

Genesis 190
Scripture's Truthfulness
Genesis 49:13-18
January 26, 2025
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The title of our message this morning is "Scripture's Truthfulness." As we are moving through the Book of Genesis verse-by-verse, God has raised up the Nation of Israel (Genesis 12-36). The reason why God needs to raise up the Nation of Israel is described in Genesis 1-11, which really describes the fall of man. God needs a special nation through which to bring His Messianic blessings to the world. The nation that He chose to raise up to fulfill that responsibility and obligation is none other than Israel.

The Nation of Israel is born through the promises that God has made to the patriarch Abraham. Those promises are passed down to his son Isaac, and then to Isaac's son Jacob; and then God does a work through Joseph (Genesis 37-50), in preserving the Nation of Israel from the sure destruction that they would have faced had they remained in Canaan.

God has brought them to the land of Egypt, where they are going to be successfully incubated from polytheistic influences for about 400 years, and the man through whom God chose to work that transition is none other than Joseph. Therefore, the Joseph story is very prominent as we round out and conclude the Book of Genesis.

Before the Book of Genesis ends, we have Genesis 49 where Joseph's father, Jacob, is ready to die. I can't blame him—he is 147 years old. (If I reach the age of 147, I will most likely be ready to go too.) Jacob gathers his sons (I call them Jacob's Dozen), and one of them is Joseph. Jacob begins to prophesy over their lives, and he starts to say a lot of things about them that will come to pass, as these sons will later in the Bible become the progenitors of the Twelve Tribes of Israel

So as you read through the Bible, you will start seeing a lot of things happening that you will not understand unless you have this background. Genesis 49, therefore, is sort of like the spine, if you will, of other things that are going to take place in the rest of Scripture. It is really foundational.

We have had Jacob calling his sons, an introduction to his oracles, and then he starts (as God allows him) giving predictions and prophecies about his sons, Jacob's Dozen. He starts with Reuben and then Simeon and Levi, which we have already covered Genesis 49:3-7. They are sort of sad stories of individuals that really had it all, but they did not finish well. It doesn't mean they are unsaved; it just means they really did not become what they could have become, in God—an unfulfilled potential.

Last week, we moved into Judah, the fourth born (Genesis 49:8-12); and the tone changes and becomes very, very positive, because it is there that we learn that Judah is

going to be the progenitor of the Messiah (Genesis 49:10 being the key verse there). We know that when the Messiah comes, He is coming through the lineage of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but He will come from a specific tribe within Israel called the Tribe of Judah.

This morning, we will take a look at Jacob's prophecies about Zebulun (Genesis 49:13), his prophecies about Issachar (Genesis 49:14-15), and as time permits, his prophecies about Dan (Genesis 49:16-18). Notice what Jacob says here concerning Zebulun. Genesis 49:13 says, *"Zebulun will dwell at the seashore; And he shall be a haven for ships, And his flank shall be toward Sidon."*

Now there is an interesting thing about Zebulun later on in the Book of Joshua—the exact scripture is Joshua 19:10-16. Four-hundred years later, following the events of the Exodus and the failure of the first generation coming out of Egypt, Joshua is actually going to lead the conquest of the Land of Canaan, which will become the Land of Israel under Joshua.

In the latter sections of the Book of Joshua, what you see is the specific places that the tribes would settle. It is an interesting prophecy, because it says that Zebulun would dwell at the seashore and be a haven for ships; and yet, Zebulun was landlocked. He was locked between Asher and Naphtali. He really was not near the Sea of Galilee; and he really was not near the Mediterranean Sea because Asher blocked his way.

So, if that is all true, how could this prophecy in Genesis 49:13 about Zebulun dwelling by the seashore be fulfilled? Of course, people jump on that, and they say, "Ha ha ha! Your Bible is filled with mistakes. Your Bible is filled with errors." It gets worse in Genesis 49:13 because it says, Zebulun *"shall be a haven for ships."* How can Zebulun be a haven for ships when he is landlocked? That doesn't make sense.

Then it gets worse, because the end of Genesis 49:13 says, *"And his flank shall be toward Sidon."* Sidon is up north in what we would call Lebanon today. You could see that Zebulun was not really located up in that area. So how could he flank Sidon as the prophecies indicate? Well, the interesting thing about the Bible is if you just give it enough time, a lot of these contradictions start to disappear.

Concerning the border with Sidon, Arnold Fruchtenbaum says: *"This prophecy may well also have meant that his trade, the rich crop that he grew in his territory, would be exported through the port to Sidon."* So this could be talking about a trading relationship with Sidon, not necessarily Zebulun being on the border of Sidon. That is one way to kind of handle a supposed contradiction.

Arnold Fruchtenbaum goes on and says:

"However, Zebulun was near enough to the coast and near enough to the Phoenician City of Sidon to be enriched because of the sea-borne trade. A major highway of the ancient Near East, the 'Via Maris,' passed through the Tribe of Zebulun."

Perhaps this is talking about a relationship with the sea—a shelter for ships dwelling near the sea in terms of a trading relationship.

That is one possibility, but I think I have a better option. In my understanding of the Bible, I have the doctrine of the Millennial Kingdom. This is why so many people would see this as some kind of error or some kind of mistake. The prophecy was not fulfilled to precision in the Book of Joshua, so they say, "Aha! The Bible is filled with errors." I come back and say, "The prophecy has not been fulfilled with precision yet, because there is coming, on planet Earth, a Millennial Kingdom."

Do you guys believe in the Millennial Kingdom? "Millennium" is just a Latin word that means "a thousand." The Church Age will end with the Rapture (hopefully sooner than later, Amen); and then what will commence upon the earth is a Seven Year Tribulation period. The Seven Year Tribulation period will climax (or conclude) with the Second Advent of our Lord Jesus Christ; and following His Second Advent will follow a wonderful time period on planet earth called the Millennial Kingdom. All of the Old Testament prophets, other than Jonah, spoke of it.

The Millennial Kingdom is a time period when Jesus will be ruling and reigning from Jerusalem (not from Washington DC). It is a time period when the nations of the earth will *"hammer their swords into plowshares"* (Isaiah 2:4). It is a time when the *"plowman will overtake the reaper"* (Amos 9:13). The point is, there is a lot of prosperity: no unemployment, underemployment, inflation, or high gas prices. Those things are all a time period of the past.

John, in the Book of Revelation adds one little detail that the Old Testament prophets developed: he said it will last for a thousand years. It is during that time period that God is going to fulfill countless prophecies and predictions in their minutest detail.

In Ezekiel 47 and 48, what you have are the boundaries of the Twelve Tribes. The tribes that we are reading about here are going to have land dimensions again, not just in the Book of Joshua, but in the Millennial Kingdom. What they will enjoy in the Millennial Kingdom is a different boundary than what they will have in the Book of Joshua.

When you study Zebulun's territory, you might jot down Ezekiel 48:26. Do you notice where Zebulun's property goes? It goes right out to the Mediterranean Sea—Zebulun will be having some beachfront property.

Why is that significant? Because if you believe in this time period of the Millennial Kingdom, then that is when all the specifics in Genesis 49:13 will be fulfilled. There is no reason to make the prophecy seem less than it is. Zebulun will dwell at the seashore. That is going to happen in Ezekiel 47, even if it didn't happen in Joshua 19. *"He shall be a haven for the ships"*—that is what is going to happen in the Millennial Kingdom in Ezekiel 47, even though it didn't happen in Joshua 19. This is when the very tiny specifics of God's word are going to be fulfilled.

Why bring all this up? I bring it up because God means what He says and says what He means. Amen. Many times, this is how to handle countless so-called "contradictions" in God's Word. "Oh, look. The prophecy didn't happen exactly like God said it would in the Book of Joshua." And our response is, "It hasn't happened in precision yet."

A lot of people that come up with these contradictions don't believe in a future earthly kingdom. They think God is somehow locked into fulfilling His prophecies in the Book of Joshua. I am here to tell you that He is not locked in, and whatever He hasn't fulfilled in the Book of Joshua will be fulfilled to the minutest detail in that glorious earthly Millennial Kingdom that is coming.

By the way, it is a Kingdom that Jesus told us to pray for. When Jesus taught the disciples to pray in Matthew 6:9-13, the first order of business was that Jesus said, pray this way. *"Thy kingdom"*—what? —*"Thy kingdom come."* There is hope for planet Earth. What is happening now will not always be—there is a better world coming. It is during that time period that God's prophecies will be fulfilled.

Another such prophecy is that the Nation of Israel is going to be given a chunk of real estate that will expand from modern-day Egypt to modern-day Iraq. You see it delineated in Genesis 15:18-21 in the Abrahamic Covenant: "To your descendants I have given this land, From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates." The land that Israel is promised is a territory extending from the Nile, we believe, all the way to the Euphrates.

All of the schools today are chanting, "From the river to the sea; the Land of Palestine shall be free." Meaning: "We want to eradicate the Jewish presence in the Land of Israel, from the Jordan to the Mediterranean." Not only is that not going to happen, but in the Millennial Kingdom, God is going to take their territory and expand it. That is why we came up with a slogan here to counter some of the propaganda at the universities. Our slogan is: "From the river to the sea, the Land of Israel will always be" (speaking of the Euphrates River to the Mediterranean Sea).

The truth of the matter is, God made promises to Israel, and every single one of them is going to be fulfilled. You are going to be stunned and shocked at how literally the Bible comes into existence in terms of these prophetic fulfillments.

By the way, every day of your Christian life, you should thank God for that, because if God is going to be faithful to Israel—if God is going to be faithful to the Jew—then guess what? He is also going to be faithful to you. Every promise that He has ever made to you—John 3:16, Romans 8, you name it—it will be fulfilled as well, because that is who God is. He is a covenant-keeping, promise-keeping God. That is His nature.

Numbers 23:19 says, *"God is not a man, that He should lie."* Titus 1:2 says, *"God who cannot lie."* Hebrews 6:18 says, *"It is impossible for God to lie."* Did you know that there are certain things that it is impossible for God to do? People ask me, "Can God make a rock so big that He can't lift it?" And the answer is "no." That would be impossible for God, who has to be sovereign over all of His creation. There are certain things that God can't do. One of the things He cannot do—not only will He not do it, but He cannot do it—He cannot tell a lie.

How different our belief system is from Islam, where the Muslim comes to the end in some kind of final judgment, and they have no assurance of salvation because they want to

know if their good deeds outweighed their bad deeds. How would you ever determine that? That is kind of a subjective standard.

Beyond that, the name of their very god means "deceiver." Allah is a deceiver in the Islamic worldview; meaning that on that final day, even if your good deeds did outweigh your bad deeds, Allah can rip the carpet out from under you, at will. How different we have, in the Bible's presentation, of God who cannot lie.

The regathering of the Jewish nation to their ancient homeland, in preparation for the fulfillment of these prophecies and promises, is not something to be disrespected in the Christian world. It is not something to be afraid of. It is something to rejoice in, because it shows us that God is going to do exactly what He said He is going to do with the Jewish people. Whatever promises are unmet today and have been unmet in biblical times, will be fulfilled in the Millennial Kingdom. And I just say to the Lord, "Praise the Lord, because that means You are going to keep all of Your promises to me, a Gentile believer."

Jesus said this in John 17:17: *"Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is what is truth."* Truth is a pretty valuable commodity when you think about it; and where is the one place you can go to to get truth? The cable television outlets? The politicians? Academia? The place to get truth is the Bible, because God, who brought the Bible into existence, cannot lie. That becomes a glorious thing. It is like true north on a compass.

The interesting thing about flying (I am not a pilot, but I have talked to a number of people that are) is that when you are flying an airplane, you can actually feel like you are upside down. Your emotions and your feelings are telling you this and that, and if you start flying by your emotions and your feelings, then the plane will most likely crash. So pilots are taught not to fly by their emotions and their feelings.

They are taught to keep their eye on something that is not lying to them, because feelings and emotions can lie. They keep their eye on the compass. Always true north. Always accurate. As long as they are doing that everything is fine, but the moment they take their eyes off of the compass and move to some kind of subjective feeling that they are having, is the moment they are in trouble.

That is how you live your Christian life. The world's system will tell you to do this or tell you to do that; or make you feel this way, or make you feel that way. You have to keep your eyes on the promises of God, because they come from a God who cannot lie. Zebulun's prophecies will be fulfilled.

Jacob moves away from Zebulun, and now he begins to talk prophetically about another one of his sons—someone named Issachar. In Genesis 49:14-15 Jacob mentions Issachar's nature. Look at Genesis 49:14. It says, *"Issachar is a strong donkey."* When you look at Issachar, he is a person of tremendous strength.

I would put it this way: he had a lot of potential, kind of like Reuben, who didn't finish well, but should have finished well because Reuben was the firstborn. He should have acted like the one who was preeminent, but he did not. It is the same thing with Issachar. He was someone of great, great strength.

In fact, in Numbers 26:25, there is a census there, and it gives the population count of Issachar at 64,300 people. And then there is another census given in 1 Chronicles 7:5, and there Issachar's number jumps from 64,300 people to 87,000 people. So there is an increase. And that has to do with Issachar's potential. His tribe was a growing tribe, but there was something wrong with Issachar's character—he preferred the place of ease rather than service.

He is not someone that had, what we might call, a very strong work ethic; and his life should have produced so much, but he chose ease over service. I guess a way of saying it is that he lacked ambition. You see Jacob speaking to this in the second part of Genesis 49:14, after talking about Issachar's strength: *"Issachar is a strong donkey, lying down between the sheepfolds."*

He preferred ease rather than service, and he was unambitious; and it showed up in his actions. He saw a place to rest, and he took it. Look at Genesis 49:15 at the resting place that, prophetically, he will see. It says, *"When he saw that a resting place was good And that the land was pleasant. He bowed his shoulder to bear burdens, And became a slave at forced labor."*

So he saw a resting place. What resting place did he see? Well, most people believe that what he is seeing there is what is called prophetically, the Jezreel Valley. Jezreel is towards the north in the Nation of Israel; and then coming out of the City of Jezreel is this area called the Jezreel Valley—a beautiful valley, a prosperous valley, a bountiful valley. It is a prediction here that Issachar would see that and he would basically lie down. Another way of saying it is that he would see what is pleasant and choose, as an option, rest rather than work, in this Jezreel Valley.

By the way, it is interesting, in the Bible, that geography matters. Have you noticed that? All the way through the Bible, you are given places of geography. Here we are speaking of one place of geography—the Jezreel Valley. Why does God keep giving us these places of geography? He wants us to understand that the events spoken of in the Bible actually happened. This is not a book simply about spiritual truth. It is that, but it comes out of an actual historical context that can be validated.

I emphasize this over and over again, because the humanists that control the educational system, they want you to believe that they control real history. What they are teaching our kids in the system is real history. "You religious people, you just do your religious thing on Sundays."

What they want to do is drive a wedge between spirituality and history; and the Bible simply will not accommodate itself to that. Right down to the resurrection chapter, 1 Corinthians 15, where Paul says that if Christ is not risen from the dead, then our faith is in vain. And then he says, "Check out the testimonies who saw the risen Christ. There are 500 eyewitnesses right now. Some have died; most are still alive. Go ask them." And that is so typical of what Scripture does. It will present spiritual truth—the resurrection of Jesus—in an actual historical context and an actual historical setting.

This is a prediction, I believe, of Issachar seeing something that would be geographically true in the Book of Joshua—the Jezreel Valley. It says, *"When he saw that a resting place was good And that the land was pleasant, He bowed his shoulder to bear burdens."* He preferred not to be a laborer. He lowered his shoulder to accept burdens. He was given a lot, and he had a lot of strength, and he had a lot of potential, but not a lot of ambition—not a lot of work ethic. A tendency that Issachar's descendants had was to "let go and let God"—just relax, enjoy life, kick your feet up, that sort of an attitude.

He paid for that, because the prophecy goes on and it says, *"And became a slave at forced labor."* He became a servant under tribute; he became a slave to the Canaanites, to enjoy the fruits of the land. In other words this prophecy is an indication that he made a trade. He traded liberty for material things.

Arnold Fruchtenbaum, speaking of the descendants of Issachar, puts it this way: *"In Judges 5:15, only with the extra forces of Barak did they join the war."* Now there are a few judges that would come from Issachar, but not very many. *"In Judges 10:1-2, one of the judges of Israel, Tola, came from this tribe. In 1 Chronicles 12:32, members of this tribe were among David's supporters."*

That is really about all that you get from Issachar. Judges 6:35 alludes to this, talking about Gideon, it does not mention Issachar's tribe as being part of his Galilean army. So it is basically someone, or a group of people, that have a ton of potential and a ton of strength, but they just didn't want to fight. They didn't want to expend the energy. "If that means I become a slave and get to enjoy some material things, I'll go ahead and I'll make the compromise."

Let me tell you something, if I could: The Bible teaches that we are not saved by works. We all understand that, or we should understand that. We talk about that over and over again. To become a Christian is to receive, by faith, a free gift. But after someone gets saved, God's expectation of that person, in their newfound Christian life, is not that they would be lazy people. Whether you make a decision to be lazy as a Christian or not lazy as a Christian, that has no bearing on your salvation. That issue got resolved the moment you placed your personal faith in Christ.

God's expectation of the growing Christian is a basic work ethic. We are not saved by good works. But you know what? We are certainly saved unto good works. In other words, there are a ton of good works God wants me to do under His power after I get saved. Laziness, or making these mental exchanges of "I am just going to enjoy life, in exchange for becoming a slave," that is not what God wants of us.

There used to be something in the United States of America called the "Protestant work ethic." In other words, if it was a Christian and you were dealing with a Christian businessman, businesswoman, Christian entrepreneur, that is the kind of person you want to do business with, because they are workers. They are not workers because they are trying to pay God back; they are not workers because they are trying to buy salvation. They are workers because that is what God expects of His people. He expects us to be industrious; He expects us to have a strong work ethic—which is something that Issachar did not have.

You do not have to get far in the Bible to see this. Proverbs 10:4 says, *"Poor is he who works with a negligent hand, But the hand of the diligent makes rich."* There is an important distinction that needs to be made about people that are in poverty. That distinction is simply this: are they in that position of poverty, like Job, for example, because of circumstances beyond their control? That is one thing. Those are people that need help.

However, the Bible teaches that there is an entirely different category of people who put themselves into a place of poverty. The Book of Proverbs just doesn't tell you how to get rich; it tells you how to get poor. A lot of people become poor through what I would call self-inflicted poverty. You can throw money at people like that all you want, but it is not going to change the problem until their character changes.

Those are people you have to motivate with this kind of teaching that I am bringing here. Those that are in some kind of condition because of circumstances beyond their control, they are the ones deserving of help. And Christian leadership needs to learn that distinction, or else we are just taking the Lord's money and giving it to people who are making bad choices constantly and are going to end up poor no matter how much money you give them.

Ephesians 4:28 says,

"He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need."

Boy, what a reason, as a Christian, to get up and go to work every day so that you can have more than you need—which is the definition of wealth, right? The definition of wealth is having resources beyond what you need. That is a legitimate motive. Why, as a Christian, would you want that? So you can give more away. Ephesians 4:28 is speaking of that.

In 2 Thessalonians 3:10 Paul is writing to the Thessalonians—the lazy brethren who were saying, "Jesus is coming back" (which he is, by the way), but they were using it as an excuse to get out of life's responsibilities. "Oh, I don't have to save money for my children's tuition for college. Jesus is coming back. I don't have to pay my bills this month or this week. Jesus is coming back." That kind of an attitude. Paul says of such in 2 Thessalonians 3:10, *"For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either."*

"Well, Pastor, do you like to eat?" "Well, yeah. Isn't it obvious?" "Well, go to work." That is what Paul is saying. This is not work for salvation; this is the sanctified lifestyle of the Christian that has been bought with the blood of Christ. This is what God expects. This is what Issachar did not become.

First Timothy 5:8: *"But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever."* Wow! That is strong language.

Do you know that every day of Christ's life, when He came of age, He got up and went to work. Jesus was about as blue collar of a guy that I can think of. Mark 6:3 says,

"Is not this the carpenter? The son of Mary, and the brother of James, and Joses and Judas and Simon? Are not His sisters here with us?' And they took offense at him."

When the townsfolk saw the ministry of Jesus, they said, "This is the carpenter." This is the guy that rolled up His sleeves and sweated and went to work every day. He had a trade.

The Jews, of course, had a saying: If you don't teach your children a trade, you will teach them to become a criminal. Jesus had a trade—He was a carpenter. His father was a carpenter; Matthew 13:55 says that. He obviously learned that trade from his father.

Paul had a trade, right? Acts 18:2-3 says,

"And he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, having recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. He came to them, and because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them, and they were working, for by trade they were tent makers."

Now, I am not against subsidizing people to be in ministry full time, but that subsidy gives you an opportunity to work even harder, because now you are alleviated from certain responsibilities—economic responsibilities—you are being supported. Well, now is your opportunity to pour yourself into what God has called you to do in a more aggressive way. Unfortunately, the ministry is a great hiding place for lazy people; and that is not godly. It is not what God wants. God wants to be glorified in what we do in terms of our work ethic.

Many Christian students want to win their professor to Christ, and they think that by doing that, they can raise their hand and offer their own philosophy in class every single day. I am telling you right now, folks, that is not the way to win your professor to Christ if you are a collegiate.

The way you win your professor to Christ is this: you outwork all of the students in the classroom. You hand in better papers; you do a better job on the reading; you get better grades in class. And I can guarantee you this much, that is going to get your professor's attention. Now you have got a platform (or a pulpit) to speak from.

Simply being lazy and being average, and introducing your own philosophy into classroom discussions week after week, that is not the way God works. Yes, the professor needs to hear the gospel, but he is not going to listen to somebody who doesn't have any credibility because the student is very mediocre in how he goes about his business in the classroom. This is what we can learn from Issachar. This is what we are not to do.

The last one that we will look at here is Dan (Genesis 49:16-18). Dan was a judge. It is predicted here in Genesis 49:16. It says, *"Dan shall judge his people, As one of the tribes of Israel."* He is going to be a judge.

Did you know that one of the most famous judges in the Bible came from the Tribe of Dan—a guy named Samson (have you ever heard of him (Judges 13-16))? Talk about another guy that didn't finish particularly well, but he had a lot of potential. He is one of the most famous judges that we have in the Bible. He was a Danite.

It is kind of interesting, later on in Biblical history, the Tribe of Dan got themselves involved in idolatry. They are the ones that, after the land was conquered, introduced idolatry into the land of Israel. You can read about it in Judges 18. Some suspect that that is why Dan is not mentioned in the 144,000—12,000 from each tribe that will evangelize the world in the Tribulation period (you can read about that in Revelation 7:1-8).

The multitude that they reach in Revelation 7:9-17, some say that Dan is not there (and he is not). And some attribute it to the idolatry that Dan wandered into in Judges 18. God didn't take away their place in the Millennial Kingdom, but He did take away a privilege (that is speculative, because the Bible doesn't tell us exactly why Dan is not mentioned).

It is wonderful to understand that God is a God of grace, because when you study Ezekiel 47 and 48, there is Dan again, in the Millennial Kingdom. So God is a God of grace. In the Millennial Kingdom, you will see Dan mentioned in Ezekiel 48:2 and Ezekiel 48:32. In spite of Dan's infractions and idolatry, God, in grace, did not wash His hands of Dan. Isn't that a great thing, by the way?

In your Christian life you are going to have ups and downs. You are going to have some weeks that are absolutely miserable, and you are going to ask yourself, "Why in the world am I even saved?" And it is so wonderful to understand that, yes, God is a God of righteousness, but He is also a God of grace. And He cannot—He will not—in fact, He cannot clip your cord and then your salvation is lost. There is still a future for you, just like there was a future for Dan in spite of Dan's "excursion," shall we call it, into idolatry.

Dan also, like so many of these others, had such great potential. You read about his potential as a warrior there in Genesis 49:17. First of all, he is analogized to a serpent. *"Dan shall be a serpent in the way."* In other words, Dan will be ready to strike those deserving of harm, the prophecy indicates. Dan is also like an adder. It says in Genesis 49:17, *"A horned snake in the path."* I would understand that as meaning that he will succeed even though he is small.

Then it talks about how Dan is going to bite the horse's heels. Look at the last part of Genesis 49:17. It says, *"That bites the horse's heels, So that his rider falls backward."* He'll bite the heels, the horse will rear up and fall backwards. Now take that prophecy and study Samson's exploits and the Danite attack on Laish in Judges 18, and you will see that same kind of thing happening through Dan's warfare. It is all a fulfillment of Bible prophecy.

It ends here in Genesis 49:18, with something absolutely spectacular, because this shows us the grace of God. It says, concerning Dan, *"For Your salvation. I wait, O Lord."*

Salvation: What an important word that is. To my knowledge, this is the first use of the actual word "salvation" in the entire Bible.

Certainly we have seen examples of salvation in the Book of Genesis, where God clothed Adam and Eve with the skins of a sacrificed animal (Genesis 3:21). Certainly we have seen the salvation of Noah and his family—eight total in the ark—protected from the floodwaters (Genesis 6-9). To my knowledge, this is the first time the actual word "salvation," has ever been used.

As I understand it, the word "salvation" is used about 78 times in Hebrew Bible (or the Old Testament); and this is the first usage of it. What a word that is. You start studying that word "salvation" and you will literally drown in information. The Bible is simple enough for a child to understand, but at the same time it is deep enough for a theologian to drown in.

That is how I feel about this word "salvation", because it doesn't always mean the same thing every time it is used. Paul used the word "salvation" (In Greek, "soteria") in the Book of Philippians where he was talking about getting out of jail—"salvation" from jail. We think that every time the word "salvation" is used, it is some kind of heaven or hell situation. It is used that way, but there are many, many uses of this word "salvation."

There are basically three tenses of salvation: justification, sanctification, and glorification. Justification is freedom (and that is what salvation is); it is freedom or emancipation, from what? Sin's penalty. At the point of faith alone in Christ alone, when a person trusts in the finished work of Jesus Christ for their salvation, just like that, they are delivered from something. They are emancipated from something, which is the penalty of sin.

Then the saved person comes into their newfound Christian life, where their salvation is not in doubt. God says, "It is time to grow up." And He moves them now into a process called sanctification (which is very different from justification). Justification takes place in a nanosecond; sanctification is a process. It is where we are learning to live lives consistent with our new identity, under the resources that God has given us.

Lewis Sperry Chafer says that 33 things change in you the moment you trust Christ. One of the things that is now different is that you have the Holy Spirit inside of you. Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. You have the new nature. In other words, you have resources that you didn't have before, by which to live.

I start as a new born Christian, making decisions consistent with those resources. Some make great strides here, others don't. That is why there has to be a Bema Seat of Rewards, to reward the faithful Christian—crowns received above and beyond salvation. Everyone has the capacity for growth, which is different from birth.

Don't confuse birth and growth; they are two different things. I can show you people in the natural world that are born, and they are not developing correctly (because of malnutrition or whatever the issue happens to be). But that doesn't mean they become unborn. Birth can't be canceled; it can't be reversed.

As a newborn child of God, God says, "It is My expressed desire for you to grow." That is a process that we are all in; and you will be in that process until your dying day or until the rapture of the church (whichever comes first). I am just allowing my practice to catch up with the position that God has already declared of me through spiritual birth.

Justification is instantaneous; sanctification is a lifelong process. Justification is a heaven or hell issue; sanctification is a Bema Seat of Rewards issue. Justification is a birth issue; sanctification is a growth issue.

Then the day will come when we will die. Is dying the worst thing that can happen to you? Everybody is so afraid to die. And yet Hebrews 2 tells us that Jesus came into the world to remove from us the fear of death, which holds man in fear and in bondage. Paul was not afraid to die. He said, in 2 Corinthians 5:8 that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. He said in Philippians 1:21, *"For me, to live is Christ and to die is gain."* In fact, he says, *"I would rather die and go into the presence of the Lord, which is much better."*

There are two words to study: much better. What is the next life compared to this life? "Much better," Paul says. But he says to the Philippians, "For your sake, I guess I'm stuck here as an apostle, writing letters to you, and so forth. But if I had my druthers, I would rather just check out." He wasn't suicidal. He knew that as long as he was living on this earth, God was using him; but his preference was to go into the presence of the Lord. He says that is "much better." The man had no fear of death whatsoever.

If you are afraid to die (you can live that way if you want), you are living way beneath your privileges. You are living way beneath what God has decreed of you. Death comes, or perhaps the rapture will come first. (What do you think about that? I can't guarantee it. I sure hope it does.) Then I will be in phase three of my salvation—in a state of glorification—like justification, happening in an instant—where I will be emancipated from what? Sin's very presence.

You see, in justification, I am emancipated from sin's penalty. In sanctification, I am gradually being emancipated from sin's power. But in glorification, I won't even have a sin nature to deal with anymore. I will have no inclination to sin, and I will be in the very presence of God.

So be careful what you are doing with this word "salvation." It means different things depending on the context you are working in. Ephesians 2:8-9 and Titus 3:5 are some verses that indicate we have been saved—Justification. Philippians 2:12 indicates that we are being saved—Sanctification. And Romans 5:10 indicate that we will be saved—Glorification. What a word that is—Salvation—as we find for the very first time there in Genesis 49:18.

Why do Jacob's prophecies about Dan end with this word "salvation"? Because, as I said before, Dan became idolatrous. Judges 18 describes it. Second Kings 10:29 says,

"However, as for the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which he made Israel sin, from these Jehu did not depart, even the golden calves that were at Bethel and that were at Dan."

That is where the golden calves (once Joshua conquered the land, a few generations down the road) would be located—at Dan.

I will tell you something very interesting about Dan: God, in all of that, never forgot Dan. There is Dan, (Ezekiel 48:2 and Ezekiel 48:32) in the Millennial Kingdom. Did they lose an opportunity to be listed amongst the 144,000 Jewish evangelists in Revelation 7? Yes, but God never cut the cord on Dan. They have a prominent Millennial role.

Jesus said this in Matthew 19:28,

"Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

He doesn't say "minus Dan" or "except Dan," because Dan is going to be there. Dan, in spite of its problems, is not cut out of its Millennial blessing. I don't know how to describe that other than the word "grace."

How does a disobedient, idolatrous tribe gain Millennial prominence (Ezekiel 48)? It has to do with grace—unmerited favor. And there are many, many people within the sound of my voice that need to hear that, because what you think is that you have gone too far and that God can't use you. God can't bless you anymore because you have gone too far into sin or disobedience.

Probably one of my most favorite verses in the whole Bible is Jonah 3:1. It says, *"Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time, saying, 'Arise, go to Nineveh...'"* What happened the first time? Well, you know the story. God said, "Go east." And Jonah went west. "Go to Nineveh." He went to Spain (Tarshish). God put him in timeout in the belly of a fish; vomited him up on the shore; and Jonah, in the midst of all of that, prays to die.

When you study Jonah 2, and he probably thought, "God is finished with me. I went too far." But the Bible says, *"Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time."* Maybe that is you. Maybe God's Word is coming to you a second time saying, "Salvation is a big word. I haven't washed My hands of you. Yes, there are consequences to sin, but I am not finished with you yet. Because My Word now is coming to you a second time."