

Genesis 49

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[0 : 0 0] 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. You can go to Genesis chapter 49. I'll meet you there in a second.

Genesis chapter 49 as we continue in the book of Genesis. I guess I was 12 years old when my mom came and got me and my stepbrother and my stepsister. I have a stepbrother and a stepsister. That one day a year we were all the same age.

And then my older stepbrother was in the house of my sister who would have been about 18 and I was 12. And she brought us in the living room and my stepdad was sitting in a recliner.

And I knew something was wrong. We all sat around him. My stepdad began to explain to me, all of us, how he had cancer. He was very aggressive. He didn't catch it early and that he was going to die.

My stepdad never went to church with us, but he didn't seem opposed to the idea that my mom would take us to church. And he never gave any problems to it. But for the next month or so, maybe a month and a half, my stepdad was there every service.

[1 : 0 4] And I learned something about him that night that really drew me close to him. I was frightened of him most of the time. He seemed to work us really hard. He didn't seem to be too loving towards us.

But he shared with us there, he was going to die in just a matter of maybe two months, that he was a Christian, that when he was younger he wanted to serve the Lord, but he kind of got away from it and got entangled with the things of life.

And he told us that he wanted us to serve God with our lives. Me and my stepbrothers, we all remember this. And just recently, my oldest stepbrother, who was away from the Lord for a long time, graduated with a degree in ministry.

And he's now serving as a pastor in a church in West Kentucky. And then my stepbrother works in a youth ministry. He's a layman and he works there. And we all go back to that, what he said.

I honestly don't remember another conversation I had with him. And I was raised with him from the age of six to about 12. I don't remember another thing he said, but I feel like I could tell you everything he said that night.

[2 : 1 3] And it had a big impact on me. Because when you go to die, what you say has a great weight behind it because you calculate it. The words here that Jacob's going to speak to his sons, they're more than calculated.

They're inspired. They're prophetic. He isn't saying, I've been watching you kids growing up. I know your temperaments. I have a pretty good guess what's going to happen to you. He looked at these guys and said, this is what's going to happen to you and your descendants.

It's a pretty heavy place. And it's a poetic thing. I don't understand all the nuances and all the words that are being used. But I know Judah means praise. Then he uses that word. And there's different animals that are being mentioned here.

Jacob, if you could show the picture. He said, I'll get your picture ready. I have no idea what it means. But I'll have it ready. I don't know if you can see it all. Issachar is a strong donkey. Judah is a old lion.

Old meaning mature enough to roar. Benjamin, the youngest, is a wolf. A hide. Nathalie, he is a hind, a red deer there. Zebulun is a haven of ships.

[3 : 14] He's a harbor. Joseph, that's grapes there. He was a branch filled with fruit. Reuben was unstable as water.

And then Simeon and Levi, that's one of those sticks with the ball at the end. They were instruments of cruelty is how he uses it. In his speech, he uses all this imagery there to use.

Some animals, some not. And some pretty heavy stuff that he talks about here with them. And so this passage here goes through all 12 tribes. So tonight is a shotgun shot over your head.

It is a bird shot. I don't know what it is that God would lay on your heart from this passage. In other parts of Scripture, it seems to be very specific in what we would know. But when we look at the lives of 12 different people, I don't know which one of them would be you.

If you're like me, I always pick somebody. When I was a little kid, I always wanted to be the blue Power Ranger. Or I always wanted to be something else. You watch something and you say, I want to be that person. I didn't really watch Power Rangers, but my brother did.

[4 : 14] But I couldn't think of another example. All right? But you pick it out. And so maybe that's it. So I want tonight to get as many of the brothers as we can and show you. So I'm going to need some help here. I'm going to need 12 guys, which is a big asking for the night, a big thing to ask for.

But I'll take you four guys, you three guys over there. That puts me at seven. Brother Ty's always good. Brother Chuck's in. We'll let you guys be the older brothers. All right? Let's see. We're at nine.

Come on, Coach. Ten. Tim. All right. Gregory. All right. If you can, guys, if you bring three chairs right here and then three chairs right here and then three people sit in front of them and then three sit on the front.

So we're all going to sit together. I was really looking forward to seeing how pastor is going to preach this passage. And now I don't get to find out. And I can guarantee you it's not the same way that I'm about to. All right?

And if he's watching online, I apologize in advance. All right. So we got our 12 tribesmen up here. We need two more guys sitting up here. All right. Did I get more than 12? That would be pretty awesome.

[5 : 14] All right. If so, let's stay up here. What are we at? 13? That's great. We'll use that. All right? I know what we'll do with 13 here. So we have 12 tribesmen here. And they're meeting.

And they're with their father, Jacob. Think about this, men. At the end of his life, he brings his... He gets to see his grandchildren in the chapter before with Joseph. He sees his grandchildren. Never expect to see Joseph.

But he sees his grandchildren. Then he gathers up his whole family, says what he wants to say. He pulls his feet up and dies. Just like that. Talk about calculating it down to the last minute.

But God was working there because God had taken a family, taken them into Egypt now, and was making a nation from them. And the rest of the Bible, and when we read the Old Testament, getting even to the New Testament is going to be what comes out of these 12 men.

Man, this is a motley crew of guys if I've ever seen it. But we'll work with 13 here because sometimes when you read it, it gets confusing. It seems like there's 12 tribes, there's 13 tribes, or there's 14 tribes.

[6 : 15] Levi doesn't get any property. Joseph's two sons get some property. So it always seems to fluctuate. In Deuteronomy, Joseph doesn't get included, and Levi doesn't get it included, but the two sons get two.

So that's why it's called the 12 tribes. You can calculate it a couple different ways. Brother Lowe is running the numbers here for me. He confirms, all right, where our CFO here says, I know what I'm talking about.

But you can add it up a couple different ways, but it ends up being the 12 tribes here. So let me hand these out to you. All right, Brother Chuck, you would be Reuben for sure, okay?

You are the oldest here. And I'm going to call you really, it's really Reuben. Really comma Reuben. I wasn't going to say Rutt-Roe, Reuben, for those that remember the Jetson, when he would say Rutt-Roe, George, because he's going to have a moment here where he's like, Rutt-Roe, I did not see this thing coming.

Now, is Titus and Justice here? That would work out, okay. We'll let Ben, and we'll let Titus here be the savage. Simeon and Levi, okay?

[7 : 17] Habitations of cruelty. These guys, give me a ferocious look. All right, excellent. All right, let's see. There we got justified Judah. We'll let that be you, Daniel.

He's the fourth child, but he ends up getting to take the place as the oldest. He doesn't get the double portion. That's going to go to Joseph, but he gets what would be called the divine prince is going to come through him.

Shiloh, in verse number 10, which is Jesus, is going to come through right here. The family of bow-tie-wearing people Jesus would come from. All right, then we have our blessed but marginalized brothers.

All right, Zebulon, Issachar, and Dan. You three men right there. And so I said, they're blessed, but they're kind of, well, show everybody, Tim. I didn't just give it to you to read, all right? I kind of said marginalized.

Pastor, the way he put it, he said they were just chilling out in the land. And you'll see why their influence is smaller than some others. Then we've got three other guys, which is Gad, Esher, and Ephraim, which are the blessed brothers.

[8 : 18] That's you here, Cheerio, if you'll take that. And then we have Joseph, Joyous Joseph. That will be you, Brother Ty.

Good choice. And then we are going to have Luke here as bad boy Benjamin. Bad boy, baby boy, bad boy Benjamin. If he was a wrestler, that would be his name for sure.

And then what we have here is the two others. We would have Levi that doesn't get a land. And then we would have, back here, we'd have Manasseh and Ephraim.

So let's look at these guys here. We're told in 1 Corinthians chapter number 10 that the Old Testament, the stories are given us as in samples, that we should look at their lives and we should learn.

Today in our adult Bible fellowship class, David DeVoy taught us why the Apostle Paul was such a great example of the transformed life by the gospel. Because Jesus didn't need to be transformed by the gospel because he was always perfect.

[9 : 21] But by looking at Paul, we could learn something about what it means to be transformed by the gospel. And then we have these men up here in a family reunion.

And they have different names. I had an uncle that I talked to the day it was his birthday. We called Snake. All right? And you can imagine what he was like. My dad was called Crash. Because when he was a teenager, he drove a car without any brakes in it.

And he went into a dealership and he hit eight different cars. And they found out that the dealership paid him to do it for insurance money. But he was known as Crash.

And I was always known as Little Crash. And so you have these nicknames like the animals back up there. Jacob, if you'll put it for me. You've got these different characteristics and these different names of people that we look at.

But in a church, oftentimes like the lesson that Ed gave us a second ago when we talk about liberty and grace, we talk a lot about our identity in Christ.

[10 : 20] In the book of Romans, we're talking a lot about our liberty. But oftentimes, they can lead us to think that your actions will not affect your life and those around you. Because even though we're secure in our identity of Christ, it doesn't mean that sin won't have a built-in consequence.

It doesn't mean that the bad decisions you're making not only will affect you, but then it's going to affect generations to come. And we're going to see that here in these people. We find in the Bible that there even comes to a point where a person is so, it's not a Romans 14 issue.

It's that I know it's right. I don't care to do it. Two people from the church came to talk to me. I love my sin. And then we get to the point where the church would pray and say, we turn you over to the destruction of Satan.

Sin is not a small matter. Sin hurts people in this life. We're forgiven from sin, but it destroys people. So the Bible tells us that life is a vapor.

And Jacob knows this, that it seems to go so quickly. So the question is, what is it that Jacob is going to say to these people, to the wolf and to the lion?

[11 : 26] What will he say when he speaks to them? And as I told you, it's prophetic. In verse 13, he says, Zebel and Shal, 16 Dan Shal, 17 Dan Shal, 19 Gad had a troop and they shall.

It's pointing forward. You can take it down, Jacob, if you will. But it's pointing forward. And what Jacob, I'll be Jacob here. I get to choose characters. I'll be Jacob here. What he's going to say to these different men, as I said, is not an educated guess.

But God spoke to him and told him what to say to them. And so as you look to family members, your uncles, as you look to these men as examples, as I would hope my kids would look to a brother Chuck for an example, all of us right now as a church family, we look back in the Old Testament and we're going to look at their life or look at their story.

So first of all, we get to really Reuben. And this is what he's going to say. He's the oldest. He would think that he knows what Jacob's going to say to him.

You're going to get a double portion and it's going to be a lot of land because we have been given all this land in Egypt. Verses 3 and 4 is what it says. Reuben, thou art my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power.

[12 : 43] You like that? Yeah, that's good so far. Number four, you're unstable as water. Thou shalt not excel because thou wentest up to the father's bed, then defoulest thou, he went up to my couch.

He told him that he was as unstable as water. Remember, and we learned that his immorality, how he slept with the concubine and he goes out there and he doesn't give his daughter-in-law a child with him and all these things that are going on.

But we find here he's not being criticized for his immorality, but he's being criticized for his instability. If you want to make a provision for your flesh, if you want to give yourself a chance for sin, create an unstable environment in your home like Reuben.

It's been said that the instability here gave the openness there for the immorality.

Because unlike Reuben, our Jesus here, he is stable, he is a rock, and he's never changing. It seems here in Reuben's life that it seems that his instability was the fault line from which the earthquake of immorality emanated.

[13 : 57] He was unstable and he led his family in an unstable way, and it was only natural that immorality would come there. And so what is Jacob's criticism when he characterizes Reuben?

He says you're unstable and because of that you have no right to lead this family. What a strong message all of us men as we look to Reuben, as we go back in the Old Testament, we look to Reuben and say, if you're an unstable man, and I've got most of you up here on stage, all right, just talk among yourselves, I'll preach to this crowd, all right?

If you're an unstable man, then you're in no place to be leading a family. And that unstable man, it brings in immorality there. And that isn't Christ-like.

Christ is the same yesterday as he is today. He says, I am the Lord, I change not every good gift and every perfect gift cometh down from the Father of lights, in whom there is no variableness, neither shadow or turning.

So there ought to be a stability about you. That doesn't mean that our men can't move to the other side of the world and change location, but the whole time they can be stable in doing that.

[15 : 02] So that's Reuben. You're unstable. You don't get it, buddy, all right? And his dad said that on his deathbed. So ask yourself, are we like our great uncle Reuben here and the fact that we are unstable?

And if you're unstable, realize you've opened up the door for immorality in your family. Then we get to the next two, Otis, which is these two, which you can tell is Otis because he's got a beard here.

So he looks to Otis here. This is Savage Simeon and Levi. Let's see what Jacob has to say to you guys. Verse number five. Simeon and Levi are brethren.

That makes sense. Yes. Instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. Oh, my soul, come not thou and thou secret unto their assembly mine honor. Be not thou united.

For in their anger they slew men, and in their self-will they dig down a wall. These people here, they are unstable, and these guys are out of control.

[15 : 59] These are men who cannot control their emotions. They are savages. They are people that went and took over a city, and they just killed mercilessly for no reason.

So it's not going to be Reuben. The whole family is looking. It isn't the Otis brother Reuben that's now going to get the blessing. But is it going to be the next two? And Jacob says, it isn't going to be you guys either.

Because you can't control your emotions, and because you can't control your emotions, you can't lead this family. Men, if we're not stable, but if we can't control our emotions, there's no telling what's going to happen.

There's no telling what kind of mess that is going to be made in our lives. So we move on from Saved Simeon and Levi, these two guys, but then we get up to Judah.

He's the fourth oldest, and this is what we find about him. We find out Judah here does not have the best track record. And some of the things I said about Reuben belong to you. Sorry about that, Reuben.

[17 : 01] I said earlier that he slept with his daughter-in-law there. That's the story here of Judah that we read about. We find that he's unstable.

This guy doesn't have the best track record. He lobbied to sell Joseph for a profit. You remember that? He separated himself from God's covenant people. He hung around with ungodly people in chapter 38.

He was sexually immoral in chapter 38. He failed to keep his word with his daughter-in-law Tamar in chapter 38. But the Bible says that he will prevail over his older brothers.

Verse number 8, and he gets four verses about him. Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise. Thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies. Thy father's children shall bow down before thee.

Judah is a lion's welt. For the prey, my son, thou art gone up. He stooped down. He counts as a lion. As an old lion, he shall rouse him up. The scepter shall not depart from Judah.

[17 : 59] Nor a lawgiver from between his feet until Shiloh come. And unto him shall the gathering of the people be. Binding his foal into the vine. And his ass coats into the choice vine. He washed his garments of wine.

And his clothes in the blood of grapes. So we find a prosperity being promised to him. He doesn't have the best track record. But we're told here that he will be over.

He'll prevail over his brothers. In 1 Chronicles, we see that it happens. He doesn't get a double portion. But Jesus, the Messiah, will come through his lineage. We'll see in Matthew chapter number 1.

Until Shiloh, until the one sent from God, verse number 10, comes, he will lead. And the nation is Judah here. It says that his donkeys will eat grapes.

That's pretty impressive, isn't it? Your donkeys, man, are going to eat grapes. They're not going to just eat grass like them. But to say that he is so well that even his donkeys. And he will tie his donkeys up to the vines of these grapes.

[18 : 57] You see the imagery here? You don't tie your donkey up to anything today. But if you did, you wouldn't be tying it up to the vines of grapes. Unless these are huge grapes and vines that are able to hold.

And the prosperity being given to him. This guy here, he's not even going to wash his clothes with, what do we wash our clothes with there? Give me a name. Tide.

Thank you, sir. All right. We don't wash our clothes with Tide. Daniel here is going to wash his clothes in the blood of grapes, in wine. What is made from the grapes.

It talks of prosperity. King David will come from his tribe. Mary will come from it. Solomon, Caleb, and then King Jesus. So, why is it that this guy is unstable in his ways?

And these guys are disqualified because they are cruel habitations or they are instruments of cruelty. But then it now gets to the fourth one here. And so, why does Jacob pronounce such rich blessings on him?

[20 : 00] We found in chapter 38 that he confessed and repented of his sins. In 43, we see that he took full responsibility for the safety of Benjamin. Remember, Reuben said, I'll take care of it.

And Jacob said, Reuben, we can't trust you, buddy. You have bad. We know you. But I'll trust Judah. He offered himself as a substitute for Joseph.

And the blessings of Judah are a beautiful picture of God's grace to those of us who confess and repent of their sins. So, in this family picture that we're having here, I don't want to be this man right here.

I don't want to be a person that would say, Trent, you're disqualified to leave your family or anybody because you're unstable. I don't want to be a person that flies off for the handle and who is so emotional that I would bring down a city at one time.

But I am a person like him who wouldn't have the best track record. But I would be somebody that would say, God, in your mercy, would you forgive me of who I am?

[21 : 00] It is Uncle Judah here, the Knight Church family, that we ought to look after and imitate. It's not the other ones up here on this stage. But it would be this man right here.

And every one of you have a story. We could change the names. We could take you up here. We could put you on this stage. And we could tell your story just like it's told right here.

And your story would have an impact from this generation, the generations to come, until our Lord comes again. So, it wasn't the strongest. It wasn't the wealthiest.

But we see that the characteristic that God was looking for in the sons of Jacob are those that will recognize their sins, who will take ownership of their problems and repent.

And he says, I'm going to let you lead all the way until the time comes that Jesus will come. And then he will, in his sovereignty, he will lead there. And so, this is our example for us tonight.

[21 : 57] Thank you, guys. If you'll leave the note cards, we will use it again when we look at the other guys. So, can I challenge you? Most of you in here, as parents, you're not going to have the opportunity to bring your kids down, have them sit around you.

Most of you won't even have the opportunity that my stepdad did and say, even though my life taught a different story to you, I now have a month and a half to tell you that my life was contrary to my heart.

Most of us will just be gone. It will sneak upon us. Or maybe you'll grow older and your children will leave the house and all they'll know is what they saw while they were in the home.

But you won't get a month and a half or two months to correct what you taught. But they're being watched and you're being seen. Would you let your testimony be that of a person like Judah who says, hey, kids, my track record wasn't the best when I was younger, but now I'm a person that recognizes my problems and I come to Jesus.

And what a wonderful picture. This is a pretty messed up family if you think about it. They could have their own reality TV show, this group of 12 people. And he didn't pick.

[23 : 06] God did not pick the one I thought he was going to pick. But in his grace, he allowed Judah to have the lineage that Jesus, the Messiah, would come.

And I'm not the person you would pick. And you're not the person that I would pick. But God has chosen every one of you to lead and an influence. And let's follow in a godly example and set it for others.

Heavenly Father, I pray that you'll work tonight for an application very clear and easy for us as dads, Lord, and the testimony we're leading. We don't want to be unstable as Reuben was, Lord.

We don't want to be that man. We don't want to be evil as the two brothers of Simeon there and Levi. But Lord, I pray that we will be like Judah here in this story.

That we will be people that you bless through your grace because we have repented of our sins, seen our weaknesses, and come to you. This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia.

[24 : 07] For more information, log on to www.visionbaptist.com where you can find our service times, location, contact information, and more audio and video recordings.