

What a great prophecy we find in Genesis 49:8-12! May our study of this great prediction of the rule of the Lion of Judah open new understanding of what it means for our Savior Jesus Christ, to be born of the tribe of Judah.

Monday: Read Genesis 49:7-9 and 49:18

Waiting for Deliverance

Jacob's prophetic descriptions of his sons use pictures drawn from the power of nature and the violence of the beasts of the field. For example, Reuben's lust is compared to turbulent water (Gen. 49:4), Simeon and Levi are as violent as wild beasts (Gen. 49:7), Benjamin is a ravenous wolf (Gen. 49:27), Gad nips at the heels of his foe like a dog (Gen. 49:19) and Dan is likened to a serpent by the roadside (Gen. 49:17). To be sure, there are other more promising and peaceful pictures from nature, such as the donkey in verse 14 (Issachar) and the doe in verse 21 (Naphtali). But overall, the sin natures of Jacob's sons, or at least the violence and danger of the world in which they live, is the theme. No wonder in the middle of his words of blessing, Jacob cries out: "I look for your deliverance, O Lord" (Gen. 49:18). Jacob knew that only the Lord Himself could redeem his family for the violent and deadly heritage of sin.

Meditate and Pray: Thank God for the "Lion of the tribe of Judah" (Gen. 49:8) who alone could make these restive brothers bow under God's rule! Just as God made these brothers bow when they were young and rebellious before Joseph the dreamer (Gen. 42:6-9), so they will bow again before someone even more mighty than the prince of Egypt: Christ Himself, of the tribe of Judah. Ask God to give you a submissive spirit which eagerly bows the knee before Christ's lordship. Pray and sing Ray Palmer's hymn # 491 from our hymn books:

Take me, O my Father, take me;
 Take me, save me, through Thy Son;
 That which Thou wouldst have me, make me,
 Let Thy will in me be done.
 Long from Thee my footsteps straying,
 Thorny proved the way I trod;
 Weary come I now, and praying,
 Take me to Thy love, my God.

Fruitless years with grief recalling,
 Humbly I confess my sin;
 At Thy feet, O Father, falling,
 To Thy household take me in.
 Freely now to Thee I proffer
 This relenting heart of mine;
 Freely life and love I offer,
 Gift unworthy love like Thine.

Tuesday: Read Genesis 49:8-9 and Revelation 5:1-9

The Lion of Deliverance

Jacob prophesies of the supremacy of the tribe of Judah. Other tribes may be likened to serpents, does, donkeys or even wolves, but there is only one Lion in the Bible. Traditionally it is the Gospel of Matthew which is symbolized in ancient church writings by the Lion, because Matthew wrote about the kingship of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. John takes up this imagery as he describes in Rev.5:5 the heavenly vision in which the "Lion of the tribe of Judah" is victorious over all His enemies. John is told not to weep, since the Lion by virtue of His victory has earned the right of opening the Scroll of the destiny of all mankind. And who is that Lion? He is none other than the Lamb whose death in Rev. 5:6-9 brings the deliverance for which Jacob longed when he first spoke about the Lion of Judah in Gen. 49! What joy for Jacob in heaven when he, along with John, saw the Lamb of Calvary declared to be the Lion of Judah!

Meditate and Pray: Thank God for the hope which we share with Jacob and John of one day seeing this same Lion of Judah revealed for us and our salvation as our Lamb in heaven, with these verses from hymn # 546:

*O Christ, He is the fountain, the deep, sweet well of love!
The streams on earth I've tasted more deep I'll drink above:
There to an ocean fullness His mercy doth expand,
And glory, glory dwelleth in Immanuel's land.*

*The Bride eyes not her garment, but her dear Bridegroom's face;
I will not gaze at glory but on my King of grace.
Not at the crown He giveth but on His pierced hand;
The Lamb is all the glory of Immanuel's land.*

Wednesday: Read Genesis 49:8-12

Abundant Safety and Peace

Lion-like though He is, Genesis 49:10's description of Christ's rule brings out the fact that this Kingdom is actually one characterized by *rest and peace*. Consider these translations of Gen. 49:10:

The scepter shall not depart from Judah,
Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet,
Until *Shiloh* comes,
And to him shall be the obedience of the peoples. (New American Standard)

The scepter shall not depart from Judah,
Nor a lawgiver from between his feet,
Until *Shiloh* comes;
And to Him *shall be* the obedience of the people. (NKJV)

The key word is *Shiloh*, a name traditionally understood in the ancient Jewish targums and commentaries as “The Man of Rest,” or “The One Who Brings Safety or Peace, or Secure Rest.” Following on this description of the King of Rest, Jacob speaks about the absolute prosperity and security of His Kingdom (Gen. 49:11-12). This Kingdom will be full of the blessings of God, from luxuriant vines and royal donkeys to a King of winsome appearance (dark eyes and white teeth). His country will literally flow with the blessings of the Wine of the Lord. You'll even be able to wash your clothes in wine, there will be so much of it - a sign of God's abundant blessing resting on His people and their land!

Meditate and Pray: Does the Bible's picture of abounding blessing in the Kingdom of Christ sound too good to be true? Does your life appear to be less than this picture of welfare and abundance? Well, take heart. This is spiritual language describing the coming of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace – Isaiah 9:6-7. In His coming to earth Christ *does* indeed make “the lion to lie down with the lamb” (Isaiah 65:25), if you have eyes of faith to see it. Ask the Lord to increase your faith in the real tangibility of Christ's spiritual blessings, with the words of hymn # 311 by James Montgomery, verses 1 & 3:

*Hail to the Lord's anointed, great David's greater Son!
Hail in the time appointed, His reign on earth begun!
He comes to break oppression, to set the captive free;
To take away transgression and rule in equity.*

*He shall come down like showers upon the fruitful earth;
Love, joy, and hope, like flowers, spring in His path to birth.
Before Him, on the mountains, shall peace, the herald, go,
And righteousness, in fountains, from hill to valley flow.*

Thursday: Read Genesis 49:10-12 and Psalm 110:2-3

Secure in His Love

We could think that the dominion described in Genesis 49:8-10 is mainly one of power; that is, that men must bow the knee to Christ, the King of Judah, simply because He is so lion-like. But as the name Shiloh indicates, peace and rest are actually the great boons of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace. They are also His greatest tools by which He lovingly conquers and subdues us to Himself. Psalm 110:2-3, for example, promise that the servants of Christ will show the power of His rule over them by being “*willing*” in the day of battle! *Christ’s love compels us*, Christ’s rest and peace by which we stand unafraid in this evil world. His people will fight and lay down our lives for such a Prince of Peace!

Meditate and Pray: Ask the Lord to give you courage to stand for Him with this prayer: Lord, help us to stand firm in this conviction: If Christ has purchased peace for me in Heaven by His blood, then surely there is no foe on earth that can rob me of my standing in Christ Jesus. Help me, therefore, to face all trials which you send into my life *willingly* - secure in the possession of such peace with God. Amen.

Friday: Read Genesis 49: 10-12 and Isaiah 5:1-10

Binding his Donkey to the Choice Vine

The stock market may rise and fall, but we ought to remind ourselves, as we prepare to worship our Mighty King of Judah each Sunday, that *true* prosperity resides only with Him. Take, for example, God’s chosen vine Israel, whom God describes in loving allegory as “His Vineyard” in Isaiah 5:1-7. Despite all His efforts to establish His people as a flourishing vineyard, tended by His loving husbandry, Israel ends up as a wasteland (Isaiah 5:5-6), broken down because of their unfaithfulness by the very God who had so lovingly planted them! Surely no prosperity will be theirs now; they will only yield a pittance of wine (Isaiah 5:10). Such is Israel’s end in the Old Testament, abandoned and exiled, with the beautiful Promised Land a wilderness. Having real prosperity, i.e., “vines to tend,” as common as trees to which you can tie your donkey, comes only from the blessing of the Lord. Let us pray for our nation to return to God as the Source of all such blessing. But on a far deeper level of praise, let us turn to Christ as our royal King.

Meditate and Pray: Riding on an ass was a symbol of prosperity and royal rule; for example, David’s royal sons ride donkeys in 2 Samuel 13:29. How amazing, given the unfruitfulness of His people, that Jesus Christ, the King of Judah, is willing in Gen. 49:11 to tie His donkey to this scraggly How amazing, given the unfruitfulness of His people, that Jesus Christ, the King of Judah, is willing in Gen. 49:11 to tie His donkey to this scraggly Vine called the people of God! Christ is committed to us as He was to Israel... *even though we are often like Israel of old, so unfruitful!* Christ “lives to intercede for us,” and will not abandon us despite how many times we fail Him.

The fact that from the seat of exalted and undimmed glory... Christ interposes petition to the Father on behalf of every one of His own... should cause us to be filled with... adoring amazement at the condescension of Trinitarian love and grace. And the effect will then be that we shall be humbled to the point of being speechless, in a true sense exasperated, at the thought of the intercession which is interjected to save us from the doom which our continuing sinfulness and unfaithfulness deserve and saved to a glory which consists in glorification with Christ.

John Murray, *The Heavenly Priestly Work of Christ*.

May God give us such speechless joy in our worship of Jesus Christ, King of Judah. Amen.