

“The Blessing of Judah” Genesis 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. Genesis 49:8–12 (NKJV)

Judah was the fourth-born son of Jacob and Leah. He it is who had the idea of selling Joseph, his brother into slavery, rather than killing him. He is the one who sins with his daughter-in-law Tamar. For these two sins he seems humbled. Later, he offers himself as surety for his brother Benjamin, before he knew that Joseph his other brother was ruling in Egypt.

His offering of himself, instead of Benjamin, and his half-confession before Joseph, made Joseph realize at least one of his brothers was regretting what he had done so many years before and results in Joseph tearfully revealing himself to his frightened brothers.

In chapter 49, Jacob, is on his deathbed, and is blessing and prophesying the futures of His sons.

I. The Name Judah means “Praised” –

1. Leah named him “Praised” because she praised God when he was born –
35 And she conceived again and bore a son, and said, “Now I will praise the LORD.” Therefore she called his name Judah... Genesis 29:35 (NKJV)

2. *Judah’s brothers praise him for while he was not the oldest, he still becomes their leader!*

3. *His defeating of his enemies, is especially evident in his descendent David's conquests –*

Your hand *shall be* on the neck of your enemies; Genesis 49:8 B

A. David writes in Psalm 18, obviously after defeating Goliath, the Philistines and other enemies –

³⁹ For You have armed me with strength for the battle; You have subdued under me those who rose up against me. ⁴⁰ You have also given me the necks of my enemies, So that I destroyed those who hated me. Psalm 18:39–40 (NKJV)

B. As prophesied, Judah in his descendant David is certainly praised by his brothers, and sisters –

⁶ Now it had happened as they were coming *home*, when David was returning from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women had come out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tambourines, with joy, and with musical instruments. ⁷ So the women sang as they danced, and said: “Saul has slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands.” 1 Samuel 18:6–7 (NKJV)

II. Judah's brothers bow before him -

... Your father's children shall bow down before you. Genesis 49:8 C

1. We know this was Joseph's dream and for Joseph this dream was already fulfilled –

⁶ Now Joseph was governor over the land; and it was he who sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brothers came and bowed down before him with *their* faces to the earth. Genesis 42:6 (NKJV)

2. For Judah this prophecy is dramatically fulfilled later, in David who becomes King in Israel, but even more so, in our Lord Jesus Christ Who is KING of Kings, and LORD of Lords –

⁴ Then the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah. And they told David, saying, “The men of Jabesh Gilead were *the ones* who buried Saul.” 2 Samuel 2:4 (NKJV)

³ Therefore all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and King David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the LORD. And they anointed David king over Israel.

2 Samuel 5:3 (NKJV)

⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to *the point of* death, even the death of the cross.

⁹ Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, ¹¹ and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2:8–11 (NKJV)

III. Judah is also called a “Lion’s whelp”

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? Genesis 49:9

The lion is the king of beasts, the terror of the forest when he roars; when he seizes his prey, none can resist him; when he goes up from the prey, none dare pursue him to revenge it. By this it is foretold that the tribe of Judah should become very formidable, and should not only obtain great victories, but should peaceably and quietly enjoy what was obtained by those victories—that they should make war, not for the sake of war, but for the sake of peace. Judah is compared, not to a lion rampant, always tearing, always raging, always ranging; but to a lion couchant, enjoying the satisfaction of his power and success, without creating vexation to others: this is to be truly great. Matthew Henry

This bringing of “peace” is ultimately what Jesus does, as LION & LAMB –
5 And I saw in the right *hand* of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals. ² Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open

the scroll and to loose its seals?” ³ And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it. ⁴ So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it. ⁵ But one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals.”

⁶ And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth. ⁷ Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne. ⁸ Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

⁹ And they sang a new song, saying: “You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, ¹⁰ And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth.” Revelation 5:1–10 (NKJV)

IV. In Christ Judah’s Kingdom is an eternal Kingdom –

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. Genesis 49:10

1. The eternity of Christ’s Kingdom is ultimately what is pictured here –

⁶ For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ Of the increase of *His* government and peace *There will be* no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this. Isaiah 9:6–7 (NKJV)

A. Government is mentioned – **Isaiah 9:6** and its increase – **Isaiah 9:7**

B. The throne of David, is the same thing as the scepter of Judah ... **Isaiah 9:7**

C. Note the description is of the best kind of RULER and RULE – **Isaiah 9:6-7**

D. This government has **no end** and continues even forever. **Isaiah 9:7**

2. *The obedience of Christ's subjects is prophesied –*

... And to Him shall be the obedience of the people. Genesis 49:10 B

A. This is a great and wonderful thing –

¹⁵ “If you love Me, keep My commandments. John 14:15 (NKJV)

²¹ He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.” John 14:21 (NKJV)

²³ Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. John 14:23 (NKJV)

B. We should desire to be obedient to Jesus Christ in everything –

¹² Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; ¹³ for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure. ¹⁴ Do all things without complaining and disputing, ¹⁵ that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, Philippians 2:12–15 (NKJV)

V. The Blessing of God upon Judah / Christ brings abundant and luxuriant blessings –

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. Genesis 49:11–12 (NKJV)

1. Stupid prosperity, mind-boggling wealth, health and pleasure –

¹¹ Binding his donkey to the vine, And his donkey's colt to the choice vine, ...

A. *What do donkeys do exceedingly well? They EAT!*

A normal vine, with normal grapes and a normal healthy donkey if you bind the donkey to the vine ... All the grapes and ALL of the vine are gone in the donkey's stomach, maybe some parts are trampled under the hungry animal's hoofs.

B. *But what is picture here is a vine so fruitful, a vine so full of grapes, you might ties a thousand donkeys to it and their big little tummies would all be aching from eating TOO MANY Delicious GRAPES and yet the glorious vine is still full of fruit!*

C. *Bread in the Bible is a staple, wine is a luxury, God in Christ provides us both*

—
³⁵ And Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. John 6:35 (NKJV)

¹¹ You will show me the path of life; In Your presence *is* fullness of joy; At Your right hand *are* pleasures forevermore. Psalm 16:11 (NKJV)

¹⁰ The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly. John 10:10 (NKJV)

¹⁴ He causes the grass to grow for the cattle, And vegetation for the service of man, That he may bring forth food from the earth, ¹⁵ And wine *that* makes glad the heart of man, Oil to make *his* face shine, And bread *which* strengthens man's heart. Psalm 104:14–15 (NKJV)

2. *Washing clothing in wine repeats the same idea ...*

3. *Jesus tells us –*

¹⁵ “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. John 15:1 (NKJV)

A. *We will find our life and abundance in Him, and no where else -*

⁵ “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. John 15:5 (NKJV)

B. As branches of this glorious Vine-Jesus, we are extensions of Him, bringing “joy” to a lost world.

VI. Judah, Jesus and the Church’s ultimate health and vitality are pictured in the last part of this blessing –
¹² His eyes are darker than wine, And his teeth whiter than milk. Genesis 49:12 (NKJV)