

Genesis 49 - Joseph

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[0 : 00] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. It is our prayer that you will be blessed by the preaching of God's Word. And we're going to get to that because we're going to get to the story of Joseph. We left off with the story of the 12, and we talked about how sometimes it seems like 14, but Levi didn't get a possession of land, and Joseph's sons got two.

And I won't bring up all 12 men like I did the other night here, as I had so many of you up here. But I do want to run through some of them for you real quickly.

So, Sergius, you'll be my assistant tonight. You're going to be split personality with 12 different people, okay? But at the end of the night, you get to hold this bow over here, and that's pretty good.

But don't pull it back because you'll embarrass yourself because it's Lydia Littlefield's, and if you can't pull it back, you'll never hear the end of it, at least from me, and you may break it. All right, so if you'll hold this here, we go through some of the people.

We talked about Savage, Simeon, and Levi. Remember that it was Jacob here. He brings in all 12 of his sons. He's speaking to them, and I'm imagining family reunion, thinking you're 12.

[1 : 04] I don't imagine any of you have 12 uncles, but thinking 12 men in your family gathered around. And he's not just making guesses like, hey, when you're a little kid, you're really bad. You know, like I can say, I think my son has a job in math, and I'm pretty sure my daughter's going to prison at an early age.

That's an educated guess. But there's no prophecy around that right now, okay? But that's not what Jacob's doing. Jacob is saying, I'm speaking from what the Lord told me, and I'm going to tell you things about you, these characteristics.

So maybe if Canon will find the picture from the other night of the different imagery there. But we had Savage, Simeon, and Levi, and we had heard what they had done to that one city and how they had destroyed it.

And then God with Jacob here is speaking and calling them savage people. So you have your two really mean uncles at the family reunion that picks on everybody that's there.

So let's, the next person, let's see who we have here. Take your time, you know. It's just a one-hour program. All right. Let's see. What are you doing? All right. All right.

[2 : 06] Then we have these blessed but marginalized men, Zebulon, Isakar, and Dan. And I said they were blessed because he's giving out blessings, but I said they were marginalized because we don't hear much about them.

1 Chronicles is going to tell us that Zebulon had a large presence in David's army and their hearts were undivided, but we hear very little about them. Isakar was loyal to Deborah and Barak and judges.

They said in 1 Chronicles they were men that understood the times. Isakar thinks rest is good and he's living the good life. He did not bow his shoulder to the burdens. But evidently this family, they weren't disciplined enough and ready to work to defend themselves because they end up being whipped by others and having to pay a tribute.

That's what we learned about them. Cannon, we found that picture of those animals and when you find it, just put it up there. And then we get to Dan who's up to no good. Samson comes from them. He didn't secure the original portion of the land.

Dan is the one that they're going up to the north and on their way they hear of the, good job. You didn't have to do anything. All right. Dan is the one that on his way up north, he hears a guy speaking.

[3 : 13] He's like, I recognize that dialect. He's from West Kentucky or he's from not my part of the country. And they pick up their Levite priest. They're kind of their lucky charm named Micah. And they say, come with me.

And then Micah grabs a grab bag of little gods on his way up with them. And they take them with them. And so in each of these here, we find the different imagery being used of them.

Judah being a lion. We see Dan is deceitful here. Simeon and Levi, they said they were weapons of cruelty there.

Reuben. If you'll turn to Reuben. What do we know? Reuben is unstable as water. That was an easy one. It's in your Bible and on the screen here. He was unstable as water.

And he was the oldest. Remember the oldest being he's sitting there. And we said, rut row Reuben. Or really Reuben because he's waiting for this blessing. And God said, it's not you.

[4 : 08] Simeon and Levi said, okay, I got this. We're number two and number three. It's not you guys either. Then we get to Judah, which is the lion here. And if you'll find Judah, we find that Judah is the one that gets the promise given.

That the divine prince, that Jesus is going to come from his line. Double portion to Joseph. Divine prince through Judah. And he was justified because he's the brother who recognized, who became sorrowful, who repented.

And so we ended the other night on Sunday night saying, out of our uncles, as we're saying here, out of the examples given to us out of these men, we don't want to be controlled by our temper like Simeon and Levi.

We don't want to be unstable because that brings place for immorality. God didn't reprimand him for immorality, but for being unstable, which always leads to immorality. But we want to be an example like Judah, knowing no matter what happened in your past, no matter what you've been involved with, you come to him with a contrite heart.

He will restore you and he'll work in your life and he has wonderful promises for you. So, so far I'm picking Judah as my action hero that I want to be when I grow up.

[5 : 17] But we're going to continue looking here and we're going to move on to Joseph. Gad, we learn about Asher prophesied. I like Asher. Asher is the uncle or the son here of Jacob that would prophesy that he would enjoy rich foods.

This is Mr. Clapp over here, okay? He's a guy who really appreciates good food. He knows how to cook. He does things for the family. This tribe went on to possess a region of East Galilee, which is known for its olive groves.

Gad, he was told that he would be knocked down, that he would get back up. Again, that would be his story. We also found that the children of Gad, the children of Reuben, and Numbers 32 are the ones who didn't want to go off and fight with their brothers and secure the land.

They were timid and scared and they said, we like this land, good enough. You guys go get it. And then Moses says, shall your brethren go to war and shall you sit here? The pastor preaches a wonderful message from that passage.

As in that lie, little said of them, but it says they give good words. They have a sweet spirit and they're gracious. And we don't see that they accomplish much here. But these men, we find their characteristics.

[6 : 27] And then we got the bad boy, Benjamin. Thinking that the youngest, everything we find. But it said of him in verse number 27, Benjamin shall raven as a wolf. In the morning he shall devour the prey.

And at night he shall divide the spoil. And so we learned something because it's prophetic. We didn't know this about Benjamin yet, but we're going to find out that. King Saul comes from it.

And obviously Jonathan comes from Benjamin. But the grace came through that Paul was a Benjamite as well.

And then we get to where we've been going here. Joseph. All right. See if you can do it under 30 seconds this time. Sergi. All right. Maybe again, keeping him busy. Don't get a paper cut. All right.

So we have joyous Joseph. You can put this down because you are going to stay Joseph the remainder of the night. All right. And so we have joyous Joseph. And we just read it.

[7 : 22] Brother Ty read it for us. But let's read it once again. Starting in chapter number 49. Starting in verse number 22 and 24. And we're going to look at the characteristics of Joseph.

Joseph is a fruitful bough. Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a whelm whose branches run over the wall. The archers are sorely grieved him and shot at him and hated him.

But his bough 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 and the stone of Israel.

So we find here that Joseph is a fruitful bough. He is a branch that runs over the walls and that he has fruit there. I'm going to let you sit down.

I know you've been working all day at Aldi. All right. You know you can buy a shopping cart for a quarter at Aldi. I do it every time I go there. All right. And so this is Joseph here for us. And it says that he is a fruitful branch, a fruitful bough.

[8 : 18] But then it goes on to talk about that as he's being shot at with arrows. He is a tree that was so productive and lush and fruitful that so much that the comparison to the other trees, they looked unproductive and unfruitful.

And he was. We know about Joseph here that he was a leader among his brothers. Growing up, he was given the coat of many colors, which symbolized his authority. And the promises that God made is a fruitful branch.

And Potiphar's house, he ended up in charge of everything. Potiphar was not even taking account for what possessions he had. He just said, Joseph, you got this. Prison, he became the superintendent.

You put him in prison, he's going to rise to the top. He was the governor of all of Egypt, second in command of the entire world, only second to the throne there of Potiphar. He was greatly blessed.

He was a person whose branches were full there with fruit. However, this made Joseph a very obvious target to everybody, and especially Satan.

[9 : 18] And it said the archers were sorely grieved him, and they shot at him. So he was a large target. He's always attacked at. Archer is kindly a cowardly weapon, if you think about it.

I don't do much of any kind of hunting. But if you're hunting and you're fighting one another, the person that has the bow and arrow gets to be off way in the distance. You know, they don't have to be involved in hand-to-hand.

Maybe they could be off at the top. I know when you're hunting deer, you've got to be much closer. But if you're standing on top of a wall, you could shoot off the wall, and you could hit them, even where they could not touch you with the sword.

Listen to what it says in Psalm 64, verse number 3, describing the words of bitter people. Who wet their tongue like a sword and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words.

People take it. We're not physically shot at. Where pastor's at in Kenya right now, there's one pastor that leads a very large ministry there. He has a scar. His house was set on fire by one tribe, and when he ran outside, he got shot with an arrow, and it went through him, and then he goes to Brother Randy's house that night, and all these other pastors come, and so hundreds-something people live in their house for like three weeks as they're fighting.

[10:34] Any of you have a story you want to match that one? No? Okay. We don't have anybody shooting bows at us or arrows at us, but we get shot at like this all the time, don't we? People will craft words to us, these bitter words, and then they send them distantly to you, maybe face-to-face, but typically maybe they could sometimes through Facebook, through a letter, through a phone call, through sometimes they try to distance themselves through like a kind, a remark where they try to act like they're not really saying anything.

I'm just joking, like that's going to do any good, you know? And so we have these that are shot at us, and I know this because I've always been a small guy. My favorite saying growing up was, sticks and stones may break my bones, but they'll also break yours, all right?

I'm not sure if that's how you were taught it, but that's how I was taught it. But I knew that I was not going to get a fight at anybody and win, but I could say things that would hurt people, and I would practice.

You know, going to middle school, and I'll tell you how we go to snack time, and there's a big window, and they're staring at my trailer, and I love you, Mom. I know you watch these services. I'm thankful for the home we had, but when you're an insecure middle schooler, and everybody's staring at your house, and they can tell you that everything they have is better, and you can't lie because they're looking at it, you know, and being insecure, I was constantly just waiting for an opportunity to take somebody down.

If somebody was mean to me, I would just wait for the opportunity for them to say something so that I could say something and pierce their heart. I'm sure there's many people in counseling today because of it.

[12:03] No, I don't imagine. I wasn't good at it, thankfully. In application here, we don't worry about physical arrows shot at us, but these verbal ones, these bitter words. You ever been hit by one of these arrows?

If not, I'll just move on to something else, okay? You ever shot any of these arrows? Some of us may not be hunters, but we can hit something 100 yards away with these words, and it's a cowardly way of attack.

The attacker's doing it at a distance, and Joseph is getting it. His brothers shot arrows at him when they verbally abused him and hated him, would not speak peaceably, is how the Bible said in Genesis 34.

Chapter 34, verse number 4, they had nothing nice to say, nothing peaceably. More arrows were shot at him as they conspired against him and took him and sold him to slavery.

I mean, could you imagine not only the shackles on his feet as he's walking into slavery, his stinking brothers sold him into slavery. I mean, that has to hurt on just a level that I cannot even imagine.

[13 : 00] Potiphar's wife, he settles in. He's a fruitful branch there. He's in leadership, and then Potiphar's wife makes his slandering comments about him and lies, destroys his reputation.

His arrows, those brothers hating him, arrows of his brothers conspiring against him, arrows of being sold into slavery, arrows of being falsely accused of attempted rape, arrows of being wrongly imprisoned.

Then he makes a buddy in prison, and he says, Hey, butler, I interpreted your dream. Just don't forget me, which seems to be a pretty small price if somebody interprets your dream, and then he goes and forgets him, and it's another arrow that's there as he's waiting those two years.

And so he's a fruitful branch, but because he is, because all those that live godly, all those that will be a fruitful branch shall suffer persecution, and you're going to be shot at.

As the apple tree with the heaviest branches, you're going to climb, and you're going to shake it every chance you can to get the fruit off of. It seems like this world says, Every time I see fruit happening in the life of one of my people, Satan in this world wants to shake you just a little bit harder.

[14 : 09] He will not break you, because we find their help is in the Lord. Joseph's brother shot arrows. Potiphar, the butler's wife, did. But we find that he did not fight back.

He didn't retaliate. He didn't seek revenge. He didn't offer a counterpunch. I don't think we need the box, do we, Sergei? Sergei used to be a boxer.

I cannot imagine the discipline in boxers and people that box. All right? All right. The discipline that a boxer must have. I watch this, and they punch each other, and at the end of the thing, they hug.

I'm thinking, there's no way. I mean, coach and wrestling. I'm either running at the end of this thing, or I'm going to pick up something. But I couldn't do it. I read recently a story of Charles Stanley in a business meeting.

A man comes up, and a deacon punches him in the face, and he doesn't do anything. And his son says, I learned about my dad's strength that night. My son would learn how Micah would beat me up after I swung back at him, if that was to happen in here.

[15 : 08] But that strength that is found in holding back and not retaliating is what we find. Joseph, a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches ran over the well. Because of that, the archers have sorely grieved him and shot at him and hated him, but his bow abode in strength.

What is the hardest part of the bow? It's not the letting go, but it's the pulling back and the waiting and holding it there. If you'll stand up, if you hold it there, if you pull it back, you think you can pull this thing back without letting it go?

Have you ever done this before? All right, this will be even more fun, okay? See if you can pull that bow back for us. Hold right here, this red thing. Just don't let go. Let's see how you do. Not really.

If Lydia was here, if she could help us. All right, grab the red thing here like that. No, let's not do that. Just with your fingers right there. All right, let's see if you can pull that thing back and hold it. Yeah, this is right.

Hold on to it. Miss Littlefield's where you're going to break it. Hold on to it. Just pull it back and hold it. All right, hold it right there. How long do you think you can hold this here? The remainder of the night?

[16 : 15] Anybody have any idea how much weight's on this thing? Don't let go of this. This is at the point that requires the most strength for surgery. It's a simple thought. Letting go is easy, but right here is where the strength is.

Now, let's let it go back. I'm really worried. Just put this thing back together. Yeah, hand me this. All right. All right, I'm going to set this down. We shouldn't have got a girl's bow and arrow because if you broke a guise, it wouldn't be near as bad.

All right, Joseph, you'll have a seat there for us. But he was attacked, but he didn't attack back. He was shot at, but he didn't shoot back. He was assaulted, and he didn't swing back. Remember, he was more than able to shoot arrows at his brothers.

Genesis 45, when Joseph revealed to his brothers that the Bible says his brethren could not answer him for they were troubled at his presence. Genesis 45 and verse 3, because they knew that all the arrows were down in the hand of Joseph, and he could destroy them.

They couldn't eat. They couldn't live. They would not make it out of that room if Joseph decided, I'm going to let go of this, and I'm going to let go of this force, and it's going to destroy you.

[17 : 20] But he showed incredible strength. His bow, it was silent. He didn't shoot back. Genesis 45, Joseph said to his brothers, come near to me, I pray you. And they came near and said, I am Joseph, your brother, whom you sowed into Egypt.

Now, therefore, be not grieved nor angry with yourselves that you sowed me hither, for God did send me before you to preserve life. I have really fallen in love with this portion of Scripture here lately, because in chapter 50, he says, I'm going to act towards you as God.

And we looked at this together. He said, I'm going to act in the place as God would act towards you and how he acts. And Jonah hated that about God, that when Jonah knew that if the gospel of God, his grace was being preached, that those people would respond.

And he wasn't mad that they would respond, but he was mad that God would forgive those Ninevites. And we find here that he provides provision. He will nourish them. And verse 14, and he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept.

And Benjamin wept upon his neck. Moreover, he kissed all his brethren and wept upon them. After that, his brethren talked with him. He's in a position. He has the bow.

[18 : 29] He could destroy them. They had been shooting arrows at him his whole childhood. They are the reason that he went through all of that. He has the power that the strength of God lets him keep that bow silent.

And he doesn't shoot back. His bow was silent. He didn't shoot back. He's the second in charge. But he doesn't do anything about it. Potiphar's wife lies about him and trying to have him killed.

He could have fought back, but he doesn't. He could have had the butler killed at his time, but he doesn't do that. His bow bowed in strength. And that's what is true about strength is that power.

He had the power to retaliate, but he showed mercy, self-restraint, temperance, and true strength. Your true test of strength is not knocking someone down that attacks you, but having the power to knock them down but not knocking them down.

That is true strength. And we see it in Joseph. We also see it again in the life of David. People that can say it is well with my soul. Soul throws spears at him, and he doesn't.

[19 : 33] On two opportunities, he could kill Saul. But he says, I'm not going to. I'm not going to shoot arrows at the man that I'm following here. We also find inside of his family with Absalom, he wouldn't.

And we see that. I can see that. And I understand having a son, why he didn't go after Absalom. But there's a man there, that Shemaiah, that when David is being chased out of town and Absalom is making an embarrassment to the family, this guy named Shemaiah comes up and throws rocks and cursings at David and says awful things about him.

And the men get beside David and they say, let us kill him. Let us shoot your arrows back. Let's silence this guy. And David says, we're not going to have that happen. If my son can say these things, this man will say these things, but I will let my strength will be found there in the Lord, and his family and all of those people, when people criticized him, he didn't fight back.

And it's the natural thing to shoot back. You've heard that it's been said, Matthew 5, 38, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. But I say unto you that ye resist not evil, but whosoever smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him also the other.

It's been said and it's still being said to this day. And you hear it said and you also say it to yourself that you think what you did to me, you thought that was good.

[21 : 02] You wait till I get to a point in power position so that I can get you back. We want to retaliate, but the spiritual thing is the rest of the Lord. We want the counterpoints, but the biblical thing is to be calm in Christ.

And how were David and Joseph strong enough not to shoot back? And we know of Joseph. It says, his bow abode in strength and the arms of his hand were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob.

It may be your strength that pulls that back, but it will only be the hands of the God that will hold you there when you want to shoot back to somebody. And don't try to do it on your own because that is a strength that is too hard.

In the first few minutes you might be able to do it, but you can't do it for a lifetime that it can only be done when God is there holding back what you would want to do.

He provides a temperance. So our source is strength and temperance. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, maintenance, and temperance.

[22 : 05] God's hands on your hands holding you back. God's Spirit controlling your spirit holding you back. You cannot do it on your own.

And we shouldn't fight back here. 1 Peter 2, 23, Who, when he was reviled and reviled not again, when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself unto him that judges rightly.

He was silent on the cross. He was concerned for the persecutors. Talk about being able to shoot the arrows. Talk about being able to change the situation. Jesus on the cross could have done that, but he didn't because he was kept there.

Joseph here is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a whelm, whose branches run over the wall. The archers are sorely grieved him and shot at him and hated him, 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 and the stones of Israel. All of those things, the fruit that was coming in John chapter number 15, as he is a branch and God is divine, and that abiding is what brought fruit, but it's also what brought temperance.

[23 : 17] So do not think that in the same person that does not have temperance, that cannot allow God to control their spirit and their anger, will also be the same type of person that produces fruit.

It's the same person every time. The person that God is working on the inside, they can say, it is well with my soul. I find my security. I find my strength on the inside.

Hey, Bo, down in Mapleton, there's going to come times and things are going to be said. It's going to hurt, but you've got to let the Lord hold your hand. He's got to hold things back, and you've got to trust that God is going to take care of you.

And that's true of Bo because he ministers, and it's true of every one of you in here that try to minister. If you go to the family member, especially when you try to minister to the people that are hurt, because they're always going to bite back at you.

I know it sounds mean to compare people that are hurt to hurting dogs, but people that work with hurting animals are the ones that are going to often get bit. And there's people that need to be loved. They're going to bite at you.

[24 : 23] They're going to attack you. They're going to snap at you. And when you want to pull back that arrow and let go, pray to the God of heaven to sustain your hand. Because of the 12 sons of Jacob, that's what I want from the life of Joseph.

And I know that the fruit that would abide of me will not be happening if I'm not able to allow him to control my spirit and have temperance in my life. Thank you, Sergi.

You did a great job tonight. We didn't break the bow and arrow, which is always a plus. So I don't know where you're at. We're going to pray here at your seat, at the altar, as we always do.

Some of you may be right there right now. You may be shaking, holding back these arrows that you want to shoot at somebody. It might be in a marriage. It might be in a relationship with your children. It may be with a co-worker.

And you may be tired today because you've been shot at all day, and you're trying to decide what you're going to do. Or maybe you realize that you've been shooting arrows at that person, and that is not what should be happening for somebody who comes to this place and can honestly say, it is well with my soul.

[25 : 27] You don't need to defend yourself. Our Lord will take care of us. And so make that your prayer there. And ask God in those moments in your life that you'll be able to have that, and you'll let his spirit control your spirit.

Heavenly Father, thank you for the example here, Joseph. Lord, you know that I need it in my life, and I believe my brothers and sisters. Well, Lord, I am certain of it. You have written it down in your Holy Script for us here to read, and this Bible is still relevant and timely to us.

So I pray that your spirit, Lord, will make application. The Holy Spirit will make applications in the heart right now and take it exactly where it needs to go. I pray that there's people tomorrow and this week that are affected by the decisions that are made right now.

Lord, I pray that you will hold and steady our hands and our bows will be silent even when arrows are shooting around us. This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia.

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