

# Assemble and Listen, Sons of Jacob, Listen to Your Father Isra'el

## 49: 2

**Assemble and listen, sons of Jacob; listen to your father Isra'el.** Ya'akov speaks in the third person (**He** switches to first person in the next verse when **he** addresses an individual **son**). He refers to himself as **Ya'akov** and as **your father Isra'el**, and appears like the wise **father** of **Proverbs** who counsels his children to hear his instruction. **Listen, my sons, to a father's instruction. Pay attention and gain understanding, and do not turn aside from what I say because those who keep my ways are blessed (Proverbs 4:1, 5:7b and 8:32b).**

First, the order of the sons as he prophesies to them is not the same as found in 29:31 to 30:25, 35:16-18 except for the first four. He begins with the sons of **Leah**, **Reuben**, **Simeon**, **Levi**, **Judah**, **Zebulun** and **Issachar**. Then he deals with **Bilhah's** son **Dan**, and then with **Zilpah's** two sons **Gad** and **Asher**, then back to **Bilhah's** other son **Naphtali**. He then deals with the sons of **Rachel**, **Yosef** and **Benjamin**. **Ephraim** and **Manasseh** were also standing by **Jacob's** deathbed. Just as the blessing of the sons became the blessing of the father, the prophecy of the father became the prophecy of the sons. Therefore, **Ephraim** and **Manasseh** were prophesied to, as you might say, through **Joseph**.

This was no ordinary conversation. Anything a man says on his deathbed is important because generally, if he ever tells the truth, he tells it on his deathbed. **Ya'akov** spoke poetically and with great imagery. His very tone suggests that he was speaking in the Spirit. He was in full possession of his faculties, even though he was close to death. Because he was speaking in poetical language, the sons could hardly fail to recognize the importance of their father's words. Almost instinctively, as they entered the room, they gathered by their own subfamily groupings, in a circular position around the bed. The net result was that fourteen sons gathered around the deathbed of their father Isra'el. As Jacob's dim eyes gradually recognized them, he proceeded to speak to each one in turn, around the circle.<sup>760</sup>