

Jacob had privately adopted and blessed Joseph's two sons as his own. Then he had called his sons to his side. Do you suppose when he had crossed his arms to bless the younger he thought of his blind father Isaac, how God could have moved him to cross his arms if Jacob had only waited in faith upon God for the blessing? How different his days could have been than the "few and evil" he confessed to Pharaoh at the end.

Still, we marvel at the godly presumption of this old man at the end of life. He was going to tell each of them before them all what was to befall them in the last days. Whose last days? Theirs personally? No, he reached ahead to the when Shiloh is to have come, as promised Judah. And beyond. The interpretation of his statements may not have been obvious to them. They are not even all obvious to us who have the advantage some thirty seven centuries of accomplished history. He forecast for some where they would settle in the land they were to conquer two hundred fifty years later. For others he marked some personal characteristic that would be reflected in their descendants. And for others he marked a significant incident in one's life that would permanently affect the destiny of their descendants. All this from Jacob, the heel grabber, supplanter. But now he had grown to be in tune with his Maker and Shepherd. Now he was not only able to forecast future events but pronounce blessings up on each son with the assurance and power of a godly patriarch.

(A patriarch was the priest, prophet and lawgiver of his descendants in ages before the nation of Israel was founded or any scriptures had been given. Subsequently God in His grace was to pronounce a very comprehensive and detailed law to Moses that would be recorded in scripture. And still later He would send prophets, and finally his Son to reveal Himself fully to the descendants of Jacob and to the whole world.

*Hebrews 1:1 God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, 2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; 3 who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.*

At this time the patriarchs were gradually being supplanted by kings such as Pharaoh and those found in Canaan. The kings were neither priests nor prophets. These necessary functions were no longer combined in one person. That is until Jesus came. He is Prophet, Priest and King.)

Jacob began his prophetic blessings with Leah's six. He barred Reuben from headship of the Israelites because of his unstable, impetuous character demonstrated in his very personal sin against his father. He was all that the natural man ever is, firstborn or not, simply another reproduction of the prideful, sinful human race.

Jacob's next two sons also were denied the leadership role and separate plats in the land because of their violent

attack on Shechem to avenge Dinah. Though Jacob seemed to have accepted avenging of her honor was just, he could not bless their deceptiveness, excessive violence and cruelty. Simeon was later relegated to a plat of land within Judah's inheritance. Levi was dispersed though out all Israel, but in an honorable, spiritual role as agents of the priesthood and as interpreters of the Law.

Judah's pledge of himself as surety for Benjamin and his success in fulfilling it, won Jacob's confidence and respect. This despite an earlier departure from God in his marriage with the Canaanite women and subsequent consequences. He was granted preeminence and promised the authority of the scepter for the duration of his tribe's history. It began with Caleb, one of the faithful spies, and culminated in the birth, rejection and crucifixion of Jesus, great David's greater Son.

Zebulon and Issachar were those who settled what had become Galilee where Nazareth was and where the Lord lived and walked. (Isaiah 9:1-2.)

*Matthew 4:15 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.*

Joseph's sons came to possess the greatest land area. Ephraim, Judah and Benjamin came to be located nearest to the royal city, Jerusalem. Benjamin was ancestor to king Saul, but he forfeited the royal dynasty to David.

There are many lessons and insights to be gotten from studying the histories and destinies of the thirteen men treated as Jacob's sons. But Jacob's prophetic blessing is a concise, basic prophetic future of the nation God formed of his sons. At our present time in history much has been fulfilled, yet much remains to unfold. The restoration of Israel as a nation in 1948 was consistent with prophecy.

The apostles and New Testament prophets completed the scriptures by the end of the first century. Yet soon after many believers began to stray from the clear teaching about Israel's future in the Bible. They began to appropriate blessings prophesied for Israel .to the Church

*2Timothy 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, **rightly dividing the word of truth.***

Jacob's blessing clearly forecasts a yet future role for the nation of Israel on earth. We must not forsake the Church's heavenly nature and seek to usurp Israel's national earthly hope. Jesus prayed for a heavenly focus and outlook for us.

*John 17:16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world..*

Many "Christian leaders" today are publically denouncing Israel's right to any national standing on earth, yet which must occur before He returns to reign, Daniel 11:36-40. They are trying to stop any support of Israel by the United

States. They apparently are claiming God's promises to Israel are theirs. Do they want to dominate the earth before Christ returns? Scripture condemns that while predicting it, Revelation 17 & 18. Commentators of the

nineteenth century knew better than that. See extract — over.

By Ronald Canner, March 16, 2011.

Extract from <<http://www.stempublishing.com/authors/kelly/7subjects/jacob.html>>

(Chapter 26) of "JACOB," by Wm. Kelly.

Genesis 48. JACOB BLESSING JOSEPH'S SONS.

"It is sadly instructive to observe how post-apostolic tradition lost the heavenly testimony by effacing Israel's hope, and appropriating its earthly place. We need not expend words in repeating these ecclesiastical vanities of Christendom; . . . "

"The true bearing is on Israel's future. For Scripture is prophetic generally and here avowedly so, as Jacob said. It begins with Israel in the flesh, anything but the Israel of God. Reuben, Simeon, and Levi indicate ruin through corruption, and violence: the two characters of human evil from the beginning to the end of man's sad story, saddest in God's people according to privilege and responsibility. Then, in Judah, only the blind can fail to see God's purpose in Christ born of the tribe but as King (not as the glorified Head in heaven), to whom shall be the gathering of peoples; but withal the failure for the time, because Shiloh was not received of the Jews. Yet the purpose stands firm in Him who came. Next, we see Zebulun going out in commerce of sea and ships among the Gentiles; in Issachar depressions and compromises for selfish quiet as

the world's slave; and in Dan, though claiming to judge, falling under Satan's power worse than idolatry; yet at this crisis a remnant looking for Jehovah's salvation. Thereon the oppressed rises to press an oppressor, as shown by Gad; while Asher points out Israel's enjoyment of their proper blessings; and Naphthali, freedom in a gracious witness for God. The whole rises to the fitting climax in Joseph, after being separated from his brethren and exalted to a wider and loftier sphere, bringing in abundant and unfailing blessing clearly identified with the true Shepherd, the Stone of Israel once sorely wounded, but flowing forth over all enclosures: blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep beneath, blessings of the race and the creature, blessings beyond bound and comparison, centring in Him Who is worthy. And with Joseph goes Benjamin, the son of his father's right hand, when power in Israel will put down every rival and share the spoil. Thus is Israel to be blessed and exalted, because in faith under Messiah and the new covenant at the end of days."

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