*divING DEEPER* **Discussion Guide**

# Genesis 49: The blessings of jacob

**TEXT SUMMARY**Today’s text winds up our study of the patriarchs in the Book of Beginnings (the Book of Genesis). It is altogether appropriate that our study, which began with God calling and blessing Abraham, should conclude with Jacob, Abraham’s grandson, blessing his twelve sons.

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The sermon

* examines the concept of blessing
* examines Jacob’s blessings to two of his sons, Judah and Joseph
* urges us to extend our blessing and pray God’s blessing on others

**INTRODUCTION** (observation)

It was customary for the father to bless the sons before he died. It was also customary for the greatest blessing to be extended to the first-born son. Jacob goes against that social convention by highlighting two other sons in his blessing.

Notice also that Jacob has not forgotten the reckless and treacherous violence of Simeon and Levi (Gen 34). Notice what he says about his two hot-headed sons in his blessings.

**Reading:**

Before you read the text, take a look at the questions on the back of the page.

ReadGenesis 49.

**DISCUSSION** (interpretation)

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**Questions:**

1. Our study of the patriarchs began with God calling and blessing Jacob’s grandfather Abraham. What echoes of the Abrahamic covenant of blessing do you see in Jacob’s blessings of his sons?
2. Why did Jacob curse his son firstborn son instead of blessing him? (see Gen 35:22)
3. Why would Joseph hold such a dear place in Jacob’s heart? (Remember the complicated dynamics of the mothers of Jacob’s twelve sons.)
4. What special honors does Jacob confer on Judah? How do those honors figure in the Abrahamic covenant?

**SO WHAT?** (application)

We’ve seen enough of the patriarchs to know that our texts have not portrayed them as heroes. They were flawed and broken men, just like us.

And yet God used them, as weak as they were, to convey His covenant blessings to the whole world. We are recipients of those covenant blessings in Christ.

How would my life look different if I were to consistently behave as if I believe what this story tells me God and His utterly unshakeable faithfulness?

* *How would my relationships look different?*
* *How would my interior life look different?*
* *How would my stewardship look different?*