

## THE BOOK OF BEGINNINGS

"Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness." – Archbishop Desmond Tutu

## God & His People: Their Hope for the Future

### The Background:

- The final act of Jacob's earthly life was to bless each of his sons. As the father of the twelve tribes and the one from who the nation as a whole derived its name (Israel), this blessing was highly significant and remained so throughout Israel's history.

### Jacob's Blessing of His Sons: Genesis 49:1-27

Then Jacob called his sons and said, "Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you what shall happen to you in days to come. Assemble and listen, O sons of Jacob, listen to Israel your father..." –Gen. 49:1-2

"...days to come." – אַחֲרֵי־יָמַי ('achariyth ha yowm) which can simply mean "at a later time" or "in the future." In many places, however, it takes on great significance, referring to "the last days."

- The LXX (Greek OT) translates this phrase as ἐσχάτων τῶν ἡμερῶν (eschatōn tōn hēmerōn). It is translated "the last/latter days" in English, a phrase used in several passages in the New Testament to refer to the end of the age. (Acts 2:17, 2 Tim. 3:1, Heb. 1:2, 2 Pet. 3:3)

→ We must understand Jacob's words as \_\_\_\_\_, anticipating the things that God would accomplish in and through His people.

- Jacob's words to Judah and to Joseph stand out because of their length. We must also recognize their significance in light of how their themes are developed in other parts of the Old Testament as well as in the New Testament.

### The Blessing of Judah (Key Theme: \_\_\_\_\_)

#### Genesis 49

#### The OT

#### The NT

<sup>49:9</sup> Judah is a lion's cub;  
from the prey, my son, you have gone up.  
He stooped down; he crouched as a lion  
and as a lioness; who dares rouse him?

Num. 24:9 He crouched, he lay down like a lion and  
like a lioness; who will rouse him up? Blessed are  
those who bless you, and cursed are those who  
curse you."

Rev. 5:5 And one of the elders said to me, "Weep  
no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of  
Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so  
that he can open the scroll and its seven seals."

<sup>49:10</sup> The scepter shall not depart from Judah,  
nor the ruler's staff from between his feet,  
until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be  
the obedience of the peoples.

Num. 24:17 I see him, but not now; I behold him, but  
not near: a star shall come out of Jacob, and  
a scepter shall rise out of Israel;

Heb. 1:8 But of the Son he says, "Your throne, O  
God, is forever and ever, the scepter of upright-  
ness is the scepter of your kingdom.

Isa. 11:4b, 10 and he shall strike the earth with the rod  
of his mouth; In that day the root of Jesse, who  
shall stand as a signal for the peoples—of him  
shall the nations inquire, and his resting place  
shall be glorious.

Rev. 9:15a From his mouth comes a sharp  
sword with which to strike down the nations,  
and he will rule them with a rod of iron.

<sup>49:11a</sup> Binding his foal to the vine  
and his donkey's colt to the choice vine

Zech. 9:9 Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!  
Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!  
Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and  
having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a  
donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

Luke 19:35-36 And they brought it to Jesus, and  
throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus  
on it. And as he rode along, they spread their  
cloaks on the road.

<sup>49:11b</sup> he has washed his garments in wine  
and his vesture in the blood of grapes.

Isa. 63:1a; 2-3 Who is this who comes from Edom,  
in crimsoned garments from Bozrah; Why is  
your apparel red, and your garments like his who  
treads in the winepress? "I have trodden the wine-  
press alone, and from the peoples no one was  
with me; I trod them in my anger and trampled  
them in my wrath; their lifeblood spattered on my  
garments, and stained all my apparel.

Rev. 19:3 He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood,  
and the name by which he is called is The Word  
of God.

Rev. 19:15b He will tread the winepress of the fury of  
the wrath of God the Almighty.

### Observations concerning the blessing of Judah:

1. The Right to \_\_\_\_\_ - It is from the tribe of Judah that the right to rule both Israel as well as the nations will be derived.
2. The Blessing was to give \_\_\_\_\_ - This blessing pictured for Israel a time when a leader would come from the tribe of Judah who would rule them and bring peace by subduing their enemies.

### The Blessing of Joseph (Key Theme: \_\_\_\_\_)

- While there are fewer direct allusions to the blessing of Joseph in the rest of the OT and the NT in comparison to the blessing of Judah, its themes regarding God's relationship to Israel and His intent for them do recur throughout the rest of Scripture.

### Observations concerning the blessing of Joseph:

1. The blessing of Joseph recalls two key themes from the earlier parts of Genesis:

Fruitfulness (Gen. 1:28, 9:1, 35:11)

*"Joseph is a fruitful bough, a fruitful bough by a spring; his branches run over the wall. –Gen. 49:22*

⇒ This fruitfulness was physical in terms of his prosperity and productivity, but it was also spiritual in terms of his \_\_\_\_\_.

Blessing (Gen. 1:28, 9:1, 12:1-3, 22:17, 26:3-4, Gen. 28:1-3)

*"by the God of your father who will help you, by the Almighty who will bless you with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that crouches beneath, blessings of the breasts and of the womb. The blessings of your father are mighty beyond the blessings of my parents..."*

⇒ The blessing of Yahweh is based on a \_\_\_\_\_ with Him. (Based on a \_\_\_\_\_)

2. More than any of the other brothers, his relationship to Yahweh is emphasized.

The Names of Yahweh: *The Mighty One of Jacob (Ps. 135:2 & 5, Isa. 49:26 & 60:16)*

*The Shepherd (Ps. 23:1, Jer. 31:10, Ezek. 34:15, John 10:1-18, Heb. 13:10)*

*The Stone or Rock of Israel (2 Sam. 2:23, Is. 30:29)*

*The Almighty (Gen. 17:1, Job 37:23, Ps. 91:1, Joel 1:15, Rev. 1:8 & 21:22)*

3. The blessing was to give hope for the \_\_\_\_\_.

*"...up to the bounties of the everlasting hills." (The LXX adds "the blessings of the eternal mountains")*

⇒ While the concept of resurrection is not explicit in Genesis, instances like this as well as Joseph's command to return his bones to the land of Canaan point towards an eternal hope that was present within the Hebrew mindset even this early in Redemptive History.

4. Joseph's \_\_\_\_\_ is emphasized.

*"May they be on the head of Joseph, and on the brow of him who was set apart from his brothers." –Gen. 49:26c*

⇒ This phrase can be rendered "made prince of" or "given leadership of."

---

The blessing of Judah emphasizes the \_\_\_\_\_ to rule while the blessing of Joseph emphasizes the \_\_\_\_\_ to rule. For there to be any hope for God's people these would have to come together in one individual.

### Ezekiel 37:15-28

- The wider context includes 37:1-14 which emphasizes hope for the future both in terms of the restoration of the nation as well as bodily resurrection.
- The illustration that Ezekiel uses is of a broken "stick." (This can be translated "staff" or "rod"...the instrument symbolic of authority)
- The emphasis is on the coming together of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ who are placed under the leadership of one Davidic Ruler (Ezek. 37:24-28).

⇒ *This is all for the glory of God through the blessing of Israel (Ezek. 37:27) and the nations (Ezek. 37:28)!*