



Genesis 49:8-12

Until Shiloh Comes

Jacob gave a "prophetic blessing" to his sons that pictures in grand outlines the future history of a nation yet to come into existence. In his blessing, he viewed how each son and their descendents would be a part of the "redemptive" nation. The blessing embraces the whole history of Israel from Jacob's time until its ultimate completion.

Before him is a large canvas. What will he paint? The patriarch Jacob first sketched his eldest son, Ruben, who should have been the natural leader and recipient of a double share of the inheritance. However, Ruben was morally bankrupt and unworthy of becoming the leader of the new nation. He was reckless, even characterized by a seething lust, and "unbridled license."

Judah is the son to whom the role of national leadership falls. His name means, "He for whom Yahweh is praised" (Genesis 49:8). The people of Israel will praise the LORD God for what He shall bring about through the tribe of Judah. His mother was praising God when she named her child Judah (Gen. 29:35). In this prophecy Judah will receive praise from his brothers for supremacy in Israel. From the line of Judah will come King David, the greatest of all kings. Moreover, whatever preeminence Judah might have had has been eclipsed by the Messiah Jesus Christ.

Lineage of Judah

This blessing to Judah emphasized the superior leadership ability and triumph over his enemies (v. 8). "Judah, your brothers shall praise you; Your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; Your father's sons shall bow down to you" (Genesis 49:8). Friend and foe will recognize his effectiveness as a leader. The emblem of the lion symbolizes the strength of this tribe's leaders. "Judah is a lion's whelp" (v. 9).

"The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet" (v. 10). The "scepter" is the symbol of royal authority, rule and dominion. It symbolizes his capacity for rule. Originally it was a long staff, then it became a short rod. The idea is that no one will be able to remove Judah's sovereignty, or dominion.

In fact, the dominion of the earthly rulers of Judah will be protected until a certain climax is achieved. It is established by the expressions, "until Shiloh comes," and by the obedience of the "peoples." These "peoples" are the non-Jews who submit to His rule. The name "Shiloh" is a name for the Messiah.

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Later in history, the tribes of Israel went to David and expressed their recognition of him as the person God had chosen as king. They said, "Previously, when Saul was king over us, you were the one who led Israel out and in. And the Lord said to you, 'You will shepherd My people Israel, and you will be a ruler over Israel. So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and King David made a covenant with them before the Lord at Hebron; then they anointed David king over Israel'" (II Samuel 5:1-3).

In the person of king David, Judah grew strong and became a conquering lion. He received the promise that the "lion of the tribe of Judah" would fulfill the greatest aspirations of the prophecy. (2 Samuel 5:10-12ff; Revelation 5:5). The people made the wrong choice when they chose Saul from the tribe of Benjamin. God's will was for them to wait until David, from the tribe of Judah, was crowned king. The royal family tribe of Israel was Judah (Hebrews 7:14; Luke 3:33; 1 Chronicles 28:4).

The important emphasis is the reign of the tribe of Judah would be extended out into eternity through the rule of the Messiah. In 2 Samuel 7:13 Yahweh explains to David that He will set up one of David's descendants as king. "He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever." It would attain eternal duration and sovereignty over all nations only by reaching beyond earthly rulers in the tribe of Judah to Shiloh-Messiah. The dominion of Judah was to be perfectly fulfilled in the appearance of Shiloh. The Lord Jesus Christ fulfilled all of these Messianic prophecies.

Giver of rest

The fulfillment of the promise to Judah is when Shiloh comes (Genesis 49:10c-12). Shiloh is the man of rest, the giver of rest or "rest-bringer." The word Shiloh could be derived from the same root word as *salem* or *shalom*, meaning "to have rest." Jesus is the Peace-giver who made reconciliation between God and sinful man by means of His death on the cross.

The earliest interpretation of this passage was messianic. The ancient Jewish Targum of Onkelos reads: "Until Messiah comes, whose is the kingdom." There are "very strongly messianic implications" from the time of the Septuagint onward.

Judah will continue to hold rule over Israel "until rest comes." It is best to regard Shiloh as a proper name of a person. Judah's capacity to rule will come to a climax in a ruler so competent that He shall be able to achieve perfect rest and He shall be called, "rest," or "rest-giver. The Messiah is the bearer of rest. He is the giver of peace and rest. Therefore, the sovereignty of Judah's rule reaches its highest point in the Messiah. Cf. Isaiah 61:1-2; Luke 4:16-21

Who is this giver of rest? The Scriptures are consistent in their emphasis on the Prince of Peace who gives His people rest. He is the "Prince of Peace" in Isaiah 9:6. Joshua couldn't lead the people into the Sabbath rest, the perfect peace. "So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His. Therefore let us be diligent to enter that rest, so that no one will fall, through *following* the same example of disobedience" (Hebrews 4:9-11). Salvation through Jesus Christ is God's perfect rest. He can give us His perfect peace. Because we have

Salvation through Jesus Christ is God's perfect rest. He can give us His perfect peace. Because we have "been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1).

A multitude of angels greeted His birth singing, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased" (Luke 2:14).

The Giver of rest stands before every hurting person today and says, "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30). He gives his perfect peace, "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful" (John 14:27; cf. John 16:33; 20:19, 21, 26).

Remember the promise to Abraham? "And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed" (Genesis 12:3). Jacob says, "and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples" (Genesis 49:10d). Again, it is the plural form referring to the non-Jews. The nations of the world shall willingly submit to His rule. "Now it will come about that In the last days The mountain of the house of the Lord Will be established as the chief of the mountains, And will be raised above the hills; And all the nations will stream to it. And many peoples will come and say, Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, To the house of the God of Jacob; That He may teach us concerning His ways And that we may walk in His paths. For the law will go forth from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He will judge between the nations, and will render decisions for many peoples; and they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they learn war. Come, house of Jacob, and let us walk in the light of the Lord" (Isaiah 2:2-5).

The emphasis is on Shiloh, the giver of rest. He shall be such an effective leader that men will readily yield Him obedience. A day is coming when men from all over the world are going to bow with cheerful, tender willing inner submission to the Messiah. Many have made a personal decision to do just that by giving their lives to Jesus Christ in simple child like faith.

The coming of Shiloh

It is the judgment of most modern translators to derive "Shiloh" from the Hebrew particle of relationship, *sher* (or *asher*), rendered "whose" or "whom," and *l*, which means "to." The meaning is "he to whom." The NIV renders it, "until he comes to whom it belongs." The NASB prefers to use "Shiloh" as a name for the Messiah, "Until Shiloh comes," and gives the meaning in the margin, "Until He comes to whom it belongs."

Shiloh refers to Jesus' rightful rule and authority. There can be only one Shiloh who fulfils the meaning. He came as that eternal ruler in Judah's line. If Jesus has not fulfilled the prophecy, there will never be another person who can do so.

The rulers of Israel descended through the line of Judah through King David down to Joseph, the adoptive father of Jesus. Matthew 1:13-16 puts Jesus in the royal line of David, through his son Solomon.

He came the first time as a humble servant-king. He ties his foal to the vine, and his donkey's colt to the choice vine; He washes his garments in wine, and his robes in the blood of grapes. His eyes are dull from wine, and his teeth white from milk " (Genesis 49:11-12).

However, when he comes a second time He will reign as the sovereign king of the universe. There is therefore another side to this great prophetic blessing. Genesis 49:11-12 refers to the judgment and salvation

therefore another side to this great prophetic blessing. Genesis 49:11-12 refers to the judgment and salvation at the Second Coming of Christ. The Prince of Peace will reign as King of Kings for ever and ever (Revelation 11:15; 5:5-14). The Hebrew prophet Ezekiel cried out, "A ruin, a ruin, a ruin, I will make it. This also will be no more until He comes whose right it is, and I will give it to Him" (Ezekiel 21:27). The reference is to the Messiah.

Revelation 5:5 sees the resurrected and ascended Lord Jesus Christ as the "lion of the tribe of Judah." One of the elders in John's vision of heaven said, "Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals" (Revelation 5:5). The sovereign messianic king will rule with the roar of a strong powerful lion.

Jesus has delivered us from the old "roaring lion," the devil, who prowls about seeking whom he may devour (1 Pet. 5:8). Today Jesus is King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

We have the choice of humbling ourselves and bowing to His reign today. There is coming a day, however, when everyone regardless of their desires will bow and worship Him. "God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:9-11).

The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world is also the lion of tribe of Judah who reigns as King of Kings.

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