

Until Shiloh Comes Ge 49:8-12

8 "Judah, you are he whom your brothers shall praise; Your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; Your father's children shall bow down before you. 9 Judah is a lion's whelp; From the prey, my son, you have gone up. He bows down, he lies down as a lion; And as a lion, who shall rouse him? 10 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. 11 Binding his donkey to the vine, And his donkey's colt to the choice vine, He washed his garments in wine, And his clothes in the blood of grapes. 12 His eyes are darker than wine, And his teeth whiter than milk.

Last week we saw the first reference to the Messiah in the Promised Child that would one day come and crush the perpetrator of the curse in the fall of man. If we accept the scope of the curse because of man's sin, we can understand the great blessedness of the promised redeemer.

Now, over 2200 years later, at the death of Jacob, we come to understand that the promised child will come from the tribe of Judah. With only a 1 in 12 chance of being right, Jacob not only picks the right tribe but also rightly predicts the future of each of the twelve tribes.

Numbers 24:17 "I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near; A Star shall come out of Jacob; A Scepter shall rise out of Israel, And batter the brow of Moab, And destroy all the sons of tumult.

This would agree with the prophecy of the Messiah's coming in [Isaiah 9:6](#): "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace," as well as [Micah 5:5](#), "And this man shall be the peace." This interpretation is preferred above the others. ¹

Until Shiloh come, he says, the scepter, or the dominion, *shall remain in Judah*. We must first see what the word (*shiloh*) signifies. Because Jerome interprets it, "He who is to be sent," some think that the place has been fraudulently corrupted, by the letter (*he*) substituted for the letter (*cheth*;) which objection, though not firm, is plausible. That which some of the Jews suppose, namely, that it denotes the place (*Shiloh*) where the ark of the covenant had been long deposited, because, a little before the commencement of David's reign, it had been laid waste, is entirely destitute of reason. For Jacob does not here predict the time when David was to be appointed king; but declares that the kingdom should be established in his family, until God should fulfill what he had promised concerning the special benediction of the seed of Abraham. Besides the form of speech, "until Shiloh come," for "until Shiloh come to an end," would be harsh and constrained. Far more correctly and consistently do other interpreters take this expression to mean "his son," for among the Hebrews a son is called (*shil.*) They say also that (*he*) is put in the place of the relative (*waw*;) and the greater part assent to this signification. ²⁰⁵ But again, the Jews dissent entirely from the meaning of the patriarch, by referring this to David. For (as I have just hinted) the origin of the kingdom in David is not here promised, but its absolute perfection in the

Messiah.

And truly an absurdity so gross, does not require a lengthened refutation. For what can this mean, that the kingdom should not come to an end in the tribe of Judah, till it should have been erected? Certainly the word *depart* means nothing else than to *cease*. Further, Jacob points to a continued series, when he says the scribe ²⁰⁶ shall not depart from between his feet. For it behaves a king so to be placed upon his throne that a lawgiver may sit between his feet. A kingdom is therefore described to us, which after it has been constituted, will not cease to exist till a more perfect state shall succeed; or, which comes to the same point; Jacob honors the future kingdom of David with this title, because it was to be the token and pledge of that happy glory which had been before ordained for the race of Abraham. In short, the kingdom which he transfers to the tribe of Judah, he declares shall be no common kingdom, because from it, at length, shall proceed the fullness of the promised benediction. But here the Jews haughtily object, that the event convicts us of error. For it appears that the kingdom by no means endured until the coming of Christ; but rather that the

²⁰⁵ Calvin seems to assent to this interpretation, which is by no means generally accepted. *Gesenius* renders , tranquillity — “until tranquillity shall come;” but the more approved rendering is “the Peaceable One,” or “the Pacifier.” He who made peace for us, by the sacrifice of Himself. — *Ed*

²⁰⁶ *Scribam recessurum negat ex pedibus*. But in the text, Calvin uses the word *Legislator*; the French version translates it *Legislateur*; and the English translation is *lawgiver*. It is evident that Calvin had a reason for using the term *Scribe*; for the original

, (*mechokaik*,) rather means a scribe or lawyer, than a lawgiver; and rather describes one who aids in the administration of laws, than one who frames them. In this sense, he supposes, and probably with truth, that the term is here applied. The expression

“from between his feet,” has been the subject of much criticism; but perhaps no view of it is so satisfactory as that maintained by Calvin. — *Ed*

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scepter was broken, from the time that the people were carried into captivity. But if they give credit

to the prophecies, I wish, before I solve their objection, that they would tell me in what manner Jacob here assigns the kingdom to his son Judah. For we know, that when it had scarcely become his fixed possession, it was suddenly rent asunder, and nearly its whole power was possessed by the tribe of Ephraim. Has God, according to these men, here promised, by the mouth of Jacob, some evanescent kingdom? If they reply, the scepter was not then broken, though Rehoboam was deprived of a great part of his people; they can by no means escape by this cavil; because the authority of Judah is expressly extended over all the tribes, by these words, “Thy mother’s sons shall bow their knee before thee.” They bring, therefore, nothing against us, which we cannot immediately, in turn, retort upon *themselves*

Yet I confess the question is not yet solved; but I wished to premise this, in order that the Jews, laying aside their disposition to calumniate, may learn calmly to examine the matter itself, with us. Christians are commonly wont to connect perpetual government with the tribe of Judah, in the following manner. When the people returned from banishment, they say, that, in the place of the royal scepter, was the government which lasted to the time of the Maccabees. That afterwards, a third mode of government succeeded, because the chief power of judging rested with the Seventy, who, it appears by history, were chosen out of the regal race. Now, so far was this authority of the royal race from having fallen into decay, that Herod, having been cited before it, with difficulty escaped capital punishment, because he contumaciously withdrew from it. Our commentators, therefore, conclude that, although the royal majesty did not shine brightly from

David until Christ, yet some preeminence remained in the tribe of Judah, and thus the oracle was fulfilled. Although these things are true, still more skill must be used in rightly discussing this passage. And, in the first place, it must be kept in mind, that the tribe of Judah was already constituted chief among the rest, as preeminent in dignity, though it had not yet obtained the dominion. And, truly, Moses elsewhere testifies, that supremacy was voluntarily conceded to it by the remaining tribes, from the time that the people were redeemed out of Egypt. In the second place, we must remember, that a more illustrious example of this dignity was set forth in that kingdom which God had commenced in David. And although defection followed soon after, so that but a small portion of authority remained in the tribe of Judah; yet the right divinely conferred upon it, could by no means be taken away. Therefore, at the time when the kingdom of Israel was replenished with abundant opulence, and was swelling with lofty pride, it was said, that the lamp of the Lord was lighted in Jerusalem.

Let us proceed further: when Ezekiel predicts the destruction of the kingdom, (Ezekiel 21:26,) he clearly shows how the scepter was to be preserved by the Lord, until it should come into the hands of Christ: "Remove the diadem, and take off the crown; this shall not be the same: I will overturn, overturn, overturn it, until he come whose right it is." It may seem at first sight that the prophecy of Jacob had failed when the tribe of Judah was stripped of its royal ornament. But we conclude hence, that God was not bound always to exhibit the visible glory of the kingdom on high. Otherwise, those other promises which predict the restoration of the throne, which was cast down and broken, were false. Behold the days come in which I will "raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof, and I will raise up his ruins." (Amos 9:11.) It would be absurd, however, to cite more passages, seeing this doctrine occurs frequently in the prophets. Whence we infer, that the kingdom was not so confirmed as always to shine with equal brightness; but that, though, for a time, it might lie fallen and defaced, it should afterwards

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recover its lost splendor. The prophets, indeed, seem to make the return from the Babylonian exile the termination of that ruin; but since they predict the restoration of the kingdom no otherwise than they do that of the temple and the priesthood, it is necessary that the whole period, from that liberation to the advent of Christ, should be comprehended. The crown, therefore, was cast down, not for one day only, or from one single head, but for a long time, and in various methods, until God placed it on Christ, his own lawful king. And truly Isaiah describes the origin of Christ, as being very remote from all regal splendor:

<http://ToulonBaptist.com>

¹Varner, William: Jacob's Dozen : A Prophetic Look at the Tribes of Israel. electronic ed. Bellmawr : Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, 1997