

The Sceptre of Judah Genesis 49:8-12

Jacob, about to die, calls his sons together that he may bless them, giving prophetic declarations concerning their descendants to Christ.

The most important prophecy concerning Judah states:

- 1. The warlike character and conquests of this tribe.**
- 2. The end of the Jews civil and religious government at the coming of Christ.**
- 3. His meek and lowly inauguration of Christ at that time as Spiritual King of the Jews riding on an ass like the ancient judges and prophets.**
- 4. His coming again in power and glory to trample on all His foes.**
- 5. His ability to save and teach and instruct a faithful people.**

Genesis 49:8-12 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. 9 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? 10 The scepter 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*. 11 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: 12 His eyes *shall be* red with wine, and his teeth white with milk.

Genesis 49:8 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.

Genesis 49:8a *Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise:*

As the name Judah signifies “praise of the Lord” in Hebrew. Jacob prophesies that this tribe will be so eminent and glorious that the rest of the tribes shall praise it. They will acknowledge the tribe of Judah’s superior power and dignity.

Genesis 49:8b *thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies;*

This describes the war-like character of this tribe to which was assigned the first lot of the promised land. This lot of the land was conquered by the faithful, pious and heroic Caleb who was the first who laid hands on the necks of his enemies and routed and subdued them cf:

Joshua 14:11 As yet I *am as* strong this day as *I was* in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength *was* then, even so *is* my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in.

Thus Caleb led the way for the total subjugation of the land under King David, who in allusion to this prediction says cf:

Psalm 18:40 Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies; that I might destroy them that hate me.

Genesis 49:8c *thy father's children shall bow down before thee.*

This is the first allusion that Judah will be the Kingly or ruling tribe.

Genesis 49:9 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?

In the different stages of its strength this tribe is compared to a lion’s whelp, to a full grown lion, and to a nursing lioness the fiercest of them all. The standard or flag of Judah was a Lion.

The city of David is where David reposed himself after his conquest of the city of Jerusalem fortress of Zion secure in the terror of his name:

I Chronicles 14:17 And the fame of David went out into all lands; and the LORD brought the fear of him upon all nations.

Thus the city of David was called Ariel in Hebrew the Lion of God.

Isaiah 29:1 Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city *where* David dwelt! add ye year to year; let them kill sacrifices.

Our Lord Himself, who was Judah's most illustrious descendant, was called cf:

Revelation 5:5 And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

Genesis 49:10 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*.

The duration of the power of this famous tribe is next determined. The scepter was a staff or rod which served as an emblem of royal or kingly authority and civil government cf:

We confidently hail this as one of the greatest Messianic prophecies in the entire Bible. A PERSON is implied here as proved by the last clause in the verse: "Unto HIM shall the obedience of the peoples be," which has the meaning that all nations shall obey THAT PERSON, a reference which no one would dare apply to Judah! (Except the non-believing Good News Bible!). That the Lord Jesus Christ is the person here spoken of is not subject to doubt or question. The passage is simply incapable of being referred to any other person or thing.

Shiloh here must be interpreted personally and Messianic-ally. It has been from the days of the Septuagint (LXX, 250 B.C the Greek O.T.). The Hebrew text of the O.T. and the Greek here has SHILOH - a name which is certainly a proper name in every other instance of its use in the entire Bible. Also, the personal pronoun "him" in the next line absolutely requires this passage to be understood as a reference to the Messiah as a person not to the Tribe of Judah. Only to Jesus Christ alone, could it ever be said that, "Unto him shall the obedience of the peoples be."

The People who wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls about the time Christ lived upon the earth understood this verse exactly as we as New Testament Christians understand them today.

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The prophecy concerning Judah is interpreted as fulfilled, and the Messiah of David Genesis 49:10

A ruler shall not depart from the tribe of Judah when Israel has dominion, and the one who sits on the throne of David (shall never) be cut off, because the "ruler's staff" is the covenant of the kingdom. ... until the Righteous Messiah, the Branch of David has come. For to him and to his seed (followers) the covenant of the kingdom of his people has been given for the eternal generations because he has kept ... the law with the men of the *Ya'-had* (congregation).

SHILOH : This word occurs with slight variations three times in the Bible, and in every one of them, the reference is to JESUS CHRIST. The fact that Shiloh is the name of a person, the majority of commentators, both Jewish and Christian, the ancient as well as modern, agree that the Messiah is the person referred to, and Jacob here foretold that the appearance of that Messiah would not occur until the staff or regal power had dropped from Judah's hands.

These three words, while not identical, are definitely variations of the same root word, the unanimous testimony of all three being that they are each a witnesses of Christ and his kingdom

Jacob (Israel) has had twelve sons but it is Judah that is to be the Kingly tribe and civil government will continue from King David until Shiloh or the Messiah and Redeemer is come.

Notice the word “until” the messiah is come.

Remember when Jacob stole Esau’s blessing cf:

Genesis 27:38-41 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. 39 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; 40 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. 41 And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him: and Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob.

Israel and Judah continued to reign over and rule Edom (Esau) for the most part until King Herod: Herod the Great was born in Edom and was a Roman client king of Judea. Herod married the granddaughter of Hyrcanus (Her’-k-nus) II, the last of the Maccabean Kings of Judah. Herod married her in an attempt to secure his claim to the throne and gain some Jewish favorable support. Herod appears in the Gospel of Matthew as the ruler of Judea who orders the army to massacre the Innocents babies of Bethlehem at the time of the birth of Jesus cf: Matthew 2:1-19. This is also prophesied by the prophet Micah cf:

Micah 5:1-2 Now gather thyself in troops, O daughter of troops: he hath laid siege against us: they shall smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek. 2 But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, [though] thou be little among the thousands of Judah, [yet] out of thee shall he come

forth unto me [that is] to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth [have been] from of old, from everlasting.

That word “until” is a big word ... meaning until Herod the great an Edomite shall “break Jacob’s or Israels yoke from off the neck of Esau

the other big word is sceptre, the kings staff which will be taken up by the Messiah / Christ when He comes ... the Psalmist says of it cf:

Psalms 45:6-7 Thy throne, O God, *is* for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom *is* a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

Hebrews 1:8-9 But unto the Son *he saith*, Thy throne, O God, *is* for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness *is* the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, *even* thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

This prophecy is fulfilled in part when David becomes King and we learn that the Messiah is to come through King David’s family line cf:

II Samuel 7:12-14 And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son.

Then of course a thousand years later Jesus the Christ is born of the tribe of Judah through Joseph his adopted father cf: Matthew 1:1-18 and Mary his virgin mother is also of the tribe of Judah cf: Luke 3:23-38

Genesis 49: 10 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].

Lawgiver Hebrew word: *khaw-kak'*, to engrave or enact, appoint, decree with the power of capital punishment. In a lesser sense, the kings of Judah who are to come will have authority to rule by decree or enact Laws and carry out capital punishment. But in a far greater sense, the Lord is the Supreme Law Giver cf:

Isaiah 33:22 For the LORD *is* our judge, the LORD *is* our lawgiver, the LORD *is* our king; he will save us.

and the Lord Jesus is the Law Giver who can save cf:

James 4:12 There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?

When Rome banished Arch-el-aus Herod's son for mal-administration the judicial power of life and death was taken away from the Jews and "until" was fulfilled for the first time with the coming of Herod the Great's Kingship and "until is fulfilled this final time when Arch'el-aus lost the power of "lawgiver" or authority to carry out death sentences and capital punishment cf:

Genesis 49:10 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].

John 18:31 Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death:

The Jew's religious system ceased completely with the destruction of the Jews capital city of Jerusalem and temple by the Romans in 70 AD;

By that time the Gospel had been preached through out the known world by the Apostles simply following orders ... what orders the Great Commission cf:

Matthew 28:18-20 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19 Go ye therefore,

and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, [even] unto the end of the world.

Mark 16:15-16 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

II Timothy 2: 2 And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

Acts 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Mark 16:20 And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with *them*, and confirming the word with signs following.

Romans 10:18 But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.

Colossians 1:5-6 For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel; 6 Which is come unto you, as *it is* in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as *it doth* also in you, since the day ye heard *of it*, and knew the grace of God in truth:

Colossians 1:23 If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and *be* not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, *and* which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;

I Thessalonians 1:7-8 So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. 8 For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your

faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing.

“until Shiloh come ...” Hebrew shee-lo, take out an epithet of the Messiah, literally meaning here: “To Him to Whom it belongs.

Derived from shalach to send forth ". What belongs? The sceptre! The real King, the real Law Giver who is to be sent forth out of the tribe of Judah who is King of Kings and Lord of Lords!

The people will be "gathered" by the Messiah or Redeemer. "Gathered" in Hebrew *yaw-keh*, is to obey, obedience, the saved will obey Him.

Luke 6:46 And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?

Genesis 49:11 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:

“Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt ... ”When the Messiah comes. His coming to present Himself will have something to do with a "foal", an "ass's colt. Cf MK. 11:1ff

Thus we see the first prophecy of our Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem prior to His crucifixion. The prophecy is further developed

Zechariah 9:9 Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he *is* just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.

In ancient times to ride upon white asses or ass-colts was the privilege of persons of high rank, princes, judges and prophets cf:

Matthew 21:1-11 And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples, 2 Saying unto them, Go into the village over against you,

and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose *them*, and bring *them* unto me. 3 And if any *man* say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them. 4 All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, 5 Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass. 6 And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them, 7 And brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set *him* thereon. 8 And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed *them* in the way. 9 And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest. 10 And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this? 11 And the multitude said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.

Gen 49:11 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:

The Children of Israel were symbolized by the vine cf:

Psalm 80:8 Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it.

And Judah is pictured as a choice vine here and in the beautiful allegory of Isaiah

Isa 5:1-7 Now will I sing to my wellbeloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My wellbeloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: 2 And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. 3 And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. 4 What could have been done more to my

vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? 5 And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; *and* break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: 6 And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briars and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. 7 For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts *is* the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.

Our Lord styled Himself as the true vine cf:

John 15:1 I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

Gen 49:11 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:

“ ... he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes” This same imagery is used describing the return of Christ in Revelation cf:

Revelation 19:13 And he [was] clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies [which were] in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. 15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. 16 And he hath on [his] vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

The vengeance to be inflicted upon all His enemies, the enemies of the Church and the enemies of faithful Christians is expressed in the symbolical imagery of: washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes: It represents His garments crimsoned in the blood of His foes and their immensely bloody slaughter.

Genesis 49:12 His eyes *shall be* red with wine, and his teeth white with milk.

The strength and wholesomeness of Shiloh's or the Messiah's doctrine are next represented by having: His eyes *shall be* red with wine, and his teeth white with milk.

And in the same way Isaiah the prophet invites the world to embrace the coming Gospel of Christ cf:

Isaiah 55:1 Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

On the last day of the feast of Tabernacles it was the custom of the Jews for the people to bring water from the fountain of Shiloah or Siloam which they poured upon the altar singing the words of

Isaiah 12:3 Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.

Which the Jewish Tar gum interprets: "With Joy shall ye receive a new doctrine from the elect of the Just One" and the feast itself was also called Hosanna which in Hebrew means save we beseech thee.

The Prophet Isaiah says the Jews will reject gently flowing waters of Shiloah cf:

Isaiah 8:6 Forasmuch as this people refuseth the waters of Shiloah that go softly, and rejoice in Rezin and Remaliah's son;

NOTE: These three words, while not identical in English spelling are definitely variations of the same root word, the unanimous testimony of all three being that they are witnesses of Christ and his Kingdom.

Our Lord on the last day of the feast invited the Jews to come to Him cf:

John 7:37-39 In the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. **38** He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. **39** But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet *given*; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.

Zechariah 12:10 And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for [his] only [son], and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for [his] firstborn.

Zechariah 13:1 In that day there shall be a fountain (Living Waters) opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.

Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Jesus compared His doctrine to new wine that required being put in new skins strong enough to hold it.

Matthew 9:17 Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved.

The Gospel is repeatedly represented as affording milk for babes or the first principles of the oracles of God for novices as well as strong meat for the masters in Christ.

I Peter 2:2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

Hebrews 5:12-14 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which *be* the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. **13** For every one that useth milk *is* unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. **14** But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, *even* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Our Lord's most significant miracle took place at this fountain the pool of Siloam,, where He healed and sent forth the blind man to His enemies the Sanhedrin Court of the Jews cf:

John 9:7 And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.

Pool of Siloam Ruins.jpg

Pool of Siloam Illustration.jpg

Before the Sanhedrin Court the blind man who was healed testified cf:

John 9:32-33 Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. **33** If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.

Here Jesus again assumes the two main features of the Shiloh or the Messiah the Anointed one and sent forth of God (Shiloh) as He did in His first sermon cf:

Luke 4:18 The Spirit of the Lord *is* upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, (cf: Isaiah 61:1ff)

Matthew 15:24 But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

John 17:3 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

Hebrew Shiloh, send forth and Greek ap-os-tel'-lo to send forth ...
Thus Jesus distinguishes His own superior mission from His commission to His apostles cf:

John 20:21 Then said Jesus to them again, Peace *be* unto you: as *my* Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

Hebrews 3:1 Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;

We find Jesus' mission as Shi'-loh or the sent forth of God foretold in Jacob's blessing to Judah in Genesis 49:10

Judah (zoom).jpg

This important prophecy concerning Judah states:

- 1. The warlike character and conquests of this tribe.**
- 2. The end of the Jews civil and religious government at the coming of Christ.**
- 3. His meek and lowly inauguration at that time as Spiritual King of the Jews riding on an ass like the ancient judges and prophets.**
- 4. His coming again in power and glory to trample on all His foes.**
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The safety, plenty, and peace of an ideal Paradise with abundant agricultural lifestyle is a shadow of the Peaceful Kingdom of God are symbolized by these quaint figures of speech. It is not suggested here that Judah would ever actually wash his clothes in wine, but that the wine (and milk) would be so abundant that he could have done so!

Thus we close our study in the book of Genesis. Step by step we have noted the development of the Messianic idea and the promises of the "Seed" or the Child to come in this first book of the Bible. The whole book revolves around the coming "seed" Jesus Christ the Son of God.

Sources: Bible KJV, Clarks Commentary, Coffman's Commentary, Halley's Bible Handbook