

Blessings from a Deathbed

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[0 : 00] Well, if we could, with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling this morning, if we could turn back to that portion of Scripture that we read. Book of Genesis and Genesis chapter 49.

Genesis chapter 49. And as we said, this chapter is a chapter about blessings from a deathbed. Blessings from a deathbed.

We're going to look at the whole chapter, but if we read again at verse 33, the last verse of the chapter. Genesis 49 at verse 33. When Jacob finished commanding his sons, he drew up his feet into the bed and breathed his last and was gathered to his people.

You know, watching and witnessing someone dying before our eyes is one of the most distressing and difficult experiences that we will ever encounter in life.

And no one likes to watch or witness death. But we all know that death is one of those painful realities of life. Death is an enemy.

[1 : 21] Death is, as the Bible says, the last enemy. It is the great separator. Because it severs our ties and it separates us from family and from friends.

But sometimes when a death is not shocking and sudden, families, they're so thankful that their loved ones were able to pass away peacefully.

Where all the family would gather around the deathbed of their loved one who's reaching the end of their days in this world. And although there would always be those feelings of numbness and helplessness and heartache and hurt.

And yet, in a sense, there's also thankfulness. Thankfulness that they were able to be there with them in their dying moments. And, you know, although these moments are some of the most painful for families.

You know, as a minister, I counted the greatest privilege to be allowed to be part of families and their grieving process. And to read God's word with them and to pray with them.

[2 : 26] And, you know, there are experiences that I've had with this congregation. And also in the community that I'll never forget. But, you know, the greatest comfort when you're at the deathbed of someone is knowing that they're a Christian.

That's the greatest comfort. Because when it's the death of a Christian, you know that they're dying well. You know that when they close their eyes, they are falling asleep in Jesus.

But, you know, for so many unconverted friends, they would rather put off coming to Christ for salvation. And they would rather take the risk of living life as they please.

In the hope that they would somehow have a deathbed conversion. But the truth is, no one's guaranteed a deathbed experience. Let alone a deathbed conversion.

In fact, deathbed conversions are very rare. There's only one deathbed conversion in the Bible. And it wasn't even on a deathbed. Because when the thief on the cross, when he hung, nailed to a Roman cross, dying beside Jesus, he said to Jesus, Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom.

[3 : 41] And you remember what Jesus said to him. He said, today you will be with me in paradise. You know, when speaking about deathbed conversions in the Bible, it was my good friend J.C. Ryle.

He said, One thief was saved that no sinner might despair, but only one that no sinner might presume. Do you know, my unconverted friend, deathbed conversions, they are very rare.

They're very rare. So don't presume that you will have one. Just make sure that you are like Jacob. Make sure you are like Jacob.

Because Jacob didn't have a deathbed conversion. Simply because he didn't need one. He was someone who had lived well. And someone who was dying well with Jesus Christ as his Savior.

But as Jacob, in this passage we read that, As Jacob lay upon his deathbed with his twelve sons gathered around his deathbed, we see that Jacob blesses his boys.

[4 : 55] Jacob blesses his twelve sons. He blesses his boys. And I'd like us to consider these blessings from Jacob's deathbed this morning. And I want us to think about it under three headings.

The bad boys, the behaving boys, and the blessed boy. The bad boys, the behaving boys, and the blessed boy.

Jacob blesses his boys. The bad boys, the behaving boys, and the blessed boy. So look first of all at the bad boys. We'll read from the beginning of the chapter.

Verse one. Then Jacob called his sons and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you what shall happen to you in days to come. Assemble and listen, O sons of Jacob. Listen to Israel your father.

Reuben, you are my firstborn, my might, and the firstfruits of my strength. Preeminent in dignity, and preeminent in power. Unstable as water, you shall not have preeminence, because you went up to your father's bed.

[5 : 55] Then you defiled it. He went up to my couch. Now in our study of the life of Joseph, we've often said that God is interested in this family.

God is interested in this family, because Jacob's family, it was, well, it was, as we've discovered, it was a very complicated and very complex family. Because as a father, Jacob had 13 children.

And he had 13 children to four different women. Jacob had two wives, who were actually two sisters, Rachel and Leah. And he also had two concubines, Bilhah and Zilpah.

And these four women, they gave birth to 12 boys and one girl. And in order of their birth, just to highlight it to you, there was Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, Dinah, who was the only daughter, then Joseph, and Benjamin, who was the youngest son.

And as you can imagine, in a household with so many wives, and concubines, and children, emotions often ran high. There was lots of tension, there was rivalries, there was jealousy, there was conflict, there was stresses, there were strains, which affected both the parents, and also the children.

[7 : 12] And in many ways, Jacob's family was, you could call it, a dysfunctional family. Because it wasn't the norm. It wasn't the God-instituted family of 2.4 children.

And yet, God was interested in this family. And the glory of the gospel, my friend, is that God is interested in your family. He's interested in your family, and all that you're going through today. Because the truth is, even as we look at this family, there's no perfect family. Every family has flaws, and failings, and fallouts. Every family encounters, and experiences breakups, and breakdowns, sins, sicknesses, suffering, sorrow, divorce, and even divisions.

And yet, the wonder of the gospel is, that God says to us, I am interested, in your family. I am interested, in your family. And God was interested, in Jacob's family.

But what we see in this chapter, is that Jacob, he was not only a patriarch, Jacob in this chapter, he's a prophet. As you know, Jacob has often been described, or defined as, as one of the patriarchs, one of the fathers, of the children of Israel.

[8 : 23] Just like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They were all patriarchs. But in this chapter, of blessing from a deathbed, Jacob is not only a patriarch, he's also a prophet.

Jacob assumes, a prophetic role. The role, and responsibility, of prophesying. And the role, and responsibility, of prophesying, was not only to, foretell future events.

It was also to, forth tell, God's word. A prophet was to, foretell, and, forth tell. And so as Jacob, pronounces blessings, from his deathbed, he foretells, the future, of his own family.

And he also, forth tells, a message, to his family. And what we see, in this opening verse, is that, in his prophetic role, Jacob, forth tells, that his three eldest sons, they were bad boys, and they were a disappointment, to their father.

His three eldest sons, we're told, they were bad boys, and a disappointment, to their father. We're told in verse 3, Reuben, you are my firstborn, my might, and the first fruits, of my strength, preeminent in dignity, and preeminent, in power.

[9 : 38] Now the name Reuben, means behold a son. Behold a son. And you know, it was a fitting name, for Jacob's firstborn son. Behold a son.

And of course, as the firstborn son, Reuben was entitled, to receive his father's, inheritance. His birthright, as the firstborn son, was to receive, Jacob's blessing, from his deathbed. That's what he should have received. And Jacob knew that. Which is why, he describes his firstborn son, Reuben. He says, that he is his might, and the first fruits, of his strength. He's preeminent in dignity, and preeminent, in power. He knows that Reuben, by right, should receive, the blessing. But Jacob also knew, that Reuben's moral failure, had forfeited, that right. He had forfeited, the father's birthright, or the father's blessing. Reuben had forfeited, his father's blessing, from his deathbed, by sleeping with one of, his father's concubines, Bilhah. [10:44] And that's why, Jacob says to him, in verse four, he says, unstable as water, you shall not have preeminence, because you went up, to your father's bed, then you defiled it, he went up, to my couch.

Now literally, Jacob says to his eldest son, he says to Reuben, that you acted, as reckless, as water. Reuben's character, conduct, and conversation, it was not befitting, or becoming, of his father's blessing.

Reuben's character, conduct, and conversation, was not befitting, or becoming, of his father's blessing. And you know, it ought to be a reminder to us, that sin always has consequences. Sin always has consequences, because sin withholds, the blessing of God. Sin withholds, the blessing of God. Yes, there's full and free forgiveness, in Christ.

But my friend, when you flirt with sin, sin always, has consequences. Sin always, has consequences. And that was true, not only for Reuben, the eldest, it was also true, for Jacob's other bad boys, Simeon, and Levi.

[11:53] We read in verse five, Simeon and Levi are brothers, weapons of violence, are their words. Let my soul come, not into their counsel. O my glory, be not joined, to their company.

For in their anger, they killed men, and in their willfulness, they hamstringed oxen. Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce, and their wrath, for it is cruel.

I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel. Simeon and Levi, were also bad boys, in Jacob's family. Not because they defiled their father's bed, but because they went, to defend their father's name.

And then they took things, a step too far. As we said, Jacob had twelve sons, and one daughter, called Dinah. And as any father would, Jacob would have doted, on his only daughter, Dinah. But as Dinah grew up, she grew up, into a beautiful young woman, and her beauty, attracted the attention, of other men. And in particular, there was one, you could say, an entitled young man, called Hamor the Hivite.

[13:00] And Hamor the Hivite, was your typical, red-blooded male. He was young, he was strong, he was handsome, he was confident, he was full of ego. And when Hamor the Hivite, when he saw, the young and beautiful, Dinah, he lusted after her, to the point, to the point, Hamor the Hivite, raped Dinah.

Hamor the Hivite, raped Dinah. Now his elder brothers, wanting to protect, their younger sister, their only sister, when Simeon and Levi, heard what had happened, to their little sister Dinah, they killed Hamor the Hivite.

But then they went, a step further, because they killed, all the young men, in the city. They took revenge, on Hamor the Hivite, and all the people of the city, for raping their sister.

But they took things, a step too far. They got caught up, in the heat of the moment, and did things, that they would later, live to regret. And you know, to an extent, we can appreciate, Simeon and Levi, that they were angry.

They were frustrated, they were hurt, by what had happened, to their sister. And we can appreciate it, because when we're angry, angry, or when we're frustrated, or when we're hurt, we sometimes say things, to someone, or do something, that we might, even later live, to regret.

[14:23] But what Simeon and Levi did, it caused a lot of hurt, and a lot of heartache, for their father Jacob. Because it was enough, to take in, that your only daughter, had been raped.

But it was worse, knowing that two of your sons, were now murderers. And my friend, sin always has consequences. And that's what we're seeing here.

Sin withholds the blessing of God. Yes, there's full and free forgiveness in Christ. And that is, that is the wonder of the gospel. There is full and free forgiveness in Christ.

But when you flirt with sin, sin always has consequences. And for the bad boys, of Reuben and Simeon and Levi, their sin withheld the blessing of God.

Their sin withheld the blessing of God. And I say that because, when their tribes, finally entered the promised land of Israel, 500 years later, none of their tribes, inherited an apportionment, of the promised land.

[15 : 28] They didn't receive, an apportionment, of the promised land. As Jacob prophesied, at the end of verse 7, I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel.

My friends, sin always has consequences because sin withholds the blessing of God. As was Jacob lay upon his deathbed with his 12 sons, they're all gathered around his deathbed.

We see that Jacob, he addresses first of all, the bad boys. But then he addresses secondly, the behaving boys. So there's the bad boys and then the behaving boys.

We'll look at verse 13. It says in verse 13, Zebulun shall dwell at the shore of the sea. He shall become a haven for ships and his border shall be at Sidon.

Issachar is a strong donkey crouching between the sheepfolds. He saw that a resting place was good and that the land was pleasant. So he bowed his shoulder to Baal and became a servant at forced labor.

[16 : 26] Dan shall judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel. Dan shall be a serpent in the way, a viper by the path that bites the horse's heels so that his rider falls backward.

And then he says, I wait for your salvation, O Lord. Now we often say, I've saved the best till last. In this case, I want to say that I've saved the blessed till last.

Because as we'll see, Judah, we missed out those verses, Judah was the blessed boy in Jacob's family. Judah was the blessed boy. But even though Judah was the blessed boy, there were others who were the behaving boys.

And from his deathbed, Jacob pronounces blessing upon these behaving boys. Jacob explains to them where their tribes will be located.

And he says, what blessings they will know and experience as they enter the promised land of Israel. And you know, thinking about this chapter, it's quite remarkable that Jacob's blessing from his deathbed, he's pronouncing blessings to his family that will not be fulfilled for another 500 years into the future.

[17 : 45] Which means that the sons of Jacob who are gathered around his deathbed at the time, they were present at his deathbed, at his bedside, and at his deathbed, they would never see these blessings being fulfilled.

It would only be their descendants after them. Because, as you know, as a family, they remained in the land of Egypt for 430 years until the Exodus under Moses.

And then they would spend another 40 years in the wilderness until they finally crossed the Jordan River into the promised land under Joshua. But Jacob here, he prophesies, he pronounces, and he proclaims blessing from his deathbed because in life, as in death, Jacob was clinging and claiming to God's covenant promise.

You know the covenant promise that was given to the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? It was the covenant promise to your offspring, I will give this land, the promised land.

To your offspring, I will give this land. And you know, looking at Jacob on his deathbed, Jacob was a man who died clinging and claiming the covenant promises of God.

[19 : 01] He was a man who died confessing that God's plans, path, and purposes in his life, they were all according to God's perfect providence.

And you know, as we've been considering the death of Jacob over the past number of weeks, you know, it's actually caused me to think about my own life and my own death. As I hope it has also caused you to consider your own life and think about your own death.

Because you know, Jacob here, he's such an example to us of what it is to live well and what it is to die well. But also the fact that Jacob teaches us that in life and in death we should be clinging and claiming the covenant promises of God's word.

We should be confessing that God's plans, his path, and his purposes in our lives, they are all according to his perfect providence. Even though we may not understand why.

that's what we need to learn from Jacob. He was someone who lived well and died well. But as Jacob pronounces blessing from his deathbed, he explains that for the bad boys of Reuben and Simeon and Levi, their sin withheld the blessing of God.

[20 : 24] And their tribes, they didn't inherit an apportionment of the promised land in Israel. But to these behaving boys, the behaving brothers, Jacob prophesied, he pronounced, and he proclaimed blessing upon them.

He says in verse 13, Zebulun shall dwell at the shore of the sea. He shall become a haven for ships and his border shall be at Sidon. To Zebulun, Jacob prophesied that his apportionment of the land would be a trade route and that his tribe would be sailors.

They would trade upon the Mediterranean Sea. So they would be a trade route and they would be sailors who traded upon the Mediterranean Sea. Then verse 14, Issachar is a strong donkey crouching between the two sheepfolds.

He saw that as a resting place, saw that a resting place was good and that the land was pleasant. So he bowed his shoulder to Baer and became a servant at forced labor.

To Issachar, Jacob prophesied that his apportionment of the promised land would be the fertile valley of Jezreel and that his tribe would be strong and hardworking farmers.

[21 : 40] Then he went on, verse 16, Dan shall judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel. Dan shall be a serpent in the way, a viper by the path that bites on the horse's heels so that his rider falls backward.

So to Dan, he pronounces another blessing. And the name Dan means to judge. That's where we get the name Daniel from. It means God is my judge.

And so to Dan, he pronounces another blessing. And the tribe of Dan was an important tribe because they would be actually located in the promised land right next to Philistine territory.

And as Jacob describes here, that like a serpent viper, the tribe of Dan would protect Israel and even prevent the Philistines from crossing the border.

In fact, Samson, you remember Samson, he was one of the most famous men from the tribe of Dan. He was from the tribe of the judges, you could say. And in fact, he was one of the judges and he defeated the Philistines by his strength.

[22 : 46] So then verse 19, we're told, Raiders shall raid Gad, but he shall raid at their heels. So to Gad, Jacob promised or prophesied that his apportionment of the land would be on the opposite side to his brother.

It would be on the east side of the Jordan, near yet more enemy territory. The tribe of Gad would produce and provide a strong army. In fact, the name Gad, it actually means troops, which is what the tribe of Gad would become.

They would become great warriors that would keep their enemy at bay. Then verse 20, Asher's food shall be rich and he shall yield royal delicacies.

To Asher, Jacob prophesied that his tribe would be located in the north. They would be in the north along the coast of Israel and their tribe would be bakers.

The tribe of Asher would be bakers. They would provide rich food with delights and delicacies fit for a king. In fact, that's why Daniel and Amy MacArthur called their bakery in Northern Ireland.

[23 : 55] They called it Asher's Bakery. You'll remember, I'm sure you've heard of Asher's Bakery. It was in the news quite often a few years ago. Asher's Bakery was owned by a Christian couple who refused, while they had no problem serving someone who was a homosexual, they refused to bake a cake in support of gay marriage.

And after a four and a half year legal case, they finally won it. So that's why they called their bakery Asher's Bakery. It was after the tribe of Asher who were bakers.

Then we read in verse 21, Naphtali is a doe let loose that bears beautiful fawns. And so to Naphtali, Jacob prophesied that his apportionment of the land would be also in the north further north than Zebulun and Issachar and it would include the Sea of Galilee, a famous area where Jesus often preached.

But the tribe of Naphtali, they were said to be good with words. They were messengers. They were good at speaking. They were good with speech and poetry and language. So the tribe of Naphtali were good speakers.

Then we read in verse 22, Joseph is a fruitful bow, a fruitful bow by a spring. His branches run over the wall. The archers bitterly attacked him, shot at him and harassed him severely.

[25 : 17] Yet his bow remained unmoved. His arms were made agile by the hands of the mighty one of Jacob. From there is the shepherd, the stone of Israel, by the God of your father who will help you, by the Almighty who will bless you with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep

that crouches beneath, blessings of the breasts and of the womb.

The blessings of your father are mighty beyond the blessings of my parents up to the bounties of the everlasting hills. May they be on the head of Joseph and on the brow of him who was set apart from his brother.

And to Joseph, Jacob prophesied that his apportionment of the land, as we saw last week in Genesis 48, will be for his sons, Ephraim and Manasseh.

And they will receive most of the blessing. They will receive the largest portion of the promised land. The land of Manasseh will be fruitful with vineyards and flocks.

So the tribe of Manasseh, they will be gardeners and shepherds. And then the tribe of Ephraim, they will be skilled archers. They will be skilled with the use of the bow and arrow.

[26 : 28] And then we read in verse 27. It says, Benjamin is a ravenous wolf in the morning devouring the prey and at evening dividing the spoil. And then it says, verse 28, all these are the twelve tribes of Israel.

This is what their father said to them as he blessed them, blessing each with a blessing suitable to him. To Benjamin, the name Benjamin means son of my right hand.

And to Benjamin, Jacob prophesied that Benjamin would be the home of God's people. It would be where Jerusalem was located. It would be where the temple would be built.

It would be where the throne of Israel would be situated. The first king of Israel was to come from the tribe of Benjamin, which was King Saul. But so would the first missionary to the Gentiles.

It was the Apostle Paul. They would all come from the tribe of Benjamin. But you know, looking at all these blessings to all these boys or these brothers, and I've only just skimmed over them, but you know, when you consider all these blessings which Jacob pronounced upon these behaving boys, he prophesied blessing upon ordinary people living ordinary lives, looking and loving their extraordinary God.

[27 : 51] That's what we should take from this. These behaving boys, Jacob, he prophesied blessing upon ordinary people who were just living ordinary lives, looking and loving their extraordinary God.

Because as we said, they were sailors. Some of them were farmers. Others of them were service men and maybe women. They were judges. They were bakers.

They were messengers. They were gardeners. They were shepherds. They were archers. Some were kings. Others were missionaries. They were from all walks of life. They were all different people.

But they were just ordinary people. They were ordinary people who were living ordinary lives, looking and loving their extraordinary God.

They were ordinary people living ordinary lives, looking and loving their extraordinary God. And you know, my Christian friend, that's what we are called, commanded, and commissioned to do.

[28 : 53] That's what we're called, commanded, and commissioned to do. That whatever our job, whether we're working or retired, whatever title we hold, whatever position we have in this community or further afield, above all else, as Christians, we're to be ordinary people, living ordinary lives, looking and loving their extraordinary God.

That's what we're to do. We're to live Christ-centered lives, Christ-centered lives for the glory of God and the furtherance of His kingdom. Now that's what I see from this family.

They were called to be ordinary people, living ordinary lives, looking and loving their extraordinary God. And that's what we are called to be.

We're called to live Christ-centered lives for the glory of God and the furtherance of His kingdom.

And so as Jacob lay on his deathbed with his twelve sons gathered around him, he addressed the bad boys and the behaving boys and then he last of all addressed the blessed boy.

The blessed boy, which was Judah. Now look at verse 8. He says, Judah, your brother shall praise you. Your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies. Your father's sons shall bow down before you.

[30 : 14] Judah is a lion's cub. From the prey, my son, you have gone up. He stooped down. He crouched as a lion and as a lioness. Who dares rouse him? The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet until tribute comes to him and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.

Binding his foal to the vine and his donkey's colt to the choice vine, he has washed his garments in wine and his vesture in the blood of grapes.

His eyes are darker than wine and his teeth whiter than milk. You know, in our study of the life of Joseph, Judah didn't have the best introduction because when we first met Judah, we met him in what was a colorful chapter in chapter 38.

And in that chapter, his life needed a bit of parental guidance. He had ended up in a messy marriage to this Canaanite woman where they had three sons together. And Judah's eldest son, he got married to a beautiful woman called Tamar.

But not long after, Judah's eldest son died. And so did Judah's second son. He also died. And then Judah's wife also died. And so in a short space of time, Judah lost three members of his closest family.

[31 : 39] And like many people, in order to deal with his grief and his losses in life, Judah buried himself in work and drowned his sorrows in alcohol.

It was a messy marriage and it led to a messy mistake. Because when we read Genesis 38, we read that one night after working hard all day with the sheep, Judah wanted to let off some steam. He wanted to find a prostitute. But what Judah didn't realize was that his beautiful daughter-in-law, Tamar, she had disguised herself as a prostitute to get back at her father-in-law, Judah, for treating her with contempt.

And of course, the upshot of that nighttime liaison was that Tamar fell pregnant with twins. It was a messy mistake. But what Judah's messy mistake revealed, and that's the beautiful thing about chapter 38, read it when you go home.

What Judah's messy mistake revealed was a marvelous Messiah. Because God used Jacob's, or Judah's, backsliding for his good. And he also used it for God's own glory.

[32 : 52] And you know, that's what I love about the Bible. The Bible doesn't sugarcoat sin or try and cover it up. The Bible presents to us and reminds us that this book is not about saints.

It's about sinners. It's about sinners who have made messy mistakes. And it just presents it to us that these are real people who had real lives and they were real sinners.

But the glory of the gospel is that God is able to work in and through our messy mistakes. And he's able to work by his grace for our good and to his glory. My friend, the glory of the gospel is that there is a marvelous Messiah in Jesus Christ.

And that marvelous Messiah came from the tribe of Judah, the blessed boy. He came all the way from the tribe of Judah, the blessed boy.

And we see that even because through Judah's messy mistake, even though it wasn't part of his plan or his purpose, Tamar's twins, the twins that Judah had with his nighttime liaison woman, they were all, it was all part of God's perfect plan and purpose.

[34 : 03] In fact, they were part of God's promise. Because Judah and Tamar and her children, they're all part of the line and lineage of grace.

When you go to the first book of the New Testament, to Matthew's gospel, we're reminded there in the opening chapter of Matthew, in the genealogy of Jesus, we're told that Tamar is an ancestor of Jesus.

And you know, it may have been a messy mistake with Tamar, but a marvelous Messiah came from Judah, the blessed boy. And what we see here is that from his deathbed, Jacob, he prophesies, he pronounces, and he proclaims blessing upon Judah.

Because he says that Judah's tribe will not only be a portion, the southern part of the land of Israel, but from his tribe will come one who is strong and powerful, we're told.

He will be the lion of the tribe of Judah. But more than that, Jacob prophesies here that the scepter shall not depart from Judah. Meaning that the tribe of Judah will be a royal tribe.

[35 : 15] It will be of royal descent. Kings will come from the tribe of Judah because the scepter shall not depart from Judah. And my friend, as Jacob prophesied, as he pronounced and even proclaimed blessing from his deathbed, what he says here is that this marvelous Messiah, he will come from the line of Judah, he will be of royal descent, and the scepter shall not depart from his hand.

He will be king over God's people, and in the realist sense, this marvelous Messiah will be the blessed boy. He will be blessed with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places.

He will be given all authority in heaven and on earth, that at the name of Jesus, every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that he is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

But you know, as we come to a conclusion, do you remember the glimpse of glory that John was given in Revelation? Where he received this revelation of heaven, and he saw this multitude gathered around the throne of heaven.

They had gathered, been brought in from every nation, tribe, people, and language. We're told there that their robes are washed, they're all made white in the blood of the Lamb, and they're all gathered around the throne of the Lamb because he's the only one who's worthy to open the scroll. [36 : 45] But how does John describe the Lamb? How does he describe the Lamb of God? And he says that he is the lion of the tribe of Judah.

He is the root of King David. He is the lion of the tribe of Judah. He is the root of King David. The one in heaven, John says, is the one whom Jacob described on his deathbed.

The one in heaven is the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of King David. And that's how Jacob described Jesus on his deathbed. That's how Jacob described Jesus on his deathbed.

But you know, the wonder of wonders is this, and with this I'll finish. As Jacob lay on his deathbed with his twelve sons gathered around him, he addresses the bad boys and the behaving boys and then he addresses the blessed boy.

But when he finishes, when he finishes prophesying and pronouncing and proclaiming blessing from his deathbed, we're told at the last verse, he drew up his feet into the bed and breathed his last and was gathered to his people.

[37 : 55] He closed his eyes in this world for the last time. And how did he open them? He opened them face to face with the one whom he had prophesied, proclaimed, and pronounced on his deathbed.

He opened his eyes in glory to see the lion of the tribe of Judah and the root of King David. He opened his eyes. He opened his eyes, my friend, to see Jesus face to face.

He opened his eyes to see Jesus face to face. And you know, it leaves us with the question, when you close your eyes in death, where will you open them?

and what will you see? When you close your eyes in death, where will you open them?

And what will you see? Will you see the lion and the lamb in glory? Or will you see the horrors of hell? when you close your eyes in death, my friend, where will you open them?

[39 : 12] You make sure you're like Jacob and die well. Die well. Well, may the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray.

O Lord, we give thanks to Thee for Thy Word. Thy Word that gives to us so many great and precious promises and help us, we pray, to cling to them, to claim them, to consider them day by day, to realize that every promise has been given to us and that they are yea and amen in Christ. Lord, go before us, we ask. Bless Thy truth to our souls that when we close our eyes in this world that we would open them, beholding the lion and the lamb, seeing Jesus face to face.

O Lord, do us good. Take away our iniquity. Receive us graciously for Jesus' sake. Amen. Well, we're going to bring our service to a conclusion this morning by singing in Psalm 17.

Psalm 17 in the Scottish Psalter. It's on page 217. Psalm 17.

[40 : 24] We're singing from verse 5 down to the verse marked 9 and then we're going to sing the last verse, verse 15. Psalm 17 from verse 5 where it says, Hold up my goings, Lord, me guide in those thy paths divine so that my footsteps may not slide out of those ways of thine.

And then we sing down to verse 9 and then the last verse of the Psalm. But as for me, I thine own face in righteousness will see and with thy likeness when I wake I satisfied shall be.

That's the hope the Psalmist had that when he closed his eyes in this world he would open them seeing Jesus face to face. So Psalm 17 from verse 5 and we'll stand to sing if you're able to God's praise.

hold up my coins Lord, me guide It looks like heart divine So that my first steps may not slide At all those waves of life I call it Thou only, O God Because Thou wilt be here That Thou rearken to Thy speech

To need and find Thy ear Thy wondrous love in Thine's shore The love by Thy right hand Since then the trust in the field rose That up against them stand As the apple of the ivy key May Thy wings shed me close

[43 : 22] From little beds search the passing Me, O God, O God, O God God does for me I Thine
own face And righteousness will see And with Thy life is with Thy way I satisfied shall be The grace
of the Lord Jesus Christ The love of God the Father And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
Be with you all Now and forevermore Amen Amen