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The Blessing and Cursing of Jacob's Sons

49: 3-27



The future histories of **the tribes** are viewed as an outgrowth of the present character of each **son** as **Jacob** prophesies. And the character of **the son**, to some degree, becomes the character of **the tribe**. In some ways this is like the prophecy of Noah concerning his three sons (**9:24-27**), stemming from the actual behavior and character of his sons, and also outlining the three streams of nations that would come out of them.⁷⁶¹ We can see a deliberate two-part organization of the chapter: **negative oracles** about **Reuben, Simeon and Levi** in **verses 3-7**, followed by a series of **positive oracles** about **Judah, Zebulun, Issachar, Dan, Gad, Asher, Naphtali and Joseph** and **Benjamin** in **verses 8-27**. This was, in effect, **Jacob's** last will and testament. Each of the blessings was fulfilled.

The blessing and cursing of **the twelve sons** reiterates the book's major theme. Mankind lost the blessing of **ADONAI** through sin and rebellion in the garden of Eden, but **the LORD** will restore **His** blessings through the Seed of Abraham.⁷⁶² There will be **a near historical** and **a far eschatological** prophecy given for each **tribe**.