

In Genesis 49, Jacob prophetically blesses each of his sons, the patriarchs of the twelve tribes of Israel. Among these blessings, the tribe of Issachar receives a unique and often overlooked portion:

Genesis 49:14-15 (NKJV)

“Issachar is a strong donkey, lying down between two burdens;
He saw that rest was good, and that the land was pleasant;
He bowed his shoulder to bear a burden, and became a band of slaves.”

To modern ears, this may sound like a curse. Who wants to be compared to a donkey a beast of burden? Who wants to be called into servanthood or hard labor? But spiritually, Issachar’s calling reveals a powerful truth: those who understand the value of the future are willing to serve in the present.

Seeing Beyond the Present

Issachar saw that the land ahead was good. He understood that true rest and peace weren’t found in avoiding responsibility but in

willingly embracing it for a greater purpose. This is a striking image of faith that looks forward (Hebrews 11:1). His decision to submit to labor was not rooted in weakness but in wisdom. He chose short-term struggle for long-term glory.

This attitude contrasts with many people today who avoid spiritual responsibility. Why do we hesitate to serve God with our time, gifts, and energy? It's often because we don't clearly see what lies ahead. We're spiritually nearsighted. As

2 Peter 1:9 says:

"For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins."

When we lack eternal vision, we fill our lives with temporary pursuits: success, wealth, comfort. We work tirelessly for earthly gain cars, houses, status yet find it burdensome to read a single chapter of Scripture, attend worship, or care for others in love. But what does it profit us?

Mark 8:36 (NKJV)

“For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?”

The Wisdom of Issachar

Later in Scripture, we again see Issachar’s spiritual maturity highlighted. During the reign of King David, men from Issachar are described in a powerful way:

1 Chronicles 12:32 (NKJV)

“Of the sons of Issachar who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do, their chiefs were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their command.”

God honored their servanthood with discernment and wisdom. They could interpret the times and advise Israel accordingly. This shows that true spiritual insight comes not from pride or privilege, but from humility and a willingness to serve. God grants wisdom to those who honor Him in obedience (Proverbs 1:7).

The Heart of Kingdom Greatness

Jesus taught His disciples a radically different standard of greatness from the world's:

Matthew 20:25-27 (NKJV)

“You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them... Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave.”

This aligns perfectly with Issachar's legacy. True greatness in the Kingdom of God is not about power or applause but about servanthood, humility, and purpose driven living. Those who understand this are willing to labor like Issachar for the good of others and for the glory of God.

What Do You See Ahead?

Do you see the “shining land” ahead the New Jerusalem, the eternal rest, the reward of the faithful?

Revelation 21:2-3 (NKJV)

“Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them...’”

Jesus is preparing this place for those who love Him (John 14:2-3). The Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:9) is near. And yet many of us live as though the here and now is all there is.

We must ask ourselves: Are we ready? Or are we spiritually asleep?

Time is Running Out

We are not just called to be spectators of grace but witnesses. The time for pleading with people to come to Christ is nearing its end. The Gospel now functions more and more as a final testimony, preparing hearts and removing excuses.

Acts 17:30-31 (NKJV)

“Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness...”

If Christ returns tonight, or if death comes suddenly are you ready? Who will receive you? Heaven is real. So is hell. These are not just symbols; they are destinations.

Hebrews 9:27 (NKJV)

“And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment...”

The Call to Repent and Serve

So what should we do?

Repent of sin. Return to God.

Serve with purpose. Live not for self, but for Christ.

Be like Issachar. Choose to labor today because you see what lies ahead.

Romans 12:1 (NKJV)

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.”

This is your calling: not to chase the fading treasures of this world, but to fulfill the will of the One who created and saved you.

May the Lord bless you and give you eyes to see the beautiful land ahead.

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