

The Moral Value of the Patriarchs' Testament

Ioan-Gheorghe Rotaru

*Professor PhD.Dr.Habil. 'Timotheus' Brethren Theological Institute of Bucharest, Romania
dr_ionicarotaru@yahoo.com*

ABSTRACT: The blessing of the patriarchs was not a gift from them to their descendants, was not sharing their wealth to their descendants, but the patriarchal blessing represented the gift of God, namely, what God the Creator was transmitting to those children through their father, the patriarch. Thus, the patriarchs, through the blessings offered to their children, look beyond the reality of the nearest timeline, in the future, thus having a future projection over their descendants regarding a place where they would live and a way of life that they would have. Another aspect of patriarchal blessing was the Creator's intention that through the blessing given to Jacob's children, everyone would eventually benefit from these blessings. The patriarchal blessings remained for posterity placed in the book of Christianity, the Holy Scripture, blessings that include a moral ethic, and as long as these precepts were respected, they were generators of peace, tranquility, harmony, happiness and prosperity. Patriarchal blessings also refer to a lifestyle. As long as the mentioned sanitary rules were respected, the people were exempted from a lot of diseases and they were happy. The purpose of the patriarchal blessings, as promised to Abraham, was that in the end the blessings would reverse over the entire world. Abraham was told: "And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 26: 4).

KEYWORDS: blessing, patriarchs, prophet, moral value

The first words spoken by someone are very important, but equally important are their last words. The Holy Scripture even states that the end of a thing is better than its beginning. (*Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof* - Ecclesiastes 7: 8). Thus, it seems that what is said in the end, the last words or the testament is even more important. The patriarchs, who were in fact the first prophets, expressed by excellence their prophetic vocation through their testament, which in the Bible is called blessing, a blessing that was basically a vision over the future, with reference not only to the child before them, but with reference to all his descendants who will follow over time receiving the blessing. Thus, through the patriarchal blessing, through this prophetic testament, one actually enters into what is called the biblical prophecy. "And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days" (Genesis 49: 1).

The patriarch prophet was the one who was looking until the end of history seeing what would happen to his descendants, to his people. The Holy Scripture reveals that only one king of the pagan culture of that time, namely the Babylonian Nebuchadnezzar, was eager to know what would happen to his empire after him. God the Creator responded to the desire of this king's heart and gave him a prophetic dream that was also interpreted by a Jewish prophet, Daniel, who was taken as a prisoner of war and brought to Babylon: "As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came *into thy mind* upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter: and he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass (Daniel 2: 29)." The patriarchs ended their lives with that prophetic vision over their descendants.

In Greek mythology, the fates set a man's future. We know this aspect from Oedipus' tragedy, what the fates foretold about the emperor's child and what he would become, with the awe and fear of his parents, the more they fled this fate, they actually faced it, being an unavoidable tragedy. For the patriarchs, however, things were completely different. The patriarchs were those people who through the vision of God combined the real situation, namely, the real attitude of man, his inclination towards one thing or another and the behavior he had with the ideal of God. For this reason, in almost all cases, the child who was to receive the blessing, according to the patriarchal tradition, respectively the first born, did

not receive it. It is noticeable that the patriarchs broke the tradition of place and time, a tradition that is the same to this day, with only a few exceptions, if that child was mentally ill, he did not receive the blessing of future patriarch. Instead at the first patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob another child and not the firstborn received the patriarchal blessing. This was due to the fact that patriarchal blessing is related to inclination, to the moral structure of a man, to the interest and concern shown for it, and in these conditions the patriarchal blessing, which came from God was received by a child other than the first born, even if the birth father was not inclined to give it to that child, and God ran things in such a way that the blessing to be received by the one who actually valued it, and the patriarch accepted this plan, because the patriarch was primarily a tool in the hand of God through which God transmitted a testament, a blessing to the one who deserved it. This was the difference between patriarchal blessing and the usual customs of the cultures of that time. The patriarch did not invoke but offered the patriarchal blessing in the sense that he was considered to be God's spokesman, who knew the future of that man and what would happen to him and his descendants until the end of the days. In this way, God in His omniscience, transmitted to the patriarch the blessing which was a distant view over time of the fate of that person's descendants. The invocation was rather a formula presented by a priest, also a representative of God, but the invocation was rather a general and conditional act, in the sense that if the man listened, he would receive that blessing too, while the presentation of the the patriarchs' testament was rather of the omniscience of the future, based on the discovery of the omniscient God. Taking into consideration the area in which the patriarchs lived, respectively the Middle East, a world totally different from the European or American area, an area where spiritual values are much better combined with material values. Our Western world is far too material and that is why all spirituality is passed through the sieve of materialism. Oriental thinking was like this: if someone, materially speaking, was well, it meant that he was someone, it meant that he was an accomplished man. But if, from the spiritual point of view, of man's relationship with God, the man is in a good position, then also from the material point of view, the man is also considered to be in a good position because when God blesses, he blesses man as a whole and then the union between the spiritual and the material existed in their minds.

All the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, were people with a good financial situation, people who achieved something and who had a good status in the society of their time, but when we talk about blessing, the material part appears in it, not only the spiritual part. There are also situations in which some received almost nothing from a material point of view and were not upset because the blessing is not essentially represented by the material part but by the spiritual part, represents the person's position in the future, represents the person's dignity in society, represents the relationship of that person with divinity, represents his place in the divine plan. The blessing includes spiritual values to a much greater extent than the material values.

Blessing of Abraham

The patriarchs left behind only a few extremely interesting monuments, namely the ***altars*** and not the fortune, they left the ***fountains***, the source of life very important in the Orient area, and in the end, they left the ***blessing*** and nothing else. The only material object left behind by the patriarchs was the tomb. The tomb from Hebron, which is still an apple of discord between the children of Abraham, Isaac and Ishmael, dividing it in two, but otherwise what they left is the altar, the spring or fountain, the source of life and the blessing the source of divine truth. It is important that the parent, in addition to material values, also to care about the spiritual values.

Abraham begins the journey of life with the blessing, being in this way different from others, because at him we do not have something different at the end of life, but on the

contrary the beginning of his life is different. Even though we don't know anything of any blessing given to Abraham by his parents, we learn that God the heavenly Father offers him the blessing from the beginning: "Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 12: 1-3).

The blessing is not only for children, family, loved ones, but on the contrary it can be addressed to anyone and can be received by anyone if they read Abraham, if they have the faith of Abraham, and if they fit into Abraham's lifestyle. And all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in you: "and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 12: 3). Most of humanity today is considered to be the descendants of Abraham, respectively: Jews, Christians and Mohammedans, and at Hebron, at the tomb of Abraham it can be seen how lovingly Jews and Christians and Mohammedans go there to pray and to worship at the tomb of Abraham, believing that if they are the possessors of the tomb, they will also be the possessors of the land and implicitly of the blessing, this taking into account only the material perspective. But if one passes from the material to the spiritual element, considering Abraham as a father of faith (Abraham's children are those who have Abraham's faith) then it can be seen that Abraham left everything leaving his country in a strange place just to listen to God, Abraham gave up the best part in favor of his grandson only to avoid conflict (Genesis 13: 7-12), Abraham mediated with all the power of his soul for a grandson (Lot) who offended him and in a way he even have deceived him, but in a crisis situation, Abraham interceded for him (Genesis 18: 23-32). Such kindness and love of an uncle. Abraham was willing to go to the highest point, that of being able to sacrifice his own child with the desire to obey God (Genesis 22: 1-12).

About Abraham it was written: "And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him: (Genesis 18:17-19)." This was Abraham, a man of faith, and those who want to sit under his umbrella, those who in their soul have Abraham as a model, must live such a life, where the spiritual values are more important than the material values, in which someone was even ready to give up his rights, just for the sake of peace and harmony. Abraham was the man who received the promise of a country, but only after a period of 400 years, after a certain series of generations, his descendants will take possession of this promised land. Abraham had the patience to wait, being able to live in tents and die in tents, but with the hope that one day his descendants would inherit the promised land.

Isaac's blessing

Isaac's behavior as a prophet was that of a man who uses his senses, his abilities to smell, to taste, to touch, and who finds at some point that he has a sense of smell, of touch, only that he had no sense of sight. The images of the human senses lead to humanity, to the human being, because the prophet was also a man, who smells, feels, tastes, hears, sees. He could hear, but he could not see, for which he could easily be deceived. Seeing things as a whole, it is observed that the divinity wanted Jacob to be blessed, because before his birth, his mother, Rebekah, has a prophecy in which she is told that the youngest will be the greatest and the elder shall serve the younger: "And Isaac intreated the LORD for his wife, because she was barren: and the LORD was intreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived. And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to enquire of the LORD. And the

LORD said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger" (Genesis 25: 21-23).

This prophecy was also shared by Isaac, who also knew that the eldest son would not be the heir, but Jacob would be, and yet he insisted, because as a man he liked hunting, because his senses were satisfied by Esau and it is worth mentioning that the man Isaac, the man with his passions, his senses, was actually deceived, but the prophet Isaac was not deceived. The prophet Isaac understands the divine vision and by two things he remains in this position saying: What I have blessed remains blessed and I do not have two blessings, because the blessing is unique. After this event, Isaac knowingly repeats, with the clarity of all his faculties, this blessing, hence the fact that the prophet Isaac was not deceived, but only the man Isaac with his senses and passions. Esau is conscious and knowingly sends Jacob to his mother's relatives: "And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan. Arise, go to Padanaram, to the house of Bethuel thy mother's father; and take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban thy mother's brother. And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people; And give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham. And Isaac sent away Jacob: and he went to Padanaram unto Laban, son of Bethuel the Syrian, the brother of Rebekah, Jacob's and Esau's mother. When Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob, and sent him away to Padanaram, to take him a wife from thence; and that as he blessed him he gave him a charge, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan" (Genesis 28:1-6).

Even Esau was ready to give up his birthright because of his senses, a lust for a soup: "And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage; for I am faint: therefore was his name called Edom. And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright. And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me? And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he swore unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright" (Genesis 25: 30-34).

It is clear, taking into account the bestowment of the blessing, that God does not love adventure, and Esau was an adventurer. God does not love the worldly spirit, and Esau went and married two Canaanite women who had a specific way of life: with idolatry, with specific dances and pastime, with certain dishes, with ugly words. Rebekah says about her daughters-in-law, Esau's wives: "And Rebekah said to Isaac, I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth: if Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these *which are* of the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do me?" (Genesis 27: 46), and Esau said nothing, though his wives were as they were.

God does not love war, hostility. Esau made a camp of 400 fighters, which at that time meant a lot, basically representing a strong attack force. If the word Esau is replaced with adventure, worldly, women of the cultures of that time and with war, it shall be observed that these are not elements characteristic of the divinity. God loved Esau as well as Jacob, but God could not agree with his lifestyle, with his pleasures, not being about human affectivity, but about an attachment to certain values. Instead, Jacob liked to sit at home, next to his mother, at the altar, being the man who does one thing until the end, who instead of trusting in the army, sees next to him a camp of angels: "And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. And when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God's host: and he called the name of that place Mahanaim" (Genesis 32: 1-2), (*Mahane ain* – double camp). In the end, Jacob attaches himself to heavenly values and God appreciates him while Esau distances himself from heavenly values and God does not agree with this way of behaving.

Jacob, in his turn, was not a saint either. He wanted to have the right of first birth, to have the quality of priest of the family and tried to achieve this with the human hand, with the deception of his father and brother, a mistake that was to be paid by him dearly. Though Jacob was the kind of man who, in spite of his mistakes, the deception of trying to get his brother's blessing, still connects with God and says: "And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me" (Genesis 32: 26). Like Jacob, every man, in spite of his mistakes, who clings to God and asks the blessing, will receive it, like Jacob.

When it comes to Esau, his father Isaac tells him that he has no other blessing and that he will be submissive to his brother, but he Esau will live by his sword: "And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, even me also, O my father. And he said, Thy brother came with subtilty, and hath taken away thy blessing. And he said, Is not he rightly named Jacob? for he hath supplanted me these two times: he took away my birthright; and, behold, now he hath taken away my blessing. And he said, Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me? And Isaac answered and said unto Esau, Behold, I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given to him for servants; and with corn and wine have I sustained him: and what shall I do now unto thee, my son? And Esau said unto his father, Hast thou but one blessing, my father? bless me, even me also, O my father. And Esau lifted up his voice, and wept. And Isaac his father answered and said unto him, Behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above; And by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother; and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck" (Genesis 27: 34-40). He liked that and with that he was going to live from now on and no matter how good fighter he would have been, he would not be able to overstep Jacob.

Jacob's blessing

Even though he has received the blessing of his father Isaac, Jacob runs away from home and for the time being, his brother Esau remains master over everything, all his parental wealth remains to him, and Jacob leaves home with nothing, reaching Laban's uncle, from where he will start everything from scratch. But there he has the blessing of God and that thing was noticed by his father-in-law: "And the man increased exceedingly, and had much cattle, and maidservants, and menservants, and camels, and asses" (Genesis 30: 43). "And he heard the words of Laban's sons, saying, Jacob hath taken away all that was our father's; and of that which was our father's hath he gotten all this glory" (Genesis 30: 43).

God's blessing was worth much more than the human blessing. Jacob's children were considered to be a gift from God, children who eventually manage to be united, to form a large family. The fact that they went through a period of terrible famine (Genesis 41: 57; 42: 1-2) was again the evidence of the divine blessing.

Jacob has two moments in which he offers the blessing. First to Joseph's children and then to the other children. Jacob had a special relationship with his son Joseph. At that time, Joseph was the prime minister of Egypt, a man of high political stature, and Jacob wanted to give him a double share of the inheritance. Interestingly is the fact that at that moment Joseph, who was the prime minister of Egypt, did not materially need anything at all and Jacob may have only 2-3 donkeys at that time, but Jacob was thinking of something else. Jacob knew that his descendants would come to the land of Canaan in the future, a country that would be divided into 12 parts, and each of his children would have a share of that land. Jacob was looking a few hundred years in the future and asked Joseph to bring his children and to be adopted by Jacob. So instead of 12 sons, now he was to have 13 sons, and his two sons were put in Joseph's place. Jacob does this act of adopting Joseph's two children in the

sense that when the land of Canaan was to be divided in the future, his son Joseph would receive a double share of the inheritance: "And it came to pass after these things, that one told Joseph, Behold, thy father is sick: and he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. And one told Jacob, and said, Behold, thy son Joseph cometh unto thee: and Israel strengthened himself, and sat upon the bed. And Jacob said unto Joseph, God Almighty appeared unto me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and blessed me, And said unto me, Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and I will make of thee a multitude of people; and will give this land to thy seed after thee for an everlasting possession. And now thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt before I came unto thee into Egypt, are mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine" (Genesis 48: 1-5).

Joseph brings his children before his father, beautifully freshen up, Manasseh on the right and Ephraim on the left, and at the moment of blessing Jacob crosses his hands and puts his right hand on the head of Ephraim, who was seated on the left, and puts his left hand on Manasseh's head which was seated on the right side. Joseph considered at that moment that his father, being old, had made a mistake by crossing his hands. Jacob says that he was not wrong, that he knows very well what he is doing, namely that his youngest child will eventually be greater than the other. As a prophet, Jacob saw over time that Ephraim would be far more important and would have a more important role than his brother Manasseh. "And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near unto him. And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands wittingly; for Manasseh was the firstborn. And he blessed Joseph, and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth. And when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it displeased him: and he held up his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's head unto Manasseh's head. And Joseph said unto his father, Not so, my father: for this is the firstborn; put thy right hand upon his head. And his father refused, and said, I know it, my son, I know it: he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great: but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations. And he blessed them that day, saying, In thee shall Israel bless, saying, God make thee as Ephraim and as Manasseh: and he set Ephraim before Manasseh" (Genesis 48: 13-20).

Jacob's blessing was not for that moment but for a much more distant future. So when Jacob was sick on his deathbed, he called his sons to tell them what would happen at the end of the days: "And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days": (Genesis 49:1). In Jacob's blessing we find answers to many of the questions that may be asked. The first mention is that the blessings of the prophets are not some predestinations.

Ruben, the firstborn, was to lose his primacy, due to his involvement in an incest: "Reuben, thou art my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power: Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel; because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; then defiledst thou it: he went up to my couch" (Genesis 49: 3-4).

Simeon and Levi are fighting and put Jacob in an embarrassing situation in Shechem, without asking him, their father. In the patriarchal family the situation was pyramidal, so that in the leading position was the father, the patriarch and it was not allowed to take any action without his approval. These two children of his, Simeon and Levi, do not consult with their father, they do everything by their own minds, making a mistake in principle, trying to solve

a problem with violence, and Jacob tells them that his soul does not unite with them, that he is not a man of violence, telling them that things must be resolved peacefully and not with the sword. He tells them that they will be scattered in Israel because they have acted in this cunning and violent way: "Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united: for in their anger, they slew a man, and in their selfwill they digged down a wall. Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel" (Genesis 49: 5-7).

The blessing depends on character, conduct, integration into society, and behavior. The spirit of Simeon and Levi's violent action was the spirit of the old law, namely, an eye for an eye, in which no forgiveness could be found. They said: This young man humiliated our nation, humiliated our sister, we apply the oriental law of retaliation, an eye for an eye. In reality, the side of the Lord rises above the mentality of time, above the tribal or traditional rules of the place.

Judas, does some common things, he separates from his brothers, he wants to go by his own way, takes a Canaanite wife, has a sad experience because his wife is dying, has an affair (Genesis 38: 1-23), but from all this Judas learns. First, he returns to his brothers and in a time of crisis Judas takes an extraordinary attitude and says: I have put myself in charge of my brother (Genesis 43: 3-9), please take me instead of my brother. I can't go home without my brother. I remain in my brother's place (Genesis 44: 18-34). This deed was fantastic, it crushed Joseph, and Judas becomes the spokesman, he becomes the leader of his brothers, the leader of the patriarchal family, and Jacob does nothing but acknowledge this position actually won by Judas through his attitude and tells him: "Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee. Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be. Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes:" (Genesis 49: 8-11).

He is given primacy because he deserved it. Judas learns from his mistakes and gains a character with a dignity to be appreciated and to be finally recognized by all his brothers. It can be seen that both at the time of Joseph's sale and at the time of his coming from Canaan and in the discussion with his father, Judas has the last word, having a deep judgment and leadership qualities. In addition to all of this, he showed a special appreciation for his family, which highlights a certain nobility: I can not see the pain of my father, I can not leave my brother here and go home, it would be better if he will return and if I will remain here. Due to these qualities, Judas becomes a prototype of Jesus Christ, who makes the exchange, the substitution, with man. And Jesus Christ will be born as a man out of the tribe of this man, Judas, who made exactly the gesture that Jesus was to make, in the sense of taking the place of others, and Judas was willing to stay in the place of his brother in prison (Genesis 44: 18-34).

Next to the other children of Judah, we have some beautiful, simple, positive presentations, blessings that are found in the geographical area where they received the inheritance in Canaan, in their historical position over time: "Zebulun shall dwell at the haven of the sea; and he shall be for an haven of ships; and his border shall be unto Zidon. Issachar is a strong ass couching down between two burdens: And he saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant; and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute. Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel. Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward. I have waited for thy salvation, O LORD. Gad, a troop shall overcome him: but he shall

overcome at the last. Out of Asher his bread shall be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties. Naphtali is a hind let loose: he giveth goodly words. Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall: The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him: But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel) Even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb: The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren. Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf: in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil" (Genesis 49: 13-28).

The most important lesson in Jacob's will is the vision regarding the future, because Jacob did not offer them anything at the moment because he was in Egypt and had nothing to offer them, but in the future, he offered them the perspective of a territory, of a positions, the perspective of a victory. Just as Jacob told them about the part of Canaan's Land that they will receive, just as God blesses a part of the heavenly Land and says that He who overcomes will sit at the table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: "And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 8: 11).

Moses' blessing

Jacob promised his descendants a land, just as Moses promised a land (Deuteronomy 33). In the end, however, staying in the land or losing it was a consequence of their attitude. These blessings of the patriarchs took place between 1800-1400 BC. The great Eastern nations of that time disappeared completely, leaving only the archeological vestiges, but the Jews continue to exist even today with the same religion in YHWH, with the same language spoken by the prophets, approximately on the same territory, remaining the only people in antiquity who survived with their language and religion together, this being a clear proof of their blessing.

Moses could be considered the last of the patriarchs, making the transition towards the prophets, using like Jacob the blessing at the end, which we find at the end of the book (Deuteronomy 33), stating that it is addressed to larger groups, namely to Israel's tribes, stating that when the addressing is in the hands of some tribes, of some larger groups, there are no more references to negative aspects of character, as Jacob does, with regard to Reuben, Simeon and Levi who were stigmatized for their deeds, and Judas and Joseph being praised for their behavior. This is no longer possible with some tribes, but something extraordinary appears. Levi, who is scattered in Israel for his violent and vengeful character, is praised in the blessing of Moses, is highly exalted, and the words addressed to him are especially beautiful: And about Levi he said: "And of Levi he said, Let thy Thummim and thy Urim be with thy holy one, whom thou didst prove at Massah, and with whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah; Who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children: for they have observed thy word, and kept thy covenant. They shall teach Jacob thy judgments, and Israel thy law: they shall put incense before thee, and whole burnt sacrifice upon thine altar. Bless, LORD, his substance, and accept the work of his hands: smite through the loins of them that rise against him, and of them that hate him, that they rise not again." (Deuteronomy 33: 8-11).

This is one of the greatest blessings given to a tribe. The blessing is not a predestination, the blessing is thus allowed to flow freely, depending on the attitude of the person or group of people, as well as the choice taken at certain decisive moments. So it was that a curse can turn into a blessing after some choices made in decisive moments of life.

Levi, cursed to be scattered, remains scattered in the end, for he will never have a territory of his own, but in every city the Levites were to be the teachers, priests and judges of that city, namely, they were to become the elite of the people. The blessing said that: "And of Levi he said, Let thy Thummim and thy Urim be with thy holy one...They shall teach Jacob thy judgments, and Israel thy law: they shall put incense before thee, and whole burnt sacrifice upon thine altar" (Deuteronomy 33: 8,10). The curse of being scattered remains a curse, they remain scattered, but these scattered people were always to be the elite of the place where they were.

When Moses notices the crisis in the wilderness with the golden calf and asks: "...Who is on the LORD'S side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him" (Exodus 32: 26). From all the children of Jacob, respectively from all the tribes of Israel, only Levi comes to Moses and sits on the side of the Lord, representing in a certain way the hand of God in resolving the crisis that appeared down the Mount Sinai, the golden calf. Thus, Levi receives the blessing, and Simeon remains with what he received from Jacob, the scattering in Israel, and certainly by the virtue of the blessing if he had also taken the path of Levi, he would have had something else. Thus, through a certain attitude taken in a moment of crisis, the curse is changed into a blessing.

When the land of Canaan was divided into 12 parts, Simeon also received a share in the midst of the tribe of Judah, which had received a very large territory, and in the middle of it Simeon also received an area of land with a number of cities. Simeon received a share, but we do not know what happened to him, that his tribe later disappeared, being especially assimilated by the tribe of Judah and that of Dan. He will no longer appear with the name of the tribe and it will no longer be mentioned that any brave, representative or valuable man came out of that tribe. Thus, the tribe of Simeon came to be scattered throughout Israel. So, Simeon's descendants lived on but lost their identity. Why did they lose their identity? For that fighting, critical, vindictive spirit that their father Jacob sanctioned. Such a repulsive spirit does not help to propel, to achieve something, but in the end, it only leads to losses, to isolation. All the tribes had both bad parts and good parts, and in Simeon it seems that there were fewer good things to last, to stay in time.

Moses in the book of Deuteronomy presents 4 speeches given in the last two months of his life, and the 4 speeches of Moses end with the blessing. In the fourth blessing, he presents the blessing in general terms, the blessing and the curse. In presenting the two diametrically opposed things, the blessing and the curse, Moses invokes the principle of effect: that is, if you listen you will receive the blessing, and if you do not listen you will receive the curse ... Following history, it can be seen that Jacob's descendants also had part of the blessing but also of the curse, which can actually happen to anyone.

Blessed be Asher: "And of Asher he said, Let Asher be blessed with children; let him be acceptable to his brethren, and let him dip his foot in oil. Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be" (Deuteronomy 33: 25, 26). A special blessing, something special, namely, someone to live without being sick, even his life to end without suffering, not to need someone to take care of him, to turn him from one side to the other, namely, the fulfillment of what it was said: May your power be as long as your days, a blessing that can happen not only to the one who was told but to anyone who respects the rules of health, who has a balanced lifestyle but who also trusts in his Maker .

Each tribe had a specific blessing, something that stood out from the others. Levi receives from Moses the blessing of the priesthood and he will be the priest of the people of Israel until the coming of Jesus Christ. Judas becomes the leader of the group of people, from which Shiloh was to emerge, being the man from whom the Davidic dynasty came for over 400 years, a dynasty from which Jesus was also born. Joseph had a double share, because Ephraim and Manasseh also had a share in the land of Canaan. Manasseh had a fairly large

territory, with a portion of land on both sides of Jordan. The blessing was something specific that made you stand out, excelling in certain things. Every child of Jacob, respectively every tribe of descendants of Jacob's children had the Canaan, but each had something special, something specific, something that went beyond the normality of things.

Conclusions

As a final conclusion, it can be seen the fact that the patriarchs, through the blessings offered to their children, look forward beyond time, having a future projection of their descendants regarding a place where they would live but also regarding their future way of life.

The blessing of the patriarchs did not represent a gift from them to their descendants, it did not represent the distribution of their wealth to their descendants, but the patriarchal blessing represents the gift of God, namely, what God the Creator transmitted to those children through their father, the patriarch.

Another aspect of the patriarchal blessing was the Creator's intention that through the blessing given to Jacob's children, everyone would eventually benefit from these blessings in the end. The patriarchal blessings remained for posterity placed in the book of Christianity, the Holy Scriptures, blessings that include a moral ethic, and as long as these precepts were respected, they were generators of peace, tranquility, harmony, happiness and prosperity. The patriarchal blessings also refer to a lifestyle. As long as the mentioned sanitary rules were respected, the people were exempted from a lot of diseases and they were happy. The purpose of the patriarchal blessings, as it was promised to Abraham, was to be poured upon all the nations in the end. Abraham was told: "And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 26: 4).

References

*** *The Holy Bible*, King James Version (KJV). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.