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Assemble and Listen, Sons of Jacob, Listen to Your Father Isra'el

49: 2



Assemble and listen, sons of Jacob; listen to your father Isra'el. Ya'akov speaks in the third person (**He** switches to first person in the next verse when **he** addresses an individual **son**). **He** refers to **himself** as **Ya'akov** and as **your father Isra'el**, and appears like the wise **father** of **Proverbs** who counsels **his** children to hear **his** instruction. **Listen, my sons, to a father's instruction. Pay attention and gain understanding, and do not turn aside from what I say** because **those who keep my ways are blessed (Proverbs 4:1, 5:7b and 8:32b)**.

Before **Jacob** was reunited with **Joseph**, **he** had been in a constant state of bereavement. If **he** had died then, it would have been in emotional misery. However, **ADONAI** allowed **him** to see **Joseph** once more. A loose end in a relationship had been tied up. Again, here in **Chapter 49**, we see the same thing in regard to all of **his sons**. There were things in all of **their** relationships which needed to be said before **Jacob** could leave **them**.

This is a very important part of the preparations necessary for **dying**. Not only is it important for the one who is **dying**, but it is just as important for the survivors, the ones left to mourn and hurt in the deceased person's absence. Often times, wounded mourners expresses in their grief the regret, and sometimes guilt, for not tying up the loose ends in

their relationship. Here in **Genesis**, **Jacob** and **his sons** undoubtedly had that opportunity in **Jacob's** quarters when **he** called **them** in to stand around **his** deathbed.

The order of **the sons** as **he** prophesies to **them** is not the same as found in **29:31** to **30:25**, **35:16-18** except for the first four. **He** begins with **the sons** of **Leah**, **Reuben**, **Simeon**, **Levi**, **Judah**, **Zebulun** and **Issachar**. Then **he** deals with **Bilhah's** son **Dan**, and then with **Zilpah's** two sons **Gad** and **Asher**, then back to **Bilhah's** other son **Naphtali**. **He** then deals with **the sons of Rachel**, **Yosef** and **Benjamin**. **Ephraim** and **Manasseh** were also standing by **Jacob's** deathbed. Just as the blessing of **the sons** became the blessing of **the father**, the prophecy of **the father** became the prophecy of **the sons**. Therefore, **Ephraim** and **Manasseh** were prophesied to, as you might say, through **Joseph**.

This was no ordinary conversation. Anything a man says on his deathbed is important because generally, if he ever tells the truth, he tells it on his deathbed. **Ya'akov** spoke poetically and with great imagery. **His** very tone suggests that **he** was speaking in **the Spirit**. **He** was in full possession of **his** faculties, even though **he** was close to death. Because **he** was speaking in poetical language, **the sons** could hardly fail to recognize the importance of **their father's** words. Almost instinctively, as **they** entered the room, **they** gathered by **their** own subfamily groupings, in a circular position around the bed. The net result was that *fourteen sons* gathered around the deathbed of their **father Isra'el**. As **Jacob's** dim eyes gradually recognized **them**, **he** proceeded to speak to each one in turn, around the circle.⁷⁶⁰