

## The Pastor's Pen

**“The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until He to whom it belongs comes. And the obedience of the nations will be His.” Genesis 49:10 (1900 B.C.)**

Go back in time with me. Imagine the centuries rolling back like massive hands on a Grandfather Clock...spinning backwards almost 40 times over. The hands of time stop, and we find ourselves almost as many years before the birth of Jesus as have passed since the birth of Jesus until our present time. The year in which we have stopped our travel back in time has brought us to somewhere between 1861 BC and 1857 BC and has landed us in Egypt.

Now, imagine a second thing for a moment. You are one of Judah’s brothers. Your dad (Jacob) knows that he is about to die, so he calls you along with all of your brothers to his bedside to hear his last words to you. Dad definitely has something to say to each one of you, and not all of it is either good or encouraging. In fact, some of what dad says is nothing less than blunt rebuke. Your heart is saddened and your ears are still stinging after hearing what he prophesied about you and your descendants. Then, he begins to speak to Judah.

Now...you and the rest of your brothers all know that Judah has not been the most upstanding fellow. Matter of fact, Judah has a pretty mixed up family. Two of his sons (Perez and Zerah) are arguably his sons *and* his grandsons, since he fathered them both by his daughter-in-law, Tamar. Talk about a family tree! So, you are prepared to hear your dad burn Judah’s ears off.

But there is zero rebuke! Instead, your dad just makes this cryptic statement that, try as you may, you simply cannot make sense of – “*The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until He to whom it belongs comes. And the obedience of the nations will be His.*”

You don’t know exactly what Jacob your father means by this statement. However, you *doknow* that the LORD has promised to send His Messiah. So, *maybe you assume* that this is referring to Him. If you do, then you most likely find yourself wondering – how would my dad know that the Messiah is going to be a descendant of Judah?

Well, it wasn’t a *guess*. Through the voice and words of Jacob, the LORD was continuing to progressively unveil the promise of the coming Redeemer. This is a further unveiling of the very same promise the LORD first gave roughly 2,250 years earlier in Eden (Genesis 3:15). You had been taught since childhood that the Messiah will come from Shem’s line, that He will come through your great-grandfather Abraham’s line, and that He will come through Jacob’s line. So, in light of all *those* factors, you probably have deduced that the Messiah will therefore descend from you or one of your brothers. But now, as you hear your father Jacob’s words, you learn for the first time that the Messiah will descend from your brother – *Judah*.

Now, fast forward back to 2025. What effect should this prophetic utterance almost 2,000 years *before* the birth of Jesus have on us, now 2025 years *after* the birth of Jesus? If we ponder this, it will cause us to stand in utter awe of our God ,as we realize Christmas *didnot* just “happen.” The Living God planned Christmas *before the foundation of the world*. When we read prophetic statements like the one Jacob makes

in Genesis 49:10, we realize that God was *continuing* to reveal His plan *little by little* as the years led up to the arrival of the Christ.

It would doubtless have been a great privilege to hear the words of this prophecy uttered for the first time. But, we actually occupy a far more privileged place in time than *either* Jacob *or* his sons – because we have been given the complete grid of Old Testament prophecy concerning the coming of the Messiah. If we are just willing to take the time to actually search the Scriptures, we will discover that the LORD told us ahead of time *Who* the Messiah would be, *when* He would arrive, *where* He would be born, *why* He would come, and *how* He would redeem us.

If we consider these things, we will find our hearts filled with a strange new wonder when we realize that Christmas is *neither* coincidence *nor* happenstance. It is an integral fulfillment of the Prophetic Promises of all the ages.

This week, may your hearts be filled with the Laughter of the Redeemed.

Heath