

- b. The seven days of creation are echoed in the seven days of mourning for Jacob.

- Seven days is about creation.
- Even in death, God is going to be at work doing creation. But *how*?

D. Why is this so important?

Kathleen Farmer rightly says that “one either has to give up the idea of justice or one has to push its execution into some realm beyond the evidence of human experience” (quoted in Waltke, pg. 624).

LIVE THE STORY

The Gospel is intended to be learned and lived in community. The following questions are designed for use in our Community Groups as an aid to growth in the Gospel and Community.

- How can we see in the account of the blessing that the blessing is ultimately about providing life and flourishing for the people of God?
- How often do people look to receive God's blessing, but fail to recognize that it comes through their brothers and sisters in Christ?
- What can we learn about the blessing and the curse from what Jacob speaks to Simeon and Levi?
- How does God bring his blessing to us? What does it mean that we are a part of the delivery system?
- What is our hope in death? i.e. What awaits us? What verses can you find that speak about what happens when we die? About our ultimate hope?
- What can we learn from Jacob saying that he was about to be gathered to his people? How might this be reflected in Hebrews 12:1?

Genesis: Truth for Understanding Our World (35)

Hope in Life and Death

Jerry Cisar — May 20, 2018

Text: Genesis 49 – 50

Introduction

I. Blessing (Genesis 49)

- A. Jacob gathers his sons to impart the blessing. (49:1-2, 28)
- i. Jacob is in charge in these scenes.
 - ii. Jacob's life began with prophecy about his future, and it ends with prophecy about the future of the people of God.
- B. The “blessing” on Reuben, Simeon, and Levi. (49:3-7)
- i. This prophecy looks to the future, but is rooted in the past.
 - a) Reuben
 - b) Simeon and Levi (34:25)
 - ii. Even in the name of justice, unrestrained anger is not okay.
 - a) It is not Simeon and Levi that are cursed, but their anger, their cruel fury that is cursed (49:7).
 - b) How we live matters, because God blesses for the good of His people.

Bruce Waltke: *“Paradoxically, what the narrator calls “blessings” are often antiblessings, such as in the case of Reuben, Simeon, and Levi. However, in terms of the nation’s destiny these antiblessings are a blessing. By demoting Reuben for his turbulence and uncontrolled sex drive, Jacob saves Israel from reckless leadership. Likewise, by cursing the cruelty of Simeon and Levi, he restricts their cruel rashness from dominating.”* [Genesis: A Commentary (p. 603).]

C. The blessing on Judah (8-12)

- i. The image of a lion and the scepter between his feet.
- ii. What is it that is coming?
- iii. Jesus is called the Lion of the Tribe of Judah (Rev. 5:5). But there is a lot of irony in that (Isa. 52:14; Rev. 5:6).

D. The other recipient of excessive blessing is Joseph.

The blessings are given in order to bring life, flourishing, to God's people. These blessings require someone to serve in order to fulfill their purpose. They offer hope in life for God's people – a people who would have much difficulty in their future, much suffering. That hope will enable endurance. God will bring them life through the blessing which flows among them—from one another.

II. Hope

A. Death and hopelessness.

Allen Verhey: “Death—and sickness and suffering—alienate people from their own flesh, from their communities, and from God. And, you see, if death is our destiny, then so is alienation” (*Remembering Jesus*).

Verhey: “Death threatens any sense that the One who bears down on us and sustains us is dependable and caring. It threatens abandonment by God and separation from God.”

Verhey: “...the horror of it isn't simply the termination of existence, but the unraveling of meaning, the destruction of relationships, the lordship of chaos”.

B. Death is being gathered to our people (49:29-33).

- i. Here we see why Jewish and Christian burial practices differ so much from many other cultures.
- ii. To be buried there is to stake a claim to a future with the people of God in the place of promise.

C. The burials of Jacob and Joseph (50:1-14)

- i. Jacob, who had trouble in life, was a king in death.
- ii. The details of Jacob's burial (50:7-10).
- iii. Joseph's burial (50:25-26)
- iv. What do we learn about hope in death?
 - a) Because of the covenant God made with Abraham, death does not have the last word.