

October 21, 2007 (LS)

**THE BLESSING AND DEATH OF ISRAEL: PART 2**  
**DOMINION**  
**GENESIS 49.22-33**

**C' JOSEPH: FRUITFULNESS THROUGH AFFLICTION (22-26)**

***The fruitful son (22):*** Trans. ? - Is this "fruitful bough/vine" whose "branches run over the wall" or is this "son of a wild she-donkey" whose "daughters march over a wall?"

Joseph is a "fruitful son" ("son" being translated "bough/vine") here. Cp. the name of Ephraim in 41.52; "double fruit."

Ephraim, who replaces Manasseh, is many times exchanged or paralleled with Joseph as a tribal name throughout Scripture (cf. e.g., Ps 78.67; Ezek 37.16, 19).

Garden imagery. There is a vine that is planted. This vine is also a son. Cp. Judah, the parallels between vines and sons are explicit in Scripture; cf. esp. Psa 80.15; cp. also John 15 and Jesus being the true vine.

By a spring of water: Assoc. with Garden and mountain of God. Waters flow from top of mountain through Garden to the world (cf. Gen 2.10ff.). Ref. to "everlasting hills" at the end of the passage, I believe, strengthens this (cf. v. 26).

This spring provides strength for the vine just like the tree planted by the rivers of living water alluded to in Psa 1.

The wall: Cp. Isa 5, God builds a wall around his vineyard. By this he protects his vine.

Branches/Daughters march over the wall: Could be positive or negative. But man was always supposed to "branch out" from Garden to the world.

"March" - indicates conquest or dominion. Strengthened by water branches march out into the world. (This is all the mandate given to Adam that is now to be fulfilled in Israel.)

***Strengthened through affliction (23-24):*** "Archers" = "lords of the arrows." God is the first One we encounter in Scripture with a bow; cf. Gen 9. Something we take up as image-bearers of God.

Bows & arrows are instruments of conquest/dominion; kingly weapons. Cp. 1Sam 18.1-5, Jonathan giving his bow to David; 2Kgs 13.15ff., Elisha instructing Joash what to do with his bow and arrows to prophesy conquest of Syria.

Jacob's sons (primarily in view here) = "the lords of the arrows." Instead of using their arrows properly, they shot at Joseph.

"Hated" = counted him as the enemy.

Joseph's response (v. 24) - (a) Joseph stayed strong through this (something indicated in the text) and/or (b) that Joseph did not shoot back.

"arms of his hands being made strong/agile by the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob." Emphasis on "hands." The hand indicates authority/power. I.e., to have something committed to your hand is to have authority in a particular area.

Through Joseph's afflictions and his willingness to submit to them without unrighteously striking back, Joseph's authority increased. He was not only personally made stronger through all of this, but his dominion was expanded. Cp. 1Pt 2.23.

The Mighty One of Jacob = the One who had delivered Jacob from all of his afflictions.

Note: it was *through* these afflictions, these wrestlings, that the arms which control these hands were made strong.

"From there." The reference may be back to Joseph, or it may be to God himself; i.e., expanding on what it means to be the Mighty One of Jacob.

If Joseph, then he is the one through whom the Mighty One of Jacob delivered and protected Israel; i.e., as a family.

Ultimate reference to God. As their Shepherd he feeds, leads, and protects. As the Stone or Rock he is mighty and unmoveable.

Cp. wilderness wanderings. He is a Shepherd that leads them (Ps 80). Also the Rock that follows them and that gives them water in the wilderness (1Cor 10.4).

Summary: Ref. to Joseph's sufferings at the hand of his brothers (esp.) and how God strengthened him to be a true king who would image him properly. The fruitful vine became more fruitful through suffering.

***The fruitfulness of/from the world (25-26a):*** God of his father. Joseph is receiving the blessing that Jacob received and that his father, Isaac, received before him, and that his father, Abraham, received before him.

Use of the name "God Almighty" (*'el shaddai*) emphasizes covenant succession. Cf. Exod 6.3.

Structure of blessing is 3-fold: blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that crouches beneath, and blessings of the breasts and of the womb. Reflects the entirety of creation. Cf. Gen 1.28

All of the blessings of original creation are being taken up here. Joseph's vocation (with all of Israel) is to be the new Adam.

If they are faithful, all of creation will be fruitful. Heaven (the firmament), the sea, and the land (which will include children). These are all areas and means of the dominion of man. When a faithful man rises to be a true king, then the earth will be fruitful.

Blessings will exceed the blessings of the fathers. God's intention: to move the world from glory to glory.

We are not simply trying to "get back to the Garden." Getting back to the Garden is necessary at one level, but the Garden is supposed to expand. Our branches are to march over the wall. Our blessings are supposed to exceed the blessings of our fathers.

"everlasting hills" - bound or bounties? Either way Jacob ref. is to receiving blessing with reference to these everlasting hills.

These everlasting hills are references to mountains. They are these great, immovable, structures in the earth. Connected to the spring of water earlier. Mountains are places where man meets with God.

All of life flows from these everlasting mountains just as it did from the mountain in Eden. These mountains will multiply throughout the earth (in one sense) and life will flow from them to the world.

***The holy warrior (26b):*** ref. to Joseph being "separate." Separate = *nezir* from which comes Nazarite. Blessings are upon Joseph's "head" and the "crown of his head."

A Nazarite was set apart, in one major respect, by his head; specifically his hair. A Nazarite was a holy warrior. He was called to a special task, and that task was that of priest-king. He was separated to take dominion, to conquer.

#### **B' BENJAMIN: THE WOLF WHO GAINS PREEMINENCE (27)**

Benjamin = "son of my right hand." Kingly position.

Benjamin = ravenous wolf. Total and swift domination. He conquers in the morning and divides the spoils of victory in evening.

Ambiguous. Cf. Jdgs 19-21; 1Sam 15

#### **A' JACOB IS GATHERED TO HIS PEOPLE (28-33)**

***Blessing of the twelve tribes (28):*** "Twelve tribes" - Jacob has established a new order; formed a new nation.

***Planted in the Promised Land (29-32):*** "gathered to his people" - he will continue to exist and wait for the resurrection. This is why he wants to be buried in the land of Canaan.

***Gathered to his people (33):***

(1) Trials can make you bitter or they can make you better. (2) History moves forward and we are to build upon the blessings given to our fathers. (3) Now that Christ has taken dominion over the universe—he is Lord of heaven and earth—the universe will respond to him by becoming fruitful.

