did Asher drive out the inhabitants of Accho, nor the inhabitants of Zidon, nor of Ahlab, nor of Achzib, nor of Helbah, nor of Aphik, nor of Rehob:

Judges 1:32: But the Asherites dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land: for they did not drive them out.

"Naphtali is a hind let loose: he giveth goodly words."

A hind is a female red deer. This could be a reference to Naphtali's character. This expression could be depicting this tribe as agile warriors.

Naphtali inherited the area around the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee (See map).

The "goodly words" that would come out of Naphtali are likely a reference to the teaching and preaching of Christ.

Matt. 4:15-17

[15] The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles;

[16] The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.

[17] From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Matt. 4:23: And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.

Jospeh

49:22: Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall:

49:23: The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him:

49:24: But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel:)

49:25: Even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb:

49:26: The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren.

Jacob devotes five verses to Joseph, Judah's blessing is the only other one that also covers five verses. But Joseph's blessing is the longest.

Jacob bestows great honors upon Joseph; one would think the Messiah would come out of Joseph.

But God only found one man who was after His own heart and that was David, form the tribe of Judah.

Joseph is called a fruitful bough, a bough is a large or a main branch.

The "bough by a well," whose branches "run over the wall," is spiritually a type of the fruit-bearing believer who abides in Christ and allows the Holy Spirit to bring forth fruit through him.

John 15:1-5

[1] I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

[2] Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

[3] Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

[4] Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

[5] I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

The well-watered bough speaks of Joseph's real relationship with God.

Gen. 39:2: And the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian.

Joseph was wounded by his brothers (the archers) and likewise those who live godly will be wounded.

2 Tim. 3:12: Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

But Joseph was able to overcome. When you look at the names of his boys, it is a testimony that Joseph never forsook or forgot the God of his father despite his circumstances and Jacob acknowledges this.

Manasseh: For God, said he, hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house.

Ephraim: For God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.

Let's read the following verse again:

Gen. 49:24: But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel:)

Gen. 49:25: Even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee…

Spurgeon says, "The main point in Joseph's character was that he was in clear and constant fellowship with God, and therefore God blessed him greatly. He lived to God, and was God's servant; he lived with God, and was God's child."

Following the life of Joseph we will find he is the one that was sold into a life of servitude (Gen. 37:28), he resisted temptation (Gen. 39), served a term in jail (Gen. 40), waited on God to exalt him instead of promoting his own cause (Gen. 40), he refused to steal the glory from God and refused to comprise the message of God (Gen. 41), he forgave others from the heart (Gen. 45:15), and refused to take advantage of a people when he had the reins of government (Gen. 47:13–26).

And the result: he was blessed by God Almighty.

We see the lot of Reuben and Simeon vs Joseph.

Likewise as a Christian you have a stark choice to make: serve God or serve the cares of this world. God has given us plenty of examples of those made the right choice and also of those who made the wrong choice.

In verse 46 Jacob contrasts his life with the life of his son Joseph.

"The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills."

Jacob recognizes the work of God in the life of Joseph. Jacob for most of his life was conniving, scheming, and calculating, yet still God blessed him; his life was one of bargaining with God: "You do this for me, and I'll do this for you…"

But this type of attitude was void in Joseph's life in spite of what he endured. "He was separated from his brothers."

In the blessing of Joseph we find five great titles for God.

1. The Mighty God of Jacob
2. The Shepherd
3. The Stone of Israel
4. The God of your father
5. The Almighty

Benjamin

49:27: Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf: in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil.

Benjamin would be the tribe with a reputation for fierceness.

This is reflected in the life of those who came out of the tribe of Benjamin. All you need to do is look at Ehud (Judges 3:15-23), Saul (1 Samuel 9:1, 14:47-52), and Paul (Acts 8:1-3).

In Judges 20 we see the Benjamites whip eleven tribes in two major battles; 26,700 against 400,000!

Their fierceness continued even in David's day.

1 Chr. 12:1: Now these are they that came to David to Ziklag, while he yet kept himself close because of Saul the son of Kish: and they were among the mighty men, helpers of the war.

1 Chr. 12:2: They were armed with bows, and could use both the right hand and the left in hurling stones and shooting arrows out of a bow, even of Saul's brethren of Benjamin.

They were able to hurl stones. Surprisingly, a good slinger hurled a stone as far and accurately as a good archer.

Roman military texts recommended archery target practice at about 200 yards (183 meters). Slingers are known to hurl their projectiles even farther, as much as 440 yards (a quarter of a mile).

As for accuracy, one ancient writer noted that the best slingers "would wound not merely the heads of their enemies, but any part of the face at which they might have aimed." Experiments demonstrate that missiles leave a sling in excess of 60 miles per hour (97 km/h).

One Roman writer noted that opponents in leather armor were in far greater danger from sling missiles than arrows. Even if the stone did not penetrate the armor, it was capable of inflicting a fatal internal injury.

Stone slingers or hurlers were the ones the opponent feared the most.

Jacob's last wishes

49:28: All these are the twelve tribes of Israel: and this is it that their father spake unto them, and blessed them; every one according to his blessing he blessed them.

49:29: And he charged them, and said unto them, I am to be gathered unto my people: bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite,

49:30: In the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite for a possession of a buryingplace.

49:31: There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah.

49:32: The purchase of the field and of the cave that is therein was from the children of Heth.

49:33: And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people.

So once Jacob was done blessing his children he tells them of his last wishes.

"I am to be gathered unto my people." Jacob desires that his corpse be carried back to the land of Canaan and to be buried among his people. At the end of his life, Leah would finally have the husband she longed to have by her side, but it would be in death.

Though he was in Egypt, he knew where he belonged; it was in the Promised Land.

And when we die, we too will leave behind the land of Egypt and the angels of God will take us to the Promised Land.

Luke 16:22: And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and <u>was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom</u>: the rich man also died, and was buried;

And when Jacob was done speaking "he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost."

Wouldn't you want to go that way? Make your final wishes known and then lie down and poof—off you go!

Spurgeon said, “Jacob did not yield up the ghost until he had delivered the last sentence of admonition and benediction to his twelve sons. He was immortal till his work was done. So long as God had another sentence to speak by him, death could not paralyze his tongue.”

And this is the way it should be with the Christian—when we are done, God will call us home. When you are in the center of God’s will you need not fear death for your life is fully in His hands.

The hymn *My Savior First of All* says:

When my lifework is ended and I cross the swelling tide,

When the bright and glorious morning I shall see;

I shall know my Redeemer when I reach the other side,

And His smile will be the first to welcome me.

One commentary said: “They say there are three basic attitudes towards death. The ancient Greeks held to what can be called the death-accepting view. Our modern world is sold out to a death-denying attitude. The Biblical approach is the death-defying attitude.

So Jacob died at the age of 147 years in 1685 B.C.

Next week we will try and finish the book of Genesis!