Genesis 49:29-50

Review…

- **Chapter 48-49 – Blessing the 12 tribes…**
  - Jacob knowing he was close to death – called his sons to his bedside…
    - He knew his 12 sons would become the 12 tribes of Israel …
    - So he prophesied over each one – revealing their characters...
  - As well as the future of their tribes (*influenced by character*)!
    - **Reuben** – the first born – but unstable as water – would never amount to much…
    - **Simeon & Levi** – were cruel – they would be scattered among the nation of Israel…
    - **Judah** – would be the ruler of the nation – from his tribe would come Shiloh – Jesus!
    - **Zebulun & Issachar** – would live by the sea / be strong but lazy…
    - **Dan** – would lead Israel into Idolatry – removed from the tribes in the book of Revelation…
    - **Gad, Asher, Naphtali** – Strong army / lovers of this world / fast runners
    - **Joseph** – would be like a fruitful tree – Ephraim the most powerful tribe in northern Israel…
    - **Benjamin** – a ravenous wolf – powerful but out of control!
  - These are the chosen people of God - scary bunch!
    - Funny thing - God does not change – they look like the bunch Jesus chose – the 12 disciples…
    - Funnier thing - they look an awful lot like you and me!

From evil to good… (4 points)

- **1st – Finishing the race… vs. 29-33**
  - 1st Jacob charged his sons (*piel*) intensely… vs. 29-30
    - He was to be buried (*imperative*) in the field of Ephron in the cave of Machpelah…
      - The field Abraham bought from Ephron the Hittite to bury Sarah in **Genesis 23:17-18**
      - It was in that cave that Isaac and Ishmael buried Abraham – **Genesis 25:9**
      - It was there Esau and Jacob buried Isaac (*and Rebekah*) – **Genesis 35:29**
    - Why was this place so special – why did Jacob want to be buried there…
      - God had promised to give Israel the land – from the Mediterranean to the Euphrates…
      - Yet like Abraham - this was the only place Israel owned in the Promised Land!
      - **Hebrews 11:9-10** – "Even when [Abraham] reached the land God promised him, he lived there by faith—for he was like a foreigner, living in a tent... Abraham did this because he was confidently looking forward to… a city designed and built by God."
      - Israel was not looking for what he could get from this life...
      - If he had – he could have been very frustrated and disappointed in the Lord…
      - Yet he was looking to an eternal reward – to an eternal city in heaven!
      - Where are we looking for God to bless us – are we looking for blessing here...
      - God does not promise us great rewards here on earth – but in heaven!
      - **Matthew 6:19-20** - "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth... but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven."
  - 2nd – Buried in the field of Machpelah… vs. 31-32
    - The list for the most part is exactly who you would expect – but then he mentioned LEAH…
      - We are not told when she died – last mentioned when they met Esau – **Genesis 33:7**
      - Presumably she lived quite bit longer than her younger sister Rachel – died in childbirth…

- Israel wanted to be buried with LEAH – not with Rachel (*who was buried in Bethlehem*)!

- It would seem rather strange Jacob would be buried with LEAH – rather than Rachel!
  - **Genesis 29:30** – "[Jacob] also loved Rachel more than Leah…"
  - From the beginning Leah appeared to be a mistake – a trick uncle Laban had pulled…
  - Yet in the end – the MISTAKE – was the one whom Israel loved more!
  - Often in life I have heard these words – I married the wrong person…
  - As though there was one perfect ONE out there – and we missed them!
- There is a common theology in the church – known as THE ONE…
  - The idea is that for each person God has a chosen ONE that they should marry…
  - As though from before the foundations of the earth – the choice was already made…
  - Now – it is true God KNOWS who we will marry – He knows everything – **Hebrews 4:13**
  - But interestingly the Bible says NOTHING about WHO we should marry!
  - We can read from cover to cover and there is not ONE passage on WHO we are to marry!
  - **II Corinthians 6:14** – does say do not be unequally yoked (*marriage is never mentioned*)!
- The idea THE ONE is actually very dangerous…
  - What can happen is we marry someone because we believe they are THE ONE…
  - But inevitable challenges happen in the marriage – **I Corinthians 7:28**
  - We can become disillusioned into thinking maybe we married the WRONG ONE…
  - Which opens up the door to look for ANOTHER ONE – who might actually be THE ONE!
- I have met many different couples…
  - I know couples who met and got married in Bible College – both CALLED to ministry…
  - Yet after a few years their marriages fell apart – and they got divorced!
  - I also know couple who were heathens – got married in a drunken stupor!
  - Yet that couple is of the godliest I know today – do marriage counseling!
- It is not about WHO we marry – it is about WHO is at the center of our marriage…
  - All the ideas the world fills us with about compatible personalities…
  - Or the thought we need to be physically attracted to a person - outward beauty NOT last!
  - Not that there is not SOME wisdom there – but it pales in comparison to THE ONE thing…
  - The ONLY thing that makes a marriage work – Jesus at the center!

- 3rd – When Jacob had finished commanding his sons… vs. 33
  - He drew his feet into the bed – and breathed his last – and was gathered to his people…
    - Breathed his last – [גָּוַע] – meaning to give up the breath of life (*spirit leaving the body*) …
    - When the Bible uses the name JACOB – he is not trusting in Jesus…
    - So why does the last mention in the Bible of this great man – refer to him as JACOB!
    - I have to think it is because that is who died that day – the sinful nature that was JACOB…
    - ISRAEL – the one who trusted in the Lord – did NOT die – he went to be with Jesus!
  - As longs as we are alive – we will have a dual nature – SINNER and SAINT…
    - **Galatians 5:16** – "The flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish."
    - We are fighting a constant battle between our JACOB and ISRAEL nature…
    - Being a GOOD Christian – or a GODLY person – does not mean we NEVER sin…
    - It means WHEN we sin - we run to Jesus for His GRACE and FORGIVENESS – **I John 1:9**
    - But when we breath our last breath that battle ENDS – we are free from our sinful nature!
    - We finally become all the Lord intended us to be – as we enter into His presence!

- **2ND - THE ABUNDANT LIFE… VS. 1-14**
  - 1st – The burial of Israel… vs. 1-3

- Joseph fell on the face of his Father – and wept over him…
  - The death and funeral of Jacob is one of the most elaborate recorded in the Bible…
  - The amount of detail involved emphasizes the importance of Jacob…
  - Of the three patriarchs – Abraham / Isaac / Jacob – it was Jacob who gave the 12 tribes!
- Joseph commanded his servants to ENBALM Jacob…
  - During Egyptian times - ENBALMING was a sacred process that lasted 70 days…
  - All of the dead persons organs were removed – dried - and placed in clay jars…
  - The body was then dried for 40 days by putting natron salt in the body cavity…
  - Then the body was scented with perfume and herbs and wrapped!
- The purpose of embalming was to preserve the body from decay – LOOK alive…
  - The irony is that even if the body does not decay – it is still NOT alive…
  - The best the world can offer – is the APPEARANCE of life – it cannot GIVE life!
  - I used to have a bowl of fruit sitting in the kitchen in my house – it looked pretty…
  - But if you took a bite – you would be unpleasantly surprised – PLASTIC fruit!
  - In the same way I know a lot of people who live a PLASTIC Christianity…
  - From the outside everything looks good – but peel away the outer layer - NO LIFE!
  - **John 10:10** – "I have come so they may have life, and have it more abundantly."

o 2nd - Following the dead… cs. 4-14
- With permissions from Pharaoh – a great multitude went to bury Jacob…
  - The entire family of Jacob (*minus the littlest kids and the livestock*) …
  - The servants of Pharaoh – the ELDERS of house of Pharaoh / and of all Egypt
  - Chariots – horsemen – a HUGE gathering – was willing to follow the dead!
  - If someone dies – HUGE crowds will often gather to walk the body to the cemetery…
  - People always seem so willing to follow the dead – but how about the living!
  - How much better to follow Jesus – not to a graveyard – but to heaven!
  - **I Corinthians 11:1** – "Follow me, just as I also follow Christ."
- The threshing floor of Atad (*thorns*) …
  - There just over the Jordan river before Jericho – they mourned seven days for Jacob…
  - All the people of Canaan saw the mourning of the Egyptians – called it Abel Mizraim…
  - Abel Mizraim – the field or mourning of the Egyptians!
  - Then the sons of Jacob buried their father in the field of Machpelah!

- **3RD - LOOKING FOR FORGIVENESS… VS. 15-21**

o 1st - A guilty conscience… vs. 15
- After the death of Israel – -the brothers of Joseph thought he might seek REVENGE…
- They had tried to kill him – sold him into slavery – where he had ended up in prison…
- There was plenty there to be bitter for – and Joseph had the power to REPAY them!
- There are few things more persistent – more unrelenting – than a guilty conscience…
- The unsettling felling – conviction in our hearts – over things we did we know were wrong…
- Time may dull it – but is like a wound that never heals – and is easily reopened…
- The reason – God will NOT let it heal – it is the Spirit is working on our hearts to repent…
- The only solution for guilt – repentance – with repentance comes forgiveness!
- **Psalm 51:10** – "Create in me a clean heart, O God."

o 2nd - A plea for mercy… vs. 16-18
- The brothers told Joseph a story (*perhaps true – perhaps not*) about their father…
  - Please FORGIVE (*imperative*) the EVIL your brothers did to you…
  - FORGIVE (*imperative*) the servants of the God of your FATHER!

- They then fell down before Joseph – we are your servants!

- Joseph was not the answer to their conscience…
  - It is true that sin can cause us to be separated from our relationship with others…
  - But ALL sin is against God – it separates us from our relationship with the LORD…
  - We need to fix the relationship with Him FIRST – then He will take care of the rest!
  - **Psalms 51:2-4** – "Wash me clean from my guilt. Purify me from my sin. For I recognize my shameful deeds—they haunt me day and night. Against you, and you alone, have I sinned; I have done what is evil in your sight."

o 3rd – I am NOT God… vs. 19
- Do NOT be afraid – am I in the place of God…
  - Do NOT [אַל] be AFRIAD (jussive) – do not LET yourself become fearful…
  - It was not the responsibility of Joseph to JUDGE his brothers for their actions…
  - He understood that ONLY God the righteous JUDGE can REPAY men for their sin!
  - Because we would NEVER be JUST in how we would dole out JUDGEMENT!
- The Old Testament version of JUSTICE was an eye for eye - **Deuteronomy 19:21**
  - The Law was not meant to be vindictive – it was meant to be limiting…
  - Meaning you were not allowed to do more to someone in revenge than they had done!
  - We want revenge - if you take my eye – I want to take both of yours / and ears / nose!
  - Therefore God is very clear – we are NEVER to JUDGE others – vengeance is His alone…
  - Because ONLY God can JUDGE fairly – giving out the VENGANCE that is deserved!
  - **Romans 12:19** – "Do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord."
- That does NOT mean we cannot JUDGE fruit…
  - **Luke 6:27** – "Judge not, and you shall not be judged…"
  - I have heard people say you CANNOT judge me – only God can judge me…
  - And to some extent I think I understand what they mean – but they are WRONG!
  - This is not talking about judging ACTIONS but judging the INTENT of the heart...
  - We absolutely can JUDGE the actions of someone – by comparing them to the Word…
  - If what someone is doing in CONTRARY to the Word – then we can say it is WRONG!
  - But we CANNOT judge why someone does something – what their MOTIVE is…
  - Only God knows the motive of the heart - only He can Judge that!
  - **Psalm 44:21** - "For He knows the secrets of the heart."

o 4th - What you meant for Evil… vs. 20-21
- What you meant for evil (*perfect*) – God meant for GOOD (*perfect*) …
  - Joseph was not mad at them – far from it – he saw a much bigger picture…
  - Their betrayal – and selling him into slavery…
  - Being falsely accused by the wife of Potiphar – forgotten by the chief butler…
  - Joseph saw God had used it all for GOOD – to save many people!
  - Therefore do NOT be afraid – Joseph promised to provide for all their families (*famine*)!
- Joseph understood this was all part of the PERFECT plan of God!
  - What does that mean – did God CAUSE the brothers to sell Joseph into slavery…
  - Certainly NOT – God would never MAKE anyone do something that was sinful!
  - **James 1:13** – "God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone."
- It means God uses ALL things to fulfill His purposes…
  - God USED the EVIL of the brothers to accomplish His purposes…
  - Meaning God TRULY does use ALL THINGS to bring about His will in our lives!

- **Ephesians 1:9** – "Having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself."
- We tend to look for something to be either category Good or Bad in life…
- I caught COVID – that is a BAD thing – but yet God used it to teach me to depend on Him…
- I got a promotion - that is a GOOD thing – unless is distracts me from the Lord…
- The truth is there are NOT – GOOD or BAD – things that come into our lives…
- There are just TOOLS that God will use to bring about His PERFECT will for our lives!

▪ If we can grasp that perspective – it will transform how we look at the world around us…
- That person who hurt us – whom we have never been able to forgive…
- That sickness or difficulty – that caused us to question the love of God…
- No matter WHAT happens in our lives – if we understand God is in TOTAL control…
- And He will use ALL things – then in ALL things we are able to give Him thanks!
- **I Thessalonians 5:18** – "In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God..."

- **4TH – GREATEST ACT OF FAITH… VS. 22-26**
  - 1st - Joseph lived to be 110 years old… vs. 22-23
    - He saw lived to see the children of Ephraim to the third generation (*great great grandkids*) …
    - And the sons of Manasseh to the second generation (*great grandkids*) …
    - Even though Manasseh was older – Ephraim was having kids faster!
    - Already he was growing into the greater tribe Israel has prophesied!
  - 2nd – Take my Bones… vs. 24-26
    - On his deathbed he made his family make a promise…
      - This is likely NOT his brothers – as they were almost all older and had likely passed…
      - God will surely visit you and BRING you out of THIS land – the PROMISED land…
      - WHEN God brings you out– take my BONES with you – bury me in the land!
      - God did redeem His people – and bring them to the Promised Land…
    - So Joseph died – was embalmed – and his coffin was put in Egypt!
      - When Israel left 400 years later - they took the bones of Joseph – **Exodus 13:19**
      - When they entered the Promised Land - they buried him – **Joshua 24:32**
    - Recorded in the Hall of Faith…
      - Joseph was a ruler / a king – who saved the lives of thousands from famine…
      - He was a Godly brother / father / grandfather / he was even a great grandfather…
      - Yet of all the things Joseph did – the one was recorded in the Hall of Faith…
      - Was his request to take his bones and bury them in the Promised Land!
      - **Hebrew 11:22** – "By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave instructions concerning his bones."
    - This was his greatest act of FAITH…
      - Joseph could have had them bury his body right then – like they did for Jacob…
      - But he wanted to leave a legacy – something to remind future generations…
      - God WOULD be faithful to His Word and bring Israel out of Egypt – **Genesis 46:4**
      - Therefore the greatest act of Faith of Joseph was not something HE did…
      - It was believing – and showing others – God would be faithful to do what He says!
      - If we want to live a life of GREAT FAITH – it is NOT about what we do for the Lord…
      - It is about believing what God says He wants to do for us!
      - Living a life that points others to the Word of the Lord – to the promises of Jesus!