

# (Genesis) Genesis 49:2-5

by J. Vernon McGee

---

*Jacob's final blessing reveals his recognition of heredity and his desire to pass on his legacy to his sons, while also warning them against the dangers of cruelty and the importance of justice and purity.*

**Duration:** 4:37

**Scripture:** Genesis 49:2-3, Genesis 49:5-7, Exodus 20:12, Proverbs 22:6, Matthew 6:33, Philippians 4:8

**Topics:** "Genesis"

---

## Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on Genesis 49:2 and the dramatic scene of Jacob, the old man, sitting up in bed leaning on his staff. The speaker reflects on the inconvenience of death and how it interrupts our plans and appointments. Jacob then proceeds to address his sons, starting with Reuben, his firstborn. Jacob recognizes the importance of heredity and acknowledges both the strengths and weaknesses of his sons. He specifically mentions Reuben's sordid story and how it prevented him from excelling. The speaker also mentions a preacher friend who could have achieved more but was content with mediocrity.

---

## Transcript

Now, I read verse 2 of Genesis 49. "...gather yourselves together, and hear, ye sons of Jacob, and hearken unto Israel your Father." Now, you must grant that this is quite a dramatic scene we have before us. Here's the old man, and he's sitting up in bed.

I've seen pictures of him stretched out in bed, and looked like he wouldn't be able to raise his head. But that's not true. He was leaning on his staff.

The last verse tells that, that he was leaning on his staff. Old Jacob, frankly, friends, he'd been on the go all of his life, and he wanted to keep going. Death is really an embarrassment.

It comes at a most inconvenient time, when we want to keep going down here. And if you've made an appointment, you have to break that appointment. Now, unusual, it says, I make all my appointments today on the condition that I'm alive.

I've got appointments made two years ahead. I don't know whether I'll fulfill them or not. And I always say, provided I'm alive.

Well, Jacob found that he couldn't keep going. He was leaning on his staff. He wanted to keep going, but he couldn't keep going.

What a remarkable man he was in many ways. We'll see that when we come to it. Now, notice what he has to say.

He begins with Reuben, verse 3. Reuben, thou art my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power. The thing that he recognized, and all of these patriarchs recognized, is the great subject of heredity that has been made so much of today. Like father, like son, it's transferred on to the son.

And Jacob is recognizing that. And he recognized in this boy a great deal that was like himself, unstable as water. That had been this man at the beginning, you see, even Jacob.

But it was true of his oldest son. Thou shall not excel. He never did win a blue ribbon.

He won a couple red ribbons and some white ribbons. He never was in first place. Thou shall not excel.

A lot of folk like that today, and they're satisfied with it. I have a preacher friend. He's a wonderful man, but he could have gone so much farther than he did go.

But he didn't want to go. He had no desire than to just do and be what he wanted to do. He could have been a wonderful writer.

He didn't want to be. I think he wrote two little pamphlets. And he could have been a great Bible teacher.

He didn't want to be. He was satisfied with winning a red ribbon, not second place. And he never won a blue ribbon.

Thou shall not excel. Because thou wentest up to thy father's bed, then defilest thou it. He went up to my couch.

Now, that is Reuben, and his was a sordid story, you remember. I didn't dwell on it. Those of you that have been with us through Genesis, I didn't dwell on it at all.

But it was there, and I'm sure many of you read it. It was a sordid story. I see no reason to dwell on that today.

Contemporary literature and plays and movies and television, well, they're making you sick of it. And I noticed that even a great many liberals today who just decried censorship and everybody ought to be able to do his thing and speak what he wanted to speak and freedom of speech. I noticed quite a few of them are writing now and saying they're tired of the dirt and filth.

That's coming out today. Well, may I say there's no reason to dwell on it. And certainly, the Christians told, if there is anything pure, then think on those things.

Now, notice the next two boys are put together. Simeon and Levi are brethren. They were full brothers.

They were the sons, you'll recall, of Leah. Instruments of a cruelty are in their habitation. You remember how they went in among their neighbors? And, of course, their own sister had been raped and they didn't appreciate that.

And they killed over the entire habitation. Only one man is guilty. But they took it out on the whole town.

They shouldn't have done that. And believe me, Jacob reminds us, Simeon and Levi are brethren.

---

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/9/SID9367.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/j-vernon-mcgee/genesis-genesis-492-5/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**