

Bible Stories for Adults

Jacob Blesses Judah

Genesis 49

Opening

Gathering: What should parents strive to leave their children in their inheritance?

Today's Focus: We are chosen by God not as a result of anything we do or who we are, but only by His grace.

Key Verses: *It is not the natural children who are God's children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring.* Romans 9:8

This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus. Ephesians 3:6

Opening Prayer

Lesson

Jesus' Parables (*Matthew 13*)

Why did Jesus speak in parables? = Those unwilling to receive Jesus' message wouldn't find the truth

Matthew 13:10-16 = To help the faithful understand God's plan, Unfaithful couldn't

Were the people before Jesus unable to understand God's plan because they weren't faithful enough?

Matthew 13:17 = No, many righteous people had longed to understand

How long had people been unable to understand the mysteries of God's plan?

Matthew 13:34-35 = Since the creation of the world

God's Mystery (*Ephesians 3*)

Who believed he was specially chosen to reveal God's mystery to the world?

Ephesians 3:1-5 = Paul, made known to him by revelation

Was he chosen for this task because he especially deserved it?

Ephesians 3:7-9 = No, Paul was chosen by God's grace, *less than the least*

What is this mystery?

Ephesians 3:6 = The whole world shares in the promise given to the Jews

Was this inclusion of non-Jews an afterthought?

Ephesians 1:4-5 = No, He chose us even before he created the world

Early Revelations of God's Mystery (*Genesis 1-10*)

Had God really planned to take the faithful to heaven since the beginning of time?

Matthew 25:34 = Yes, kingdom of heaven was prepared with the creation of the world

How long did man wait before first hearing God's promise of saving grace through Christ?

Genesis 3:15 = First promise of Savior was immediate after judgment of first sin

How did God reveal the mystery of His grace after condemning Cain for murdering Abel?

Genesis 4:15 = Promised to protect Cain from vengeance, put a mark on him

What promise of grace did God give after destroying the wicked earth in a flood?

Genesis 9:8-11 = Never again would a flood destroy all life

What mark did God offer to remind mankind of this promise?

Genesis 9:12-15 = Rainbow is sign of God's covenant with the earth and all creatures

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A Channel to Reveal the Mystery (*Genesis 11-12*)

- What did man do next that invoked God's judgment? = Rejected God's command to scatter & fill earth
- Genesis 11:4, 9 = Tried to build a tower and city to make a name for themselves
- What promise of grace did God give after scattering and confusing vain mankind?
- Genesis 12:1-3 = Called Abram out of grace, promised to bless him and world through him

The First Generation (*Genesis 17:1-14*) = Write *Abraham* on top of board

- What did God do for Abram the year before Isaac would be born?
- Genesis 17:1-2 (1-8) = Confirmed His eternal covenant to Abraham and his descendants
- What mark did God give as a permanent reminder of His promise?
- Genesis 17:10-11 = Circumcision

The Second Generation (*Genesis 17:15-21*) = Add lines to *Isaac* and *Ishmael*

- Who would receive these eternal promises after Abraham?
- Genesis 17:15-16, 19 = Isaac, a miracle child Abraham would have at 100 years old
- Did Abraham agree with God's wisdom? = *Isaac* means *he laughs*, Sarah laughed in Gen 18
- Genesis 17:17-18 = No, he wanted his first-born 13-yr old son, Ishmael, to be the one
- Had God forgotten that Ishmael owned Abraham's legal birthright?
- Genesis 17:20-21 = No, human birthright isn't the same as God's covenant birthright
- What did the birthright mean to a firstborn son?
- Genesis 27:29 = Leadership of the tribe and family
- Deuteronomy 21:17 = A double share of the inheritance
- Genesis 27:4 = The blessings of the father
- Aren't all of Abraham's descendants heirs to the promise given to him?
- Romans 9:6-8 (1-9) = No, only children of the promise; God doesn't have any grandchildren

The Third Generation (*Genesis 27*) = Add lines to *Jacob* and *Esau*

- Did God intervene in any way with the birth of the next generation?
- Genesis 25:21 = Yes, Rebekah was barren, Isaac prayed, God answered with twins
- Did Isaac allow God to direct the covenant birthright of the next generation?
- Genesis 27:30-33 = No, he tried to give it to Esau, his firstborn
- When Isaac learned of his mistake, did he try to take back God's blessing and give it to Esau?
- Genesis 27:34-40 = No, he knew he couldn't change God's plan
- Could Isaac have been more careful and made sure the covenant promise went to Esau?
- Romans 9:10-16 = No, it was God's plan; God had chosen Jacob before birth

The Fourth Generation (*Genesis 29:31-30:24*) = Write names on board in order

- Did God intervene in any way with the birth of the next generation?
- Genesis 29:31-35 = God gave Leah 4 sons, kept Rachel barren (Jacob loved her more)
- How did Rachel, the loved wife, try to affect God's plans for the covenant family?
- Genesis 30:1-8 = She had Jacob have 2 sons through her maid Bilhah
- What did Leah think of her sister's tricks?
- Genesis 30:9-13 = She had Jacob have 2 sons through her maid Zilpah
- Did Leah regret doing this when God opened her womb again?
- Genesis 30:17-21 = No, she thought it had pleased God; had 2 more sons and a daughter

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Rachel's Sons (*Genesis 35:16-18*)

What famous son did Rachel bear when she finally became pregnant?

Genesis 30:22-24 = Joseph

How did Jacob feel about this only son of the wife he loved?

Genesis 37:3-4 = He loved him more than the others, they hated Joseph for it

What happened when Rachel had her second son?

Genesis 35:16-18 = She died in childbirth

Reuben, Jacob's Firstborn (*Genesis 49:1-4*)

Did Jacob try to give the covenant birthright to his firstborn, Reuben?

Genesis 49:1-4 = No, he recognized his human birthright, but said he'd no longer excel

Note: No judge, prophet or prince came from tribe of Reuben; Territory taken by Moab

What did Jacob refer to in his condemnation of Reuben?

Genesis 35:22 = Reuben had slept with Bilhah (40 years earlier)

Was Reuben irresponsible as an eldest brother?

Genesis 37:19-22, 29 = No, he tried to protect Joseph; Just wasn't God's chosen

Simeon and Levi (*Genesis 49:5-7*)

Did the covenant birthright go to one of the next sons in line?

Genesis 49:5-7 = No, they were cursed for their violence

What incident revealed Simeon's and Levi's violent sides? = Revenge for Shechem taking Dinah

Genesis 34:1-2, 11-15, 24-25 = They deceived a city to be circumcised and slaughtered them

Jacob prophesied that the tribes of Simeon and Levi would be scattered in Israel. Did this happen?

Joshua 19:1 = Simeon's territory was within Judah's; eventually became part of Judah

Joshua 13:33; 21:3 = Levi was given no inheritance; they had towns within the tribes

Joseph and Benjamin (*Genesis 49:22-27*)

Did Jacob give the covenant birthright to his favorite son or his youngest son?

Genesis 49:22-27 = No, he blessed Joseph and prophesied Benjamin's love for war

Note: Joseph's fruit included Deborah, Gideon, Jephthah (judges) and Samuel (prophet)

How did Jacob further bless his favorite son Joseph? = Ephraim and Manasseh each received territory

Genesis 48:5, 15-16 = He took Joseph's sons and blessed them as his own

What did Joseph do when Jacob started to bless Ephraim over Manasseh, the firstborn?

Genesis 48:14, 17-20 = He tried to stop Jacob, but Jacob said it was right

How was the tribe of Benjamin later seen as a ravenous wolf? = Ehud and Saul from Benjamin

Judges 20:12-14, 21 = Benjamites fought rest of Israel rather than discipline Gibeon

What happened to Benjamin as a result of this battle?

Judges 20:46-48 = All but 600 men were killed; Judges 21 - Israel helped them get wives

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Judah (*Genesis 49:8-12*)

How did Jacob pass on the covenant birthright to Judah?

Genesis 49:8-10 = Messianic prophesy

your hand will be on the neck of your enemies (Psalm 18:40) = Military and political power

father's sons will bow down to you (2 Samuel 5:1-3) = All tribes recognized David as king

You are a lion's cub (Revelation 5:5) = Lion is king of beasts, Jesus is Lion of Judah

Shiloh (Isaiah 9:6) = means *man of peace*; Jesus is Prince of Peace

scepter will not depart ...until Shiloh comes (Luke 2:1) = Judeans ruled Judah until Rome

obedience of the nations (Matthew 28:18-20) = All nations united into one new Israel

How did Jacob describe the spiritual blessings and treasures brought by this *scepter* of Judah?

Genesis 49:11-12 = So plentiful that today's valuable is in over-abundance

tether his donkey to a vine = No one would destroy a valuable vine by tying a donkey to it

wash his garments in wine = wine as plentiful as water

eyes darker than wine, teeth whiter than milk = great health

Zebulun, Issachar, Dan, Gad, Asher and Naphtali (*Genesis 49:13-21*)

What blessings did Jacob have for his six other sons?

Genesis 49:13 = Zebulun became very active in shipping as far as Sidon

Genesis 49:14-15 = Issachar was hard working with good land, success brought taxes

Genesis 49:16-18 = Samson was from Dan and conquered the Philistines

Genesis 49:19 = Gad gave David brave warriors (1Ch 12:8); raided by Moab and Ammon

Genesis 49:20 = Asher's coastline led to trading of luxuries

Genesis 49:21 = Naphtali was known for being friendly and obliging

Closing Prayer

Response - Consider and meditate on one each day this week

1. What great insights and understandings has God given me into His mysterious plan?
(*Deut. 29:29; Matthew 11:25-27; Romans 3; 9:6-18; Galatians 3:21-29; Ephesians 3:6, 10-12*)
2. How and through whom have I gained insight and understanding into God's mysterious plan?
(*Deuteronomy 4:5-6; Daniel 2:19-23; 1 Corinthians 9:1-14; Galatians 1:6-9; Ephesians 3:1-5*)
3. When have I helped others understand the mysteries of God's plan for them?
(*Deuteronomy 4:9; Isaiah 43:10-13; Matthew 28:18-20; Galatians 1:15-16; Ephesians 3:7-9; 1 Timothy 4:6-16; 1 Peter 3:15*)
4. What have I done that showed rejection of my birthright?
(*Genesis 25:34; 49:3-4; 1 Kings 19:10; Matthew 6:1-18; 23:1-15; Luke 10:16; Romans 10:1-3; 1 Peter 2:4-8*)
5. How has God blessed me when I clearly haven't deserved it?
(*Ezra 9:13; Job 33:27-28; Matthew 11:25; Romans 9-10; 5:6-8; Ephesians 2:1-10; 1 John 4:9-10*)