

Day 46 - WEDNESDAY: December 14th

Genesis 49:1–12 NKJV

And Jacob called his sons and said, "Gather together, that I may tell you what shall befall you in the last days: "Gather together and hear, you sons of Jacob, And listen to Israel your father. "Reuben, you are my firstborn, My might and the beginning of my strength, The excellency of dignity and the excellency of power. Unstable as water, you shall not excel, Because you went up to your father's bed; Then you defiled it—He went up to my couch. "Simeon and Levi are brothers; Instruments of cruelty are in their dwelling place. Let not my soul enter their council; Let not my honor be united to their assembly; For in their anger they slew a man, And in their self-will they hamstrung an ox. Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce; And their wrath, for it is cruel! I will divide them in Jacob And scatter them in Israel. "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. 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? 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. 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. His eyes are darker than wine, And his teeth whiter than milk.

Daily Deep Dive:

Verse 1 – Now that the blessings of Ephraim & Manasseh have been prophesied, Jacob now calls in the rest of his sons and tells them all what will occur “in the last days”.

In my research, I counted 13 times these same two Hebrew words, forming the phrase “last days/latter days” are used together in the Old Testament. When these two words are used together, it points to the time just before the establishment of the Kingdom of God (at the second coming of Jesus Christ). A similar Greek phrase appears in the New Testament that in all but one case points to the same time period. The one exception in the New Testament is John 7:37 when “last day” is in reference to the final day of the fall Feast celebration.

Here’s what the UCG reading program states about this phrase and its implications: “Genesis 49 details Jacob’s last words to his sons shortly before he died. Jacob, under God’s inspiration, describes the state of his descendants in the future—each of the 12 sons of Israel is mentioned. Some commentaries look for the fulfillment of these prophecies for each tribe by looking at the history recorded in books of the Old Testament. Of course, some of the

characteristics and destinies outlined by Jacob were fulfilled in small measure during those times. However, note when Jacob said these prophecies would come to pass: “Gather together, that I may tell you what shall befall you in the last days” (verse 1).

The phrases “in the last days” and “in the latter days” appear around 20 times in the Bible. They refer to the period of time at the end of the age leading into the establishment of God’s Kingdom on Earth (e.g., Isaiah 2:2; Micah 4:1; 2 Timothy 3:1; 2 Peter 3:3). So, rather than foretelling the condition of the tribes at the times recorded in the books of Kings and Chronicles, Jacob describes the circumstances of the tribes at the end of the age. This tells us something very interesting: All of the tribes of Israel will exist as distinct peoples at the time of the end, shortly before the return of Jesus Christ—except for Simeon and Levi, of course, who will exist as peoples, but will be scattered throughout the other tribes.

Many of the prophecies about individual tribes prove difficult to apply with a specific meaning, due to the broad scope of the language employed. Of all the particulars mentioned, verse 10, regarding Judah, is more readily interpreted. Since the “scepter shall not depart from Judah,”

we know that a succession of kings descended from Judah would exist until a specified time, being that a scepter is a symbol of kingship. The specific time frame mentioned is “until Shiloh comes.” Shiloh is interpreted as “Peaceable and Prosperous One,” or as the “Savior,” or even as “To Whom It [the Scepter] Belongs,” all of which are clear references to Christ, to whom would be the “obedience of the people.” Since the royal line would exist until the “last days,” the coming of Shiloh here must indicate Christ’s second coming. Indeed, this prophecy explains that Christ will assume the throne of Judah in the end time—meaning that there has to be a throne of kings of Jewish descent in existence for Him to return to. And indeed there is. (To learn more about it, please refer to our online publication, [“The Throne of Britain: Its Biblical Origin and Future”](#).)”

[END]

Verse 3 – The firstborn inheritance should have belonged to Reuben (“the beginning of my strength” (Deut 21:17)), here addressed first before all his brothers. Reuben was in the position to have authority over the family, and the dignity & power associated with being the firstborn. He lost all of that by his own decisions and actions. Jamieson–Faucet–

Brown states: “His posterity never made any figure; no judge, prophet, nor ruler, sprang from this tribe.”

Verse 5 – Simeon & Levi were not only brothers in the sense of the same mother & father, but also in their common cruelty.

Verse 6 – The NKJV says “Let not my soul enter their council; Let not my honor be united to their assembly”.

This may not be easy to follow. The NLT states this morning plainly as: “May I never join in their meetings; may I never be a party to their plans.” These two brothers apparently didn’t just act this way on one occasion, but it was a part of who they were and what they did.

Verse 7 – Notice the curse that Jacob prophesizes on the tribes of Simeon & Levi: “I will divide them in Jacob And scatter them in Israel.” Both of these nations would be dispersed throughout the other tribes. Levi, would end up with 48 cities spread around and Simeon would have a few lots spread around (Joshua 19:1). Jarchi (aka Rashi), a French Rabbi, states, that a great many of this tribe (Simeon) were scribes and teachers of the law, and even teachers of children, and by which they lived among the several tribes.

Verse 8 – The name Judah, means “Praised” (Brown–Driver–Briggs). Jacob shows that this tribe would take top honor, authority & dignity above all the rest of the tribes.

“Your hand *shall be* on the neck of your enemies” shows that they would rule over and defeat militarily their enemies (compare Psalm 18:40), and it states “Your father's children shall bow down before you” showing that the tribe of Judah would rule over all the other tribes. We see this through King David & King Solomon, but has it’s greatest fulfillment David’s descendent, Jesus Christ, the Messiah (Rev 19:16, Rev 11:15–17).

Verse 9 – Compares Judah to various stages of a lion. From a young lion (lion’s whelp – meaning cub, young), to a strong mature lion that is satisfied from eating its prey, who can stoop down and rest and not be disturbed.

Verse 10 – Here in this verse, we have several words that are used for the very first time in the Bible.

“Scepter” – Hebrew word meaning, “rod, staff, branch, scepter, tribe”. It’s used 190x in the bible, being translated 140x times “tribe”, 34x “rod” and 10x “scepter”.

“lawgiver” – Hebrew word meaning “to hack, that is, engrave” (Strong’s). It’s used 19x in the Bible, being translated most often “lawgiver” (6x), but also governor

(2x), decree (2x), “engrave” (2x), and some one offs. But it’s clear that this word has to do with those who make and record the rules, laws, decrees, etc...

“Shiloh” – This is the one and only time this word is used in the Bible, so it’s difficult for individuals to determine its exact meaning. Both Strongs and Brown–Driver–Briggs record that it comes from a root word meaning “tranquil (verb)”. Some have then concluded that that this noun form means “Peaceable One” or “Peacemaker”. Another proposed meaning has been “He whose it is” or “that which belongs to Him”, referring to the “rod/scepter”.

From these words, and in connection with verse 8, it seems clear to me, that Judah is being given authority to rule (“rod/scepter”), and to make and record law (lawgiver), for a period of time, until the One will come who will bring Judah’s military power and rule to an end: The Peaceable One, the Peacemaker, and the One whose Kingdom will reign forever and never end.

Verse 11 & 12 – I’m not clear if these verses are still referring to Shiloh or back to Judah. It may be both.

I’m going to include excerpts from John Gill’s commentary on these 2 verses as he speculates about possible meanings:

About: Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine,....

“Which may be understood either of the tribe of Judah, and signify that vines should grow in such plenty, and so large and strong, that a man might fasten his ass to one of them, and if it ate and destroyed it, it would give no great concern, since the country abounded with them”

“or else of Shiloh the Messiah, which some interpret literally of him, when the prophecy in Zec_9:9 was fulfilled, as is recorded in Mat_21:2 but others better, figuratively, of Christ's causing the Gentiles, comparable to an ass's colt, for their impurity, ignorance of, and sluggishness in spiritual things, to cleave to him the true vine, Joh_15:1 in the exercise of faith, hope, and love, or to join themselves to his church and people, sometimes compared to a vine or vineyard, Isa_5:1”

About: and he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes:

“an hyperbolical expression, setting forth the great abundance of wine in this tribe, of which there was such plenty, that if they would, they might have used it instead of water to wash their clothes in, but not that they did do so, only might if they would; and may denote the great

quantity of spiritual blessings flowing from the love of God, which come by Christ; and of his word and ordinances, which are comparable to wine and milk, and are a feast of fat things, of wine on the lees, well refined, Isa_26:6 and may be applied to Christ, to the garment of his human nature, which, through his sufferings and death, was like a vesture dipped in blood, and he became red in his apparel, Isa_63:1 or to his church and people, which cleave to him as a garment, and whose garments are washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb, Rev_1:5”

About: **His eyes shall be red with wine,**

“as applied to the Messiah, the antitype of Judah, and who was of this tribe, it may denote not so much the beauty of his eyes, as the Targums paraphrase it; as the joy and pleasure that sparkled in his eyes when he shed his blood on the cross, enduring that, and despising the shame of it, for the joy of the salvation of his people; or the clearness of his sight in beholding the actions of his enemies, and especially of the fierceness and fury of his wrath against them, whose eyes are said to be an flames of fire, Rev_1:14.”

About: **and his teeth white with milk**

“denoting the fruitfulness of his land, producing fine pastures, on which flocks and herds fed, and gave abundance of milk”

“ay respect Christ and his people, and be expressive of the purity of his nature, life, and doctrine, and of the holiness of his members, their faith and conversation” [END]