THE NATURE OF JACOB'S DECLARATION ABOUT JUDAH AND JOSEPH IN GENESIS 49 AND ITS IMPACT ON THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL

by

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to understand the biblical author's objective in including and narrating the last will and testament of Jacob to his sons in Genesis 49. The focus is on Gn 49:1-2, 8-12, 22-26, 28, which talks about Jacob's declaration regarding the future of Judah and Joseph and the effect of the blessings declared on them in relation to the future of the nation of Israel. Along these lines, this study explains the nature of OT prophecy; the nature of the prophetic declaration of Jacob on Judah and Joseph; the fulfillment of these declarations and their eschatological implications for Jacob's declaration involved both immediate and future fulfillment.

Although Judah and Joseph are only two sons out of the twelve, they are two great pillars on which Israel as a nation stands. This work attempts to trace the scope of the blessings that Jacob uttered for Judah and Joseph and how these impinged on the future of the nation. Both sons experienced tough beginnings. For instance, Judah experienced the shame of his failures while Joseph suffered persecution on account of his envious brothers and the meaning of his dreams that exacerbated their jealousy. Despite all these, the LORD was faithful to cause their latter end to be greater than their less significant beginning. Jacob declared that Judah will enjoy agricultural and spiritual prosperity. Judah's descendants will include lines of kings. Even the Messiah descends from the genealogy of Judah. On the side of Joseph, he received the firstborn's blessings of dignity and power. His sons (Manasseh and Ephraim) were destined to be part of the blessings designed for Joseph, their father. So, Judah, Joseph, and the latter's sons are seen as making a great impact in the future of Israel. Although they are few compared to the

other ten sons, their life and blessings positively affected the future transformation of Israel as a nation.

This study also seeks to show parallels in the African culture as regards to the will and testament of a dying father–especially declarations of blessings and how this affects the lifestyle of the recipient. It also presents how curses can be reversed on account of God's mercy and the change in attitude of the recipient so that the same person can hope for a chance at life.

Faithfulness is a virtue that is held in high esteem by most Africans. When a person walks in faithfulness to God and others, he or she is destined to enjoy unprecedented blessings regardless of the circumstances. To illustrate this, the study will highlight a culture bearer's reflections in light of the story of Joseph–relating to his experiences of God's faithfulness in transforming him to become a blessing to others instead of a curse.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	D. N. Freedman (ed.), *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 6 vols., Garden City (NY) 1992
ABRL	Anchor Bible Reference Library (Garden City [NY]).
ALGHJ	Arbeiten zur Literatur und Geschicte des Hellenistischen Judentums (Leiden)
AJSL	*American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*
AnBib	Analecta Biblica
ANEP	J. B. Pritchard, ed., *The Ancient Near East in Pictures relating to the Old Testament.* 2nd ed. Princeton: Princeton University, 1969
ANET	J. B. Pritchard, ed., *The Ancient Near East Texts Relating to the Old Testament.* 3rd ed. Princeton: Princeton University, 1969
AOAT	Altes Orient and Altes Testament
AOSTS	American Oriental Society, Translation Series
ArOr	*Archiv Orientalni*
ARV	American Revised Version
ARTU	J. C. de Moor, *An Anthology of Religious Texts from Ugarit* (NISABA, 16), Leiden, Germany, 1987.
AS	Assyriological Studies
AThANT	Abhandlungen zur Thelogie des Alten und Neuen Testaments (Zurich)
ATR	*Anglican Theological Review*
BA	*The Biblical Archaeologist* (New Haven [CT])
BAR	*Biblical Archaeology Review*
BASOR	*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* (New Haven [CT])
BDB	Brown, F., S. R. Driver, C. Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament.* Repr. Oxford: Clarendon, 1959
BETS	*Bulletin of the Evangelical Theological Society*
BHH	*Biblisch-Historisches Handworterbuch*
BHS	K. Elliger and W. Rudolph, eds., *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia.* Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1967-77
BKC	Bible Knowledge Commentary
Bib	*Biblica*
BibOr	Biblica et Orientalia
BN	*Biblische Notizen*
BR	*Biblical Research*
BRev	*Bible Review*
BSac	*Bibliotheca Sacra*
BSOAS	*Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*
BT	*The Bible Translator*
BTB	*Biblical Theology Bulletin*
BZ	*Biblische Zeitshrift*
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*

CTJ	*Calvin Theological Journal*
CTM	*Concordia Theological Monthly*
CTQ	*Concordia Theological Quarterly*
EBD	Easton Bible Dictionary
EvQ	*Evangelical Quarterly*
EDBT	Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology
HALOT	Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament
HBD	Holman Bible Dictionary
ICC	International Critical Commentary
IDB	Interpreter's Dictionary
IEJ	*Israel Exploration Journal* (Jerusalem)
IntB	*The Interpreter's Bible* (Nashville)
ISBE	International Standard Bible Encyclopedia
JAOS	Journal of American Oriental Society
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature* (Philadelphia [PA])
JBR	*Journal of Bible and Religion* (Boston [MA])
JBSt	Jerusalem Biblical Studies (Jerusalem)
JCS	*Journal of Cuneiform Studies* (Chicago [IL])
JETS	*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* (Wheaton ([IL])
JJS	*Journal of Jewish Studies* (London)
JM	P. Joun, T. Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (SubBi, 15), Roma 1991.
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies* (Chicago [IL])
JNSL	*Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages* (Stellenbosch)
JQR	*Jewish Quarterly Review* (Philadelphia [PA])
JSNT	*Journal for the Study of the New Testament* (Sheffield)
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* (Sheffield)
JSOTS	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series (Sheffield)
JSSt	*Journal of Semitic Studies* (Manchester)
JThS	*Journal of Theological Studies* (London)
Konig, *Die*	E. Konig, *Die Genesis eingeleitet, ubersetzt und erlart, Genesis, Gutersloh* ^{3}1925
Lett[10]	J. P. Lettinga, *Grammatica van het Bijbels Hebreeuws,* 10*e* Leiden 1976.
LMHebr	Late Hebrew (Mishnaic)
NBD	New Bible Dictionary
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIVAC	New International Version Application Commentary
OTL	Old Testament Library
OTS	Oudtestamentische Studieen
PEQ	Palestine Exploration Quarterly
PTR	Princeton Theological Review
SABCP	Structural Analysis of Biblical and Canaanite Poetry
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature: Monograph Series

SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
StOr	*Studia Orientalia*
SVT	*Supplements to Vetus Testamentum*
SWBAS	The Social World of Biblical Antiquity Series
TBD	Tyndale Bible Dictionary
TCS	Texts from Cuneiform Sources
TDNT	Theological Dictionary of the New Testament
TDOT	Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament
THAT	*Theologisches Handworterbuch zum Alten Testament*
ThB	*Theologische Bucherei*
ThWAT	*Theologisches Worterbuch zum Alten Testament*
ThWNT	*Theologisches Worterbuch zum Neuen Testament*
ThZ	*Theologische Zeitschrift*
TJ	Trinity Journal
TJon	Targums of Pseudo-Jonathan
TN	Targum Neophyti or Palestinian Targum
TO	Targum Onkelos
TJT	Toronto Journal of Theology
TNTC	Tyndale New Testament Commentaries
TOTC	Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries
TUSR	Trinity University Studies in Religion
TWAT	Theologisches Worterbuch zum Alten Testament
TWOT	Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament
TynBul	Tyndale Bulletin
TZ	*Theologisches Zeitschrift*
UF	*Ugarit-Forschungen*
USQR	Union Seminary Quarterly Review
UT	Ugaritic Textbook
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
VTSup	*Vetus Testamentum, Supplements*
WTJ	Westminster Theological Journal
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

The OT describes the life and history of the chosen people, the Israelites. Patently, Israel's life begins from the call of Abraham, who became the precursor of a great nation (Gn 12:1-3). The promise of a great nation was given to him and the same promise was repeated by God to Isaac. God then in His sovereign wisdom chose Jacob, in *lieu* of Esau his brother, as the bearer of His promise to his grandfather, Abraham.

The establishment of a great nation found its physical manifestation through the sons of Jacob, the twelve tribes (Gn 29:31-30:24; 35:16-20). Amidst strange circumstances, Jacob married two women (Leah and Rachel), who with their respective maids (Bilhah and Zilpah) had thirteen children. His penultimate son, Joseph was his beloved and this made his other children jealous. They hated Joseph and sold him out as a slave (Gn 37:3-36) so that he ended in Egypt. God blessed him and brought to him his father, Jacob, who was by this time well stricken in years. As an old man, he felt the urgent need to bless his sons and declare unto them their future before he joins his ancestors (Gn 49:1). The declaration of his sons' future defines not only their future as individuals, but also the future of the nation of Israel. By divine inspiration and power, Jacob saw beyond their present lives. His physical eyes were dim and weak; but spiritually, they were sharp and clear. The declarations are not so much about their persons as it is about their posterity. The negative as well as the positive aspects of this prophetic declaration corresponds to the future challenges and blessings of the nation of

Israel. They herald the foundation of Israel as a nation, their future culmination, and some eschatological elements that will add meaning to what is still future.

Genesis 49 is a compendium of diverse assessments from Jacob about his children. A few of these appraisals will be: good and bad results of their past actions, praises about their good standings, and a prophecy about what is designated for them in the future. The greatness of their future is contingent upon the uniqueness of their beginning. God is hereby revealing to Jacob that He is building up a great future out of his children. To make this a reality, there is the need for God to give him a revelation about their future. As he reveals this prophecy to his children, they will be psychologically and emotionally prepared for what is to come. This revelation will also help them correct the mistakes of the past so that they will live up to God's standard for them.

Statement of the Purpose

The purpose of this study is to understand the author's objective in narrating this story about the future of Judah and Joseph and the impact of Jacob's declarations on them and on the future of the nation of Israel. Space will not allow an exhaustive study of Jacob's declaration about all of his sons. Since the declarations pertaining to Judah and Joseph arguably have an eschatological impact on the future of Israel, it is imperative to focus on Jacob's prophetic declaration to them. A question worth asking is, why did the author give much space (twelve verses) to present a detailed description of this prophecy to Judah and Joseph and what makes them outstanding when compared to the other ten sons?

This thesis will identify the reason why the prophetic declaration about these two sons is important and, hence, the author's extended description. The truth is that, after this prophetic declaration about Judah and Joseph, their tribes as well as the nation of Israel acted and responded to her environment in a special way described by Jacob in his declaration to them. This thesis will address the unique elements that are highlighted in this prophecy about them. For instance, the prophetic declaration entails the blessings pertaining to Judah and Joseph and how these blessings greatly impact their future glory. This thesis will also emphasize God's special and specific calling for each of these two tribes (sons) with regards to the future of Israel and the challenges that they will experience in light of the future.

Furthermore, this thesis will briefly reflect on the past dreadful experience of Joseph. It will explicate on the manner how his brothers and enemies bitterly treated him and yet he survived (Gn 49:23-26). Although severely assailed, he became more blessed than his persecutors. This thesis will throw more light on the blessings of God upon the life of Joseph that turned his tests into a great testimony of blessings. His painful and insignificant beginning turned into a prosperous and an awesome end. The faithfulness of God is revealed in the life of Joseph by virtue of his devotion and faithfulness to God. His devotion and piety toward God and his master in Egypt attracted the LORD's divine favor and flavor in every facet of his life. This paper will inform the African reader about the essence of believing and trusting in the LORD. It presents a culture bearer's experience of being treated with contempt by family and friends and, yet, becoming conspicuous and blessed by God in the long term.

Importance of the Study

Students of the Bible need to understand how Israel as a nation began and equally come to grips with the individuals (Judah and Joseph) whom God used to define their history. These two sons serve as instruments employed by God to establish His divine agenda for the nation of Israel. Hence Gn 49:1-2, 8-12, 22-26, 28, in part, serve as the pivot around which the foundation and history of Israel revolves. It gives a clear picture of God setting apart Judah and Joseph regarding His future plans for Israel as a nation. The study shows the wider spectrum of the nature and uniqueness of Israel from the perspective of Judah and Joseph who both form the larger portion of the tribes' blessings.

Genesis 49:1-2, 8-12, 22-26, 28 cannot be taken in isolation from the whole of the chapter, which begins with Jacob's words, "Gather together so that I may tell you what will befall you in the last days" (Gn 49:1). This thesis will expatiate on what Jacob meant by the phrase "what will happen to you in the future." Does this mean the future of the sons as individuals or the future of the nation of Israel, or better still, their future today? Another area to consider is how the meaning of their names corresponds to the prophecy given to them. One question this thesis will answer is this: What is the relationship between the names of these sons (Judah and Joseph) and the prophetic declaration given to them by God through Jacob? In the same vein, the time and event prior to their birth seem to have some bearing on this prophetic declaration. The future of Israel is undoubtedly dependent on the nation's beginning.

Jacob's prophetic declaration helps the student of the Bible discover the intricacies of Israel's nature and disposition, her inclinations and responses to the world around her. Furthermore, some parts of the prophecy are hard to understand in relation to

the tribal divisions. For example, why are Judah and Joseph given special blessings compared to the other sons? This is one of the questions that will be addressed here so that students of the Bible can make sense of the crux of the declaration presented in Gn 49:1-2, 8-12, 22-26, 28.

The prophetic declaration of Jacob concerning his children underscores the essence of the covenant relationship that exists between God and Israel as a nation. Their failure to live up to God's expectation will disturb His plan for them as a nation, but their ability to walk with the Lord will cause them to triumph and be established. Knowing that Judah and Joseph form a greater part of the nation of Israel, it is imperative to understand the intricacies concerning their growth and development to be able to appreciate the reason behind the behavioral patterns of Israel as a whole.

Tracing the impact of this prophetic declaration on the future of Israel will help identify the reasons why God relishes obedience to Him. In predicting the future of Judah and Joseph, Jacob underscores the exigency of their relationship with God. The fulfillment of His promise for them in the present as well as their future is quite dependent on their obedience and faithfulness to the LORD's will and purpose.

Relating this to the African culture, Africans relish the words of a dying father in the same way as ancient Israelite culture. These are seen as a will and testament that cannot be revoked by anyone. The blessings of a dying father or mother are binding and irrevocable. Nothing can distort these blessings except the children themselves. Their constant good character and attitude is of an essence and this will prolong the blessings reserved for them. In light of this African belief, the African Christian needs to come to grips with the marks of faithfulness to God and to others. The faithful and obedient

lifestyle of Joseph attracted the LORD's faithfulness, protection, and provision even in a strange land. The African Christian needs to understand that one's relationship with God defines his ability to enjoy a prolonged blessing bestowed upon him or her by a dying father or mother.

Operational Definition of Terms

Some important words used in this thesis need explanation:

Nature: The elements and features that govern Jacob's prediction and declaration of his sons' future.

Declaration: The public announcement of the future happenings in the lives of Jacob's sons, prediction of what is to come in their lives, and prophetic insights regarding their future.

Impact: The force of impression or the major effect of the words of Jacob in the lives of his sons–whether in the near or distant future.

Eschatological: The elements of Jacob's declaration that are designated for the last days, an era yet to come from the perspective of the twenty first century reader. Some of these elements were fulfilled during Jesus' first coming and the rest are yet to be fulfilled in His second coming.

Presuppositions of the Study

This thesis presupposes that the glorious future of Israel is dependent on the prophetic predictions of Jacob to Judah and Joseph. It asserts that the positive individual predictions concerning them have an integral part to play in the overall future of Israel as a nation.

It also presupposes that the positive attitudes commended by Jacob about Judah and Joseph have a nexus with the positive events that will surface in their lives as tribes. Their struggles and challenges mold them to become conformed into God's predestined plan and purpose for them. Their lifestyles also reveal what transpired when they were but youths. The same kinds of behavior were exemplified when they grew as tribes.

This thesis embraces the early dating of Genesis and, hence, sees Genesis 49 as an early mid-second millennium BCE prediction by Jacob about the future of his children. It does not adopt a late dating of Genesis where this passage is seen as written at the time these sons of Jacob were already a nation and had already gained prominence; instead, it accepts a fifteenth century compositional dating and not a sixth century work as posited by some biblical scholars and historians. Genesis entails elements that suggest later insertions of an editor, but a big part of the book is arguably an authentic fifteenth century work. Some of those who posit a later dating do not assent to futuristic prophetic declaration and for that matter do not embrace the possibility of a divine unction that can empower one to see events in the distant future before their actual manifestation.

Limitations of the Study

It is essential to deal with everything pertaining to Jacob's declaration about his sons and its impact on Israel as a nation. However, this paper has limitations and the following explains them:

First, space will not allow coverage of all the sons of Jacob and their declarations. This thesis will single out Jacob's declaration about Judah and Joseph only and expound on these.

Second, this thesis will surface the attitudes, characters, behaviors, and lifestyle of Judah and Joseph described in this prophetic declaration and their resultant effects in the nearest future. It will also focus on what the Bible succinctly declares about them (crucial elements about their birth and development as sons and tribes) and not what is indirect or vague.

Third, the prophetic declarations about Judah and Joseph include eschatological aspects, hence this thesis will highlight what still awaits fulfillment. It will briefly touch on issues concerning prophecy and its fulfillment but will not delve into all the complexities of the text nor their prophetic mysteries.

Fourth, this thesis will not be entirely exhaustive regarding information about Judah and Joseph. Rather, it will focus on some salient aspects that define the history of biblical Israel. Aspects that entail the development of these two sons and their tribes (including Manasseh and Ephraim) as a unit will be presented in brevity and not in detail. The family genealogies that identify each of these two tribes will be skipped except when they have a role to play concerning the crucial elements that define and establish the core of Jacob's prophetic declaration about them in Gn 49:1-2, 8-12, 22-26, 28.

Last, the exegetical part of this thesis will not intensively delve into the eschatological aspect regarding some "hard to understand" elements of the prophetic declarations; but it will at least deal with the two prominent elements, which includes the term שִׁילֹה "Shiloh" (10) and the phrase רֹעֶה אֶבֶן יִשְׂרָאֵל "the Shepherd, Stone of Israel" (24). This paper will clarify their basic meaning to provide a fundamental understanding of Jacob's purpose for employing them and their respective contexts.

Review of Literature

Books and articles were consulted in writing this thesis. Some of these were referred to more than others. For instance, the work of Hutton highlights the phenomenon and nature of biblical prophecy, explaining some of the complications that prophecy entails.[1] Armerding and Gasque deal with biblical prophecies and their eschatological implications. They throw more light on Jacob's prophecy about the future of Jacob's children and the impact of this prophecy on the nation of Israel as a whole. They expatiate on the need to understand divine declarations, which justify the essence of biblical prophecy.[2] Fairbairn explains how prophecy should be viewed in respect to its distinctive nature. He asked the questions: In a word, is it the characteristic of prophecy to make known certainly and conclusively what is to come to pass? Or, are its revelations to some extent conditional, depending on the line of conduct that may meanwhile be pursued by those to whom they are addressed?[3] Wyngaarden reflects on the contextual elements of prophecy that are always downplayed by many translators and authors in their quest to presuppose their future fulfillments. He looks at Genesis 49 and explains the context out of which this prophetic declaration was born and juxtaposes it to the fulfillment in the future.[4] Seebass underscores the aspects of forthtelling and foretelling

[1] Rodney R. Hutton, *Fortress Introduction to the Prophets* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2004).

[2] Carl E. Armerding and W. Ward Gasque, eds., *Handbook of Biblical Prophecy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1977) and *A Guide to Biblical Prophecy–Dreams, Visions, and Oracles* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1992).

[3] Patrick Fairbairn, *Prophecy* (New York: Nelson & Phillips, 1874).

[4] Martin J. Wyngaarden, *The Future of the Kingdom in Prophecy and Fulfillment* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1955).

in prophecy. He explains that even though biblical prophecy encompasses the former, the declaration of Jacob is embedded on the latter much more than the former. [5]

Leupold underlines the essence of understanding the meaning of a prophecy in its current context before delving into its futuristic aspects. To Leupold, Genesis 49 should be understood in the light of the nature of Canaan where the tribes grew and matured, so that one can obtain a complete understanding of Jacob's declaration about his sons.[6] Calvin comments on the prophetic declaration of Jacob in Genesis 49, revealing his in-depth understanding of Moses' import for adding this story to the compendium of narratives in Genesis.[7] Hoop identifies the *Sitz im Leben* of Gn 49:1-28 and touches on some themes suitable for this passage. He concentrates on the grammatical nuances of the words employed by Jacob and brings out their meaning as far as the book's context is concerned.[8]

Scholars like Vos, Waltke, Walton, and Westermann describe how each individual among the sons of Jacob received his share of the prophecy and its impact on the future of Israel as a nation. These commentaries refer to Jacob's words as "blessings" in all its aspects and they discuss some of the complicated nuances involved in the Hebrew terms used in the passage, the literary styles used, and the historical aspects

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[5] H. Seebass, *"acharit," Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament.* 1/2, herausgegeben von G. J. Botterweck und H. Ringgren (Stuttgart, Germany: W. Kohlhammer GmbH, 1971).

[6] H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis, v*ol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1956).

[7] John Calvin, *Commentaries on the First Book of Moses Called Genesis*, John King, trans (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948); *Genesis*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979); and, *Genesis 20:7*, "Calvin's Commentary on the Bible," http://new.studylight.org/com/cal/view.cgi?bk=0&ch=0 (accessed 11 December 2012).

[8] Raymond De Hoop, *Genesis 49 in Its Literary and Historical Context*, Oudtestamentische Studien, Book 39 (Leiden, Germany: Brill Academic, 1999).

governing this prophecy.[9] Sailhamer asserts that Gn 49:1-28 plays a noteworthy role in the overall arrangement of the books accorded to Moses. To Sailhamer, the events that happened in the past are signs of something to come.[10] Heck describes the nature of Jacob's declaration about his sons and how they fully relate with their characters and attitudes. In this article, Heck identifies the metaphors utilized by Jacob and their significance in the life of each son. He also compares Jacob's words to that of the blessings of Moses to each tribe (Deuteronomy 33).[11] Hamilton describes every statement given to each tribe and explains the meaning of each prophecy and their impact on their future.[12] Wenham explains the structure and form of Gn 49:1-28 and describes the genre of the passage as poetic. He explains the textual issues identified in the Hebrew Bible concerning the passage and prescribes options suitable to understand the passage.[13] Sarna presents the nature of the sons of Jacob and their respective declarations and brings to light the important aspects of the words of Jacob to his sons.[14]

Renney describes the nature of Jacob's declaration to his sons (Gn 49:1-28) in conjunction with Moses' blessings about the tribes (Deuteronomy 33). He identifies the

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[9] Howard F. Vos, *Genesis* (Chicago, IL: Moody, 1982); Gerhard Von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1973); Bruce K. Waltke, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001); John H. Walton, *Genesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001); Claus Westermann, *Genesis 36-50: A Commentary* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1984-86); and, Paul Wright, ed., *Genesis: Shepherd's Notes* (Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1997).

[10] John H. Sailhamer, "The Canonical Approach to the OT: Its Effect on Understanding Prophecy," *JETS* 30, no. 3 (September 1987): 307-15.

[11] Joel D. Heck, "A History of Interpretation of Genesis 49 and Deuteronomy 33," *BSac* 147 (January-March l990): 16-31.

[12] Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995).

[13] Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 16-50, WBC*, vol. 2 (Dallas, TX: Word, 1994).

[14] Nahum M. Sarna, *Understanding Genesis*, 1st ed. (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1966).

inheritances each tribe received in light of Jacob and Moses' blessings to the sons and tribes.[15] Josephus describes the unique nature of the inheritances given to the tribes. His perspectives on how the sons of Jacob grew into tribes and finally a great nation are significant.[16]

Procedures for the Study

This thesis examines Gn 49:1-2, 8-12, 22-26, 28, which includes an exegesis of the passage to identify the author's intention for incorporating this extended narrative. The study will address the usage of selected words. It will consult commentaries and journals on Genesis 49 to bring to light the views of other scholars, identify where they agree or disagree, as well as surface their conclusions regarding the chosen text.

This thesis contains six chapters. Chapter two describes the specific nature of OT prophecy, its fulfillment, and the eschatological perspective of prophecy. Chapter three is subdivided into two parts: The first discusses the historical and literary contexts of Genesis 49:1-28. The second discusses the translation of the whole passage; provides an exegetical outline of the declaration concerning Judah and Joseph; and presents a commentary on the declarations about them. Chapter four describes the fulfillment of Jacob's declaration to Judah and Joseph (including Manasseh and Ephraim) in conjunction with Moses' blessings to all of the above tribes as described in Deuteronomy 33. Chapter five touches on the eschatological aspects of Jacob's prophetic declaration

[15] Robert Renney, *The Prophetic Blessings of Jacob and of Moses, Respecting the Twelve Tribes of Israel, Explained and Illustrated: An Argument for the Truth of Divine Revelation* (London: J. G. & F. Rivington, 1832).

[16] William Whiston, trans., *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged*, elect. ed. (Garland, TX: Galaxie Software, 1999).

about Judah and Joseph regarding the coming of the Messiah, "the Shepherd," and the "Stone of Israel." Chapter six summarizes the meaning and the message of Gn 49:1-2, 8-12, 22-26, 28 and presents a culture bearer's theological reflection on Joseph's past predicament with his brothers in Canaan as well as in Egypt (Gn 37; 39-41; 49:23-25). It also presents how most Africans view a person who is blessed by God and how one can soar above the persecutions and afflictions from family and friends. Finally, it highlights theological principles about the need to be faithful to the faithful God in times of difficulties.

Chapter 2

Old Testament Prophecy

The OT comprises a compendium of many prophets whom God used as intermediaries between Him and His people. Some wrote books, which are named after them while others are not attributed with any book but were nevertheless engaged in the prophetic ministry. Although this paper will mainly deal with the latter, it is essential to throw light on the former to present in summary form the distinguishing mark between the two groups.

Forthtelling and Foretelling in the Old Testament

The main similarity between writing prophets and those who did not engage in writing is that God called both to minister to a designated group of people. Their ministry was primarily forthtelling while a portion of it was foretelling, a pronouncement which concerned messianic or eschatological prophecies. Kaiser and Silva see prophecy as mainly forthtelling stating,

> The bulk of prophecy in both the earlier prophets (Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings), the latter prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and the twelve minor prophets), and the New Testament prophets actually involved God's messengers speaking the word of God to a contemporary culture that needed to be challenged to cease its resistance to the word of God. As such, these prophets were "forth-tellers."[1]

Many scholars agree with Kaiser and Silva's assertion. When it comes to prophecy, however, the foretelling aspect cannot be dismissed; and, Genesis 49, being a typical example of a prophetic declaration, has both forthtelling and foretelling.

[1] Walter C. Kaiser and Moisés Silva, *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics: The Search for Meaning* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 139.

Jacob's prediction was not just about the future of his children (foretelling). Most importantly, he reprimands them about their past actions (forthtelling), many of which have punitive repercussions pertaining to their future. Seebass explains that Genesis 49 has two sides: Jacob's perspective and that of his sons. To the speaker, Jacob, the prophecy pertains to the distant future,[2] but to the sons, it is less distant than their father perceives it to be. Seebass established this point and brings one to the view that the forthtelling aspect of Genesis 49 is not as intense as is the foretelling. Leupold views the issue differently from Seebass, stating, "As far as Jacob himself was concerned, the first instance of fulfillment naturally was the occupation of Canaan by the tribes descended from his sons. As far as Israel was concerned, that was the first thing to be realized."[3] Both of these views about Genesis 49, stress its uniqueness since it entails both the forthtelling and foretelling aspects of prophecy. Leupold also suggests a Messianic element undergirding the phrase בְּאַחֲרִית הַיָּמִים "in the last days" (49:1).[4] Consequently, the near replacement of this phrase to verse 10 appears to highlight the dispensation of the Messiah. [5] This period will witness God's promise to Abraham about the abundant

[2] H. Seebass, *"acharith," ThWAT*, 1/2, herausgegeben von G. J. Botterweck und H. Ringgren (Stuttgart, Germany: W. Kohlhammer GmbH, 1971), col. 227.

[3] H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis,* vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1956), 570; and, Carl Armerding, "The Last Words of Jacob: Genesis 49," *BSac* 112, no. 448 (1955): 323-4.

[4] Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis,* 570.

[5] Chapter three of this thesis will focus on the exegesis of Gen 49:1-2, 8-12, 22-26, 28. Regarding 49:10, this paper will not be exhaustive in dealing with every aspect of this verse and for this reason, the following resources will be helpful in providing additional information concerning "Shiloh." K. Smyth, "Gen. xlix, 8-12," *CBQ* 7 (1945): 290-305; J. Coppens, "La benediction de Jacob. Son cadre historique a la lumiere des paralleles ougaritiques," *SVT* 4 (1957): 97-115; E. M. Good, "The 'Blessing' on Judah, Gen. xlix, 8-12," *JBL* 82 (1963): 427-32; John Walton, *From Biblical Text... to Contemporary Life* in The *NIVAC* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001); Bruce Waltke, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001); and, Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis, WBC* (Dallas: Word, 2002).

blessings reserved for his descendants. This promise serves as an assurance of the arrival of the Messianic kingdom. Space will be given to this Messianic prophecy later in this paper (Chap. 5).

In conclusion, the forthtelling and foretelling aspects of Genesis 49 are evident and this paper accepts this dual understanding about Jacob's declaration to his sons. At this stage, it is essential to understand the meaning of the title "prophet and prophecy" and the central force, the Spirit of God, around whom prophetic directions and insights revolve.

The Nature of Old Testament Prophecy

God made a covenant with His people, and to enforce this covenant, there must be regular communication between Himself and them. To make this possible, God called and established special people, the prophets or those who were given the unction to communicate God's plans for His people. Along with their special ministries came special titles that define their uniqueness.

The Title "Prophet"

Kaiser defines the title prophet as, "An individual who received a call from God to be God's spokesperson, often connected with some crisis that was about to occur, and then announced God's message of judgment and/or deliverance to Israel and the nations."[6] To him, its meaning is subject to controversy, because most of the answers to this mystery depend on the root meaning of terms in ancient languages. He states,

[6] Walter C. Kaiser, "Prophet," *Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology,* ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1996), 575.

> Early attempts to explain the meaning of prophet were based on trying to derive the noun from a verbal root. The older Gesenius Lexicon edited by Tregelles hypothecated that the noun "prophet" came from the verb *naba* [נָבַע], in which the original final letter, *ayin*, was softened into an *aleph* (*naba* [נָבָא]); this verb meant "to bubble up" or "boil forth." Hence the prophet was one who entered an ecstatic state of utterance, pouring forth words automatically under divine inspiration. Almost all scholars now reject such a suggestion because it remains unattested and cannot be demonstrated from known rules of philology.[7]

Although the real meaning of the word "prophet" remains an enigma, a close study of the OT will bring out God's perspective regarding the title. Elwell and Comfort say, "As far as the OT is concerned, however, the prophets are forthtellers (declaring the truth about God) by being foretellers (predicting what God will do). Prediction is neither an occasional nor a marginal activity in the OT; it is the way the prophet went about his work."[8]

There are two main passages in the Pentateuch that bring out the meaning of the title "prophet." The first, Ex 7:1-2 states, "Then the Lord said to Moses, 'See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron will be your prophet. You are to say everything I command you, and your brother Aaron is to tell Pharaoh.'" These verses reveal the responsibility of the prophet. Moses, as an envoy of God, declares the divine revelation and passes it to Aaron, who stands as a prophet. Aaron then communicates this revelation to Pharaoh. This stresses the essence that a prophet is a mouthpiece of God just as Aaron was to Moses. The second, Nm 12:6-8 states, "When a prophet of the Lord is among you, I reveal myself to him in visions, I speak to him in dreams. But this is not true of my servant Moses; he is faithful in all my house. With him I speak face to face,

[7] Kaiser, "Prophet," *Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology,* 575.

[8] Walter A. Elwell and Philip Wesley Comfort, "Prophet, Prophetess," *TBD* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 2001), 1086.

clearly and not in riddles; he sees the form of the Lord." The above verse compares Moses to all the prophets during and before the time of Moses. God spoke directly to him, but to other prophets, He communicated through visions and dreams. These two passages in the Pentateuch reveal that a prophet is a person officially chosen by God and he is given a divine message to communicate through diverse means. Easton adds to this definition stating, "The 'prophet' proclaimed the message given to him, as the 'seer' beheld the vision of God (See Nm 12:6, 8). Thus, a prophet was a spokesman for God; he spoke in God's name and by his authority (Ex 7:1). He is the mouth by which God speaks to men (Jer 1:9; Is 51:16), and hence what the prophet says is not of man but of God (2 Pt 1:20, 21; comp. Heb 3:7; Acts 4:25; 28:25)."[9] Having discussed the title "prophet," it is expedient to explicate on the nature of the prophet's call.

The Call of the Prophet

There is no precise rule concerning how each person who prophesied in the OT was called. Some were directly and conspicuously chosen by God to occupy the office of prophet (Samuel, Elisha, Isaiah, Amos, Hosea, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel) while others started prophesying without Scripture defining when and how they were called (Balaam, Elijah, Nathan, and some of the minor prophets). Then, like Jacob, some were not called as prophets, but they had the unction to declare future events before they come to pass. Kaiser states, "It is impossible to demonstrate from the text of Scripture that each person called to be a prophet received a specific call from God; however, that fact may be

[9] M. G. Easton, "prophet," *EBD* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research, 1996), n.p.

explained by the brevity of our records and by the fact that it was not the purpose of Scripture to record all such details."[10]

The OT identifies people like Saul who were not called into the prophetic office, but whom the Spirit moved to prophesy (1 Sm 10:10). Others like David, a king over Israel, were directly called prophets. Yet the office of a prophet was not their main ministry or calling (Acts 2:30). Moses on the other hand was ranked greatly as a prophet and yet functioned as a leader of God's people from captivity (Ex 3:10). In the case of Genesis 49, Jacob, although not a prophet, is seen as prophesying about the future of his children. Yet he was moved by the Spirit to operate in the prophetic office.

Abraham was the first patriarch to be called a prophet in the Bible (Gn 20:7). God personally witnessed to Abimelech, the king of Egypt in a dream about the ministry of Abraham. God called him a prophet and told Abimelech that Abraham would pray for him and he would live. Apart from this verse, nowhere is Abraham called a prophet in the OT. Poole thinks the word "prophet" as it is employed in the above text can be understood as a person cherished by God and very much close to Him. He then makes reference to Ps 105:15 where the prophet is juxtaposed with God's anointed one.[11] Poole's understanding of the word "prophet" in relation to the verse above emphasizes the meaning of the word before the office of the prophet was officially established by God. Calvin agrees with Poole and comments on the same verse, explaining that there is no doubt the word "prophet" is a name given to someone called into the prophetic office.

[10] Kaiser, "The Call of the Prophet," *Baker's Evangelical Dictionary*, 575.

[11] Matthew Poole, *Matthew Poole's Commentary on the Holy Bible* (n.p.: Hendrickson, 1685), Gn 20:7.

Yet to him, it stands to reason that there is a much deeper meaning to the word or name than what it resonates. Like Poole, Calvin believes that the word depicts someone who is consecrated by God and has a close amity with Him. He states, "For since at that time, no Scripture was in existence, God not only made himself known by dreams and visions but chose also to himself rare and excellent men, to scatter abroad the seed of piety, by which the world would become more inexcusable. But since Abraham is a prophet, he is constituted, as it were, a mediator between God and Abimelech."[12] The uniqueness of Abraham's walk with God elevated him to attract God's favor and blessings. He was proven worthy by God in serving as a mediator between God and Abimelech (to pray that Abimelech would live). To assert that the title "prophet" was not used before the time of Samuel is erroneous, and this story in Gn 20:7 attests to this premise. Coffman states,

> The critical allegation that prophet was a term that did not appear until the times of Samuel is ridiculous in the light of what is revealed here. God Himself used the term in a revelation to Abimelech long centuries before Samuel ever lived. There was a period during which the word prophet seems to have fallen into disuse, and it was revived in the times of Samuel. Of course, the radical critical scholars would like to prove that none of the Pentateuch existed before the times of Samuel, but such views should be rejected as sheer nonsense.[13]

Coffman blatantly rebuts the assertion of critical scholars that the events presented in the Pentateuch are not as early as tradition views them to be. He acknowledges the times when it was out of use and that the call and ministry of Samuel revived it. Biblical scholars seem not to see any difference between the prophets who lived before Samuel and during and after him. However, the title of a prophet given to Abraham defines his

[12] John Calvin and John King, *Commentaries on the First Book of Moses, Called Genesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1948), Gen 20:7.

[13] James Burton Coffman, *Genesis 20:7*, Coffman Commentaries on the Old and New Testament (Abilene, TX: Abilene Christian University, 1983-1999).

function as having the capability or unction to pray for Abimelech. On the same level, Jacob's ability to prophesy concerning his sons' future illustrates the authority he has to bless them and pray for their future. Praying for others is a prophet's outstanding ministry.

The responsibility of the prophet or anyone who was moved by the Spirit of God to prophesy is encased in the meaning of the prophetic office. Their message centers on righteousness, which is the foundation of their covenant with the LORD. Jacob received the unction to prophesy in order to instill a righteous life in his sons. Do-Hwa Huh, in his article that brands the OT prophets as preachers, agrees with many other scholars about the prophet's mission of impacting the righteousness of God into their people. He states,

> While there is always the danger of modernizing the Old Testament in seeking to make it a pattern for contemporary preaching, a homiletical theory or tradition has long associated the preacher with the prophet and sought to see in the prophetic utterances both the contents of the sermons and the prophets' methods as the model for subsequent prophets or preachers. Not only are preachers today called to be creative, but they also must follow in a long tradition that goes back to the Hebrew prophets who provided and modeled the power of biblical preaching.[14]

Prophecy concerns the hearer's immediate context that attracts and prepares them for the plan of God about the future. The one prophesying speaks about what is needful for their present audiences. The seal that secures the prophetic mandate is a call that provokes the people to opt for spiritual reformation in every sphere of their lives. It arouses them toward righteousness. To Allen, "prophetic preaching might be called corrective preaching."[15] Baab reacts positively to Allen's statement and explains that the phrase

[14] Do-Hwa Huh, "A New Understanding of Prophetic Preaching" *Evangel* (June 1, 2005): 40; John Albert Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons* (New York: Harper, 1944), 18-21; and, Ronald E. Sleeth, *God's Word and Our Words: Basic Homiletics* (Atlanta, GA: John Knox, 1986), 11.

[15] Ronald J. Allen, "The Relationship between the Pastoral and the Prophetic in Preaching," *Encounter* 49, no. 3 (1988): 173, 181.

"corrective preaching" crops up from the message of doom by the prophets that alarms people to arise and shine in righteousness.[16]

The messages of the prophets were not only concerning the righteousness of God, but they turned the attention of the people to the will and work of God. Do-Hwa Huh states,

> The prophets in ancient Israel were not primarily teachers of ethics. Their primary function in Israel was to illumine where and when God was at work in his world. In Isaiah 10, for example, the prophet maintains that God is at work in the ascendancy of the Assyrian empire. God says, "Ah, Assyria, the rod of my anger, the staff of my fury. Against a godless nation I send him, and against the people of my wrath I command him" (v.v. 5-6). Isaiah is pointing out how God can be seen, even in the brutal judgment of Israel.[17]

The prophets and those who prophesy were called to revive and exhort their people about the work of God, which was to guard the hearts of the people from desecrating the LORD's covenant, which He had with their fathers. Having this covenant as their benchmark, Barker explains that the prophecy reminded the people about their responsibility to God and others.[18]

In addition to reviving the hearts of their own people, they also gave prophecies about their future (foretelling). These prophecies have a near future or a distant future fulfillment. 1 Samuel 3:11-14 reveals the nature of a near future prophecy given by God through the boy Samuel about Eli, his family, and Israel. Deuteronomy 18:18, 19 presents a distant future prophecy about a prophet whom God will raise to establish His will among His people. This prophecy is believed to have been fulfilled in the first advent of

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[16] Otto J. Baab, *Prophetic Preaching: A New Approach* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1958), 13.

[17] Do-Hwa Huh, "A New Understanding of Prophetic Preaching," 40.

[18] David G. Barker, "Messages of Judgment and Hope: The Prophets" [article online] http:// www.campbellbaptist.org/institute/old_testament_survey_07a.pdf; (accessed 7 December 2012).

Christ. Having understood the responsibility of the prophet or someone used by God to prophesy, it is worthwhile to understand how mere men like them could catch a glimpse of the future before it happens. The question worth asking is: What is the secret behind the prophet's outstanding gift to foresee future events?

The Power of the Spirit of God

The uniqueness of the OT prophets cannot be dismissed as well as the awesomeness of the Spirit of God in directing these men to inscribe and propagate His purposes for His people. Archer, in writing about the topic "Inspiration of the Old Testament" in conjunction with 1 Pet 1:10-11, states,

> The Holy Spirit was in these Old Testament authors, and that he guided them into composing words of infallible truth sure of fulfillment, even though the human authors themselves did not fully know all that these divinely guided words actually signified. Because of verses like these, in interpreting Scripture we must seek to establish not merely the intention of the human author who wrote the words, but also (and more important) the intention of the divine Author who guided in the composition of those words.[19]

This assertion buttresses the notion that the Spirit of God guided the OT prophets to inscribe His will. Indisputably, the Spirit guided the limited minds of the human agents and breathed upon them the force that impelled them to know beyond their capability and also to perceive revelations beyond their realm of understanding. They received divine messages from above and relayed these to their audiences as the Spirit guided and directed. Freeman who agrees with Archer states,

> The true prophet insists that his messages do not originate in his own heart nor result from his own personal reflections, but they are divinely revealed counsels through the Spirit of God …. The prophet, under a divine anointing by God's

[19] Gleason L. Archer, Jr., *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, rev. ed. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1974), 29.

> Spirit, declares the word of the Lord received from the Spirit by inspiration or revelation. Sometimes it may run counter to his own preference (Jon 1-4). Often it is not fully comprehended by the speaker himself (Dn 7:15; 12:8; 1 Pt 1:10-11).[20]

Freeman views OT prophecy as a ministry that gives credence to the essence and uniqueness of God's relationship with His people. The person who is under the Spirit of God's leading does not always agree to the Lord's commands, but by virtue of his office and call, he acts in accordance with God's designed specifications concerning the prophecy. Like Jonah, a prophet can withstand God's divine will for a while, yet the presence of the Spirit of God in him impels him to stop at nothing until he fulfills what the LORD pleases. This willful disobedience does not crop up from the prophet's inability to comprehend God's message, but from his unwillingness to accept God's will. People who operated in the prophetic unction were given access to obtain divine inspiration and revelation and yet were also given the leeway to manipulate, alter, and reject the message. They have the latitude to reject and refuse to speak in the Name of the LORD. Their will and desires were not obscured or possessed by the Spirit of God so as to be controlled and manipulated like puppets. Rather, they were moved by the Spirit in accordance with their own freewill.

Goldingay, in his study on Ezekiel 37, explains about the essence and presence of the Spirit in the OT. He establishes the notion that the symbolic use of the wind in the passage advocates the presence of the Spirit of God, which is packaged with mystery, unpredictability, and an unusual force of God.[21] This unusual force (the Spirit) from God

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[20] Hobart E. Freeman, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Prophets* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1968), 73.

[21] John Goldingay, "Was the Holy Spirit Active in Old Testament Times? What was New About the Christian Experience of God?" *Ex Auditu* 12 (1996): 15.

captivates, empowers, and comes upon the men of God to predict mysteries regarding the future.

Prophecy and Fulfillment

The beauty and essence of a prophetic declaration is contingent upon its fulfillment. As already mentioned, prophecies are made up of two kinds: written and spoken. Both are expressed with their fulfillment in view. Most of OT prophecies have their fulfillment in the New Testament. Some were fulfilled in the OT itself.

A Brief History about Prophecy and Fulfillment

Over the years, many scholars viewed fulfillment of prophecy as having two sides: Literal and metaphorical fulfillment. Childs claims that with the presence of diverse Jewish scholastic forces against fulfillment of OT prophecy in the NT, many early Christian apologists embraced the allegorical aspect of the fulfillment of prophecy to reconcile discrepancies.[22] While the literal approach to prophecy is encouraged, the allegorical aspect of it should be embraced as well. This is because some of the prophecies in the OT are allegorical in nature. History reveals the contention between the Alexandrian and the Antiochian schools concerning biblical interpretation. The former espouses an allegorical interpretation, while the latter defends the literal handling of the text. The period of the Enlightenment fostered the rise of many scholars with the passion to concentrate on biblical prophecies and their fulfillment. Luther's exegesis of the prophecies in the OT centered only on Christology, which meant to him that OT

[22] Brevard S. Childs, "Prophecy and Fulfillment: A Study of Contemporary Hermeneutics," *Interpretation* 12 (1958): 259.

prophecies directly related to Christ.[23] Calvin approached OT prophecies differently from Luther. To Wallace and Diestel, Calvin understood the work of Christ as a direct display of what he called "historical institutions of Israel," which predates Christ's kingdom.[24]

Schleiermacher posits a more positive approach to prophecy and fulfillment. He distinguished prophecies into two groups: the first is given to an individual and the second he calls "Messianic prophecy." He explains the former as dealing with the individual's future, but the focus is not on the degree of accuracy regarding its fulfillment. However, the latter does not focus on the particulars about the prophecy, rather upon the universal aspects of it; hence, the reason it is of much greater value than prophecy merely to an individual.[25] Vischer's book underscores his understanding concerning prophecy and fulfillment in connection with the relationship between the OT and the NT.[26] Childs explains that Vischer embraces Jesus as the Object of the OT.[27] Eichrodt expresses disappointment about Vischer's inability to embrace with certainty the historical premise of prophetic revelation, which has played a conspicuous role regarding what he term as "the ambiguities of the empirical world." He again emphasizes prophecy and fulfillment as strictly related to each other, believing that both steadily cropped up in

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[23] Heinrich Bornkamm, *Luther und das Alte Testament* (Tubingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 1948), 88-90.

[24] R. S. Wallace, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Word and Sacrament* (Edinburgh, Scotland: Oliver and Boyd 1953), 42-44; and, Ludwig Diestel, *Geschichte des Alten Testaments* (Jena: Hermann Dufft, 1869), 136, 267.

[25] H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewart, eds., *The Christian Faith* (Edinburgh, Scotland: T&T Clark, 1928), 103.

[26] Wilhelm Vischer, *The Witness of the Old Testament to Christ*, vol. 1 (London: Lutterworth, 1949).

[27] Childs, "Prophecy and Fulfillment," 261-2.

history.[28] According to Childs, Baumgärtel refutes all the above assertions about prophecy and fulfillment and presents the idea of "promise" as the factor absent in all of the solutions presented above. According to him, it is vital to accept the fact that the idea of promise should be separated from prophecy. He sees the former as sacrosanct in both Testaments and it is substantiated by the popular phrase, "I am the Lord thy God," a promise fulfilled only in Jesus Christ.[29] Childs states,

> Prophecy, however, is the humanly conditioned attempt of the Old Testament prophets to understand when and how the divine promise would be fulfilled. Promise is unchangeable and absolute in truth whereas prophecy is relative. Since the fulfillment of the promise is known only in Christ, the New Testament's witness to him becomes the yardstick for judging what in the Old Testament is a testimony to this promise. The Old Testament is theologically relevant only when it relates itself existentially to the promise fulfilled in Christ. Baumgärtel contends that the formula "prophecy and fulfillment" must be abandoned as a means of relating the Testaments since it is an attempt to demonstrate logically from the standpoint of the Old Testament the promise of Christ. The method is theologically false in trying to pass from the Old Testament to the New on the basis of empirical data, and is, moreover, historically unconvincing and outmoded.[30]

It is an erroneous practice for one to select verses from the OT to use as individual prooftexts to validate their fulfillment in the NT. On the contrary, Dodd explains that OT citations can be acknowledged and embraced as pointers that define an entire biblical context. Furthermore, he proposed that the conjecture opted by other scholars undergirding this use of the OT by the NT is a "certain understanding of history, which is

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[28] Walther Eichrodt, "Zur Frage der theologischen Exegese des A. T," *Theologische Blätter*, 17 (1938): 74-76; idem, *Theologie des A. T.?* I (1948), 257-9; idem, *Israel in der Weissagung des A. T.* (1951); and, idem, "Ist die typologische Exegese sachgemässe Exegese?" *Theologische Literaturzeitung*, 81 (1956): 641-3.

[29] Childs, "Prophecy and Fulfillment," 263.

[30] Ibid.

substantially that of the prophets themselves."[31] Childs adds that it is because of the need to get into the realm of understanding biblical history that the study about the word "fulfillment" is crucial.[32]

Understanding the Word "Fulfill"

The history surrounding prophecy and its fulfillment indicates a myriad of complicated ideas and assertions on the part of scholars. These complications concern not these prophecies, but mainly the nature of their fulfillment. At this juncture, it is essential to expound on the word "fulfill."

The Qal-stem of Hebrew verb מלא means "to fill" or "to be full." Examples of it in the OT are: Fill the earth (Gn 1:28); the days of her purifying be fulfilled (Lv 12:4); the train of Yahweh fills the temple (Is 6:1); the woman, following Elisha's command, takes empty vessels and pours oil in them until they are full (2 Kgs 4:6). Childs explicates that when the word is used with the *qal* and the *niphal* stem, it underlines their spatial implication, which expresses a temporal sense.[33] In the Hebrew sense, when the word is used in relation to days and years, it is addressed as being full, filled, or fulfilled. Examples are: Rebekah's days were full that she could give birth (Gn 25:24); forty days were full before the process of embalming Joseph is completed (Gn 50:3); following a certain period of separation, the Nazirite's days are said to be full that he may return to a normal life (Nm 6:13).

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[31] C. H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures* (London: Nisbet, 1952), 127-9.

[32] Childs, "Prophecy and Fulfillment: A Study of Contemporary Hermeneutics," 264.

[33] Ibid.

The uniqueness of the Hebrew notion and thought is established with the use of the word in its temporal sense. Pedersen and other scholars explain that time is understood in the area of quality rather than temporality.[34] Hebrew thought is motivated by their interest for a suitable moment as well as holding chronological timings in high esteem. The sequential element of time is noted by days, months, and years. Childs states,

> In the great majority of cases *ml'* appears in reference to days or years in order to designate the filling or completing of chronological time. *ml'* is never used with *'eth* or *mo'edh* to express the filling of an appointed time. Occasionally, however, the chronological element is replaced by a usage of "day" bordering on *'eth* (Jer 25:34). The uniqueness of the term *ml'* used in expressing chronological time rests in the fact that this time is viewed as a totality.[35]

The context and content of a given prophecy define whether the time must be embraced as chronological or opportune. In the Hebrew mindset, one cannot separate time from its complete content if he desires to explain its sequential element. Orelli responds to this notion and explains that the Hebrew outlined events of the past in terms of impending events and the events reserved in the future in terms of that encased in the past.[36]

A complete understanding of the word "fulfill" can be deduced from the *piel* verb stem in conjunction with the verb מלא. Since the *piel* stem can reveal the aspect of plurality in the critical implication of "to fill," the filling of words can be included in the usage of the term. Examples of these are: The word which had been spoken concerning the house of Eli was *filled* when Solomon expelled Abiathar from office (1 Kgs 2:27).

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[34] J. Pedersen, *Israel*, I/II (London: Oxford University Press, 1926), 487-8; J. Marsh, *The Fullness of Time* (London: Nisbet, 1952), 19-20; and, T. Boman, *Das hebräische Denken im Vergleich mit dem Griechischen?* (1954), 109-10.

[35] Childs, "Prophecy and Fulfillment," 265.

[36] C. von Orelli, *Die hebräischen Synonyma der Zeit und Ewigkeit* (Leipzig, Germany: A. Lorentz, 1871), 14.

Childs states,

> The true word possesses an independent existence since it is a part of the totality towards which it moves. If it is a filled word, it already shares in the reality. It hastens toward its end and cannot be stopped (cf. Hab 2:3). An empty word returns void…it never possessed reality. The true word continues until it forms a totality with that reality of which it is already a part. Word and sign have much in common since they both point toward a totality while already possessing a portion of the anticipated reality. A word filled full to form a whole is fulfilled.[37]

Childs' understanding of the word "fulfill" brings to view the biblical meaning regarding the cultural differences with the use of "fulfillment." Fulfillment should not be seen in terms of identical agreement in relation to the prophecy and its physical manifestation. He states, "It is non-Hebraic thinking which tries to relate prophecy and fulfillment in terms of exactness of correspondence based on a Greek theory of truth."[38] The Greek value of fulfillment is distinct from the Hebrew perspective. The latter connects the two as one and their relation is never contingent upon an external force. Childs explains that the biblical connection that exists between prophecy and fulfillment is a formidable task, since today's view concerning the topic is antithetical to the ancient thought.[39] The disappointment of scholars in completely understanding the marriage between prophecy and its fulfillment reveals that both should not be separated as two different issues. Rather, they should be seen as one whole event. Childs describes this marriage as "quasi–independent" action that births its fulfillment. To him, "It is not just descriptive, but causative."[40]

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[37] Childs, "Prophecy and Fulfillment," 267.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Childs, "Prophecy and Fulfillment," 267.

This concept employed by Childs is embraced as a well-suited description of the word "fulfillment" as it is used in the Bible. It underscores the reality of a spoken word as corresponding precisely to its fulfillment. Though the spoken word cannot be perfectly akin to its fulfillment, they are parcels of the same reality. What the OT stresses is a standard that will determine a true or false prophecy (Dt 13:1-5; 18:22; Jer 28:9). There is no distinct testing standard in determining whether a prophecy or word is "full or filled." Childs says, "The Hebrew concept is naive and an event is fulfilled when it is full. One determines it by its content, and when it is full, it evidences by itself the fullness. Because the Hebrew mentality could not abstract fulfillment from its content, the Hebrew saw no problem at this point. Fullness need not be tested since it authenticates itself."[41]

The OT affirms without doubt that the fulfillment of a given prophecy underlines its truth. The OT scriptures provide two criteria for determining the truth about a word. First, if it does not establish itself in the area of "filling" then it is not a sure word from Yahweh (Dt 18:22). Second, if it "fills" itself, the value of its substance must agree to the substance of the spoken prophecy or revelation. The writer of the Kings outlines in detailed form all the prophecies that are fulfilled and, surprisingly, they all agree with the spoken prophecy given in the past (1 Kgs 8:20, 12:15b; 2 Kgs 23:6-18).

A prophetic message is determined not only by the "fullness" of the spoken word but, also with the acknowledgment of total correspondence between the spoken word and its fulfillment. The NT Gospels clarify that the OT prophetic words get its "filling and fullness" in Christ Jesus. A relatively similar view and understanding is held by a Roman Catholic scholar, Becker, who advocates for a Messianic hope and inkling with regards to

[41] Ibid., 268.

the calling and ministry of OT prophets.[42] Childs states categorically that, "There is no objective criterion possible by which this can be tested. The person of Jesus Christ himself as the fullness of the word is self-authenticating. Because the Evangelists have been confronted by this wholeness, they witness to it. The purpose of the OT citation is to show just how the prophetic word worked in history to bring about its fulfillment."[43] Having understood the meaning of the word to "fulfill" in relation to the Hebrew, Greek, and modern thought, it is essential to revisit the amity between the one prophesying and the manner wherewith it will be fulfilled. Bornemann explains that the one prophesying declares the word, which is the will of God. He then communicates this divine message to his context, which is his current situation. The truth is that the speaker's present circumstance cannot be divorced from that of the past, and this demands a marriage between understanding the present and the reinterpretation of the past. Regarding the future, it means the promise that this purpose would be inevitably fulfilled.[44]

OT prophecy is designed to be fulfilled at an appointed time, but there is the need to also delve into the eschatological aspect of biblical prophecy, which reaches its fullness in Christ and that of the future beyond Christ. Bornemann states,

> The figure of the Messiah stemmed from the Israelite understanding of kingship as a covenant function. It was only one of several "images" employed by the prophets to express their certainty that God's covenant purpose would be realized and that his kingdom would be established. When the prophets spoke of the Messiah they spoke always to a specific historical situation interpreted in light of

[42] J. Becker, *Messianic Expectation in the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 95: Becker says, "Messianic expectation is a matter not of isolated prophetic messages but of the history of Israel."

[43] Childs, "Prophecy and Fulfillment," 269.

[44] Robert Bornemann, "On Prophecy and Fulfillment," *Lutheran Quarterly* (1 November 1955): 331.

> the covenant, and so the messianic expectation was expressed in terms of their assurance that God would fulfill his covenant purpose, and not in terms of prediction.[45]

In view of the function and message of the prophecies given in the OT and their fulfillment, Bornemann underscores several conclusions as being essential to an understanding of prophecy and fulfillment. They are as follows:

1. *The relation of prophecy and fulfillment is to be understood in terms of the covenant purpose of God.* The function of OT prophecy was the proclamation of the word of God to its own day. The prophet makes clear to his contemporaries the purpose of God as it affected them. The prophets bore witness to this purpose, it can be said that they bore witness (albeit indirect) to Christ, who is both its fulfiller and fulfillment.
2. *The starting point for understanding the prophetic word is Jesus Christ and not the prophetic word itself.* As the fulfillment of the purpose of God, Christ is also its revealer. Apart from him the prophetic word is a hidden word.
3. *The event of Christ is to be understood in the light of the prophetic word.* In Christ the prophetic word is confirmed; the OT enables us to see in Christ the fulfillment of the purpose of God. What happens in the gospel is made clear by what happened in the past, for past and present are organically related in the purpose of God. Therefore, prophecy becomes an integral part of our understanding of the person and function of Christ, of the nature of the New Covenant, and of the church, the New Israel. [46]

Inasmuch as one cannot discredit the reality and essence of fulfillment with regards to what has been prophesied in the past, there is a need to know that there are OT

[45] Bornemann, "On Prophecy and Fulfillment," 336.

[46] Ibid., 337-8.

prophecies yet to be fulfilled. These are grouped under what is called eschatological prophecies.

Eschatological Events

Since this paper discusses OT prophecies and their fulfillment, this section will present a brief discussion of eschatology as it relates to OT prophecies and their fulfillment in the NT. In addition to this is the last and final days, popularly called "The Day of the LORD."

Finger defines eschatology as "The teachings concerning the last things in world history."[47] The word comes from the Greek etymology ἔσχατος meaning "last" or "final."[48] Eschatology deals with the OT prophecies that have not been fulfilled yet. Finger approaches eschatology in two distinct ways: The first focuses on the last events destined for the future and the second understands what is to come and highlights its essence for Christianity today.[49]

A clear-cut understanding of the prophecies that are yet to be fulfilled is a difficult interpretative issue. This challenge does not dismiss the clarity of God's word. The word of God is perfect, but humans studying His word are not. This human imperfection poses a challenge to understand what is clearly presented in the Bible concerning the last days.

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[47] Thomas Finger, "Eschatology," *HBD*, ed. Trent C. Butler (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1991), 432.

[48] William Arndt, F. Wilbur Gingrich, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature: A Translation and Adaption of the Fourth Revised and Augmented Edition of Walter Bauer's Griechisch-Deutsches Worterbuch Zu Den Schrift En Des Neuen Testaments Und Der Ubrigen Urchristlichen Literatur* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 313.

[49] Finger, "Eschatology," 432.

For instance, the prophecy of the prophet Joel concerning the last days (2:28-3:1, 2), has two sides: the first (2: 28, 29) was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost. Peter testified to affirm this fulfillment. He said, "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel" (Acts 2:16). The second (2:30-3:1, 2), should also be taken literally as is the first according to Peter. The manifestation of "wonders in the sky and on the earth, blood, fire, and columns of smoke; the sun turning into darkness and the moon into blood, before the great and awesome day of the LORD appears" are all yet to be fulfilled.

A phrase that is connected to the last days and frequently employed in the OT is יוֹם יְהוָה "the day of the Lord." When prophets like Isaiah, Joel, and Malachi use this phrase, they usually refer to something connected to the last days of the Messiah. The earliest use of this phrase can be found in Isaiah 2 where the prophet says, "For a day belongs to the LORD of hosts shall be against every proud person, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low."[50] The phrase "a day belongs to the LORD" in verse 12 has a nexus with what "shall come to pass in the last days" (Isa 2:2). It is undeniably clear that the context of this passage reveals an eschatological event that is still awaiting fulfillment. Many other scholars see this phrase as not concerning a distant future but a near one.[51] The whole of Isaiah 2 concerns the ministry and mission of the

[50] Isa 2:12, KJV.

[51] The Majority of critical scholars will also see יוֹם יְהוָה as pertaining to a near future (a time closer to when these prophecies were given). Carroll and Blenkinsopp argue that these prophecies reached their fulfillment during the post-exilic periods (R. Carroll, *When Prophecy Failed: Cognitive Dissonance in Prophetic Traditions of the Old Testament* [New York: Seabury, 1979], 205; and, J. Blenkinsopp, *Prophecy and Canon* [Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977], 128-38). Irrefutably, the ancient Israelite had a different notion concerning "the day of the LORD" as compared to what the LORD meant when He gave them the words. A prophecy that was agreed to have been fulfilled in the past may have its literal culmination or fullness in the distant future yet to be fulfilled. The thoughts and ways of the LORD are higher and greater than that of man (Is 55). A great majority of the OT prophecies remain yet to be literally fulfilled.

second advent of the Messiah. Keil and Delitzsch appreciably comment on Is 2:2 stating, "The expression 'the last days' (*acharith hayyamim,* "the end of the days"), which does not occur anywhere else in Isaiah, is always used in an eschatological sense. It never refers to the course of history immediately following the time being, but invariably indicates the furthest point in the history of this life–the point which lies on the outermost limits of the speaker's horizon."[52] Martin agrees with Keil and Delitzsch, saying, "In the Millennium, people everywhere will realize that God's revelation is foundational to their lives. They will want to know it (He will teach us) and to live according to it (walk in it)."[53] Both groups of authors underscore the far future component of Is 2:2. Isaiah prophesied about the future glorification that will complete every event in history. Moreover, this future event will establish the manifestation of the Messiah's last reign on the earth and His exaltation over the whole earth.

Another early use of the phrase "day of the LORD" is in Am 5:18-20. The author renders the phrase as futuristic, but not eschatological. Amos seems to be prophesying about an imminent doom that is coming upon the people he was called to minister to. Wright assumes the phrase "the day of the LORD" was popular in those days in relation to the prophetic office and that Amos' audience or hearers would understand it as "the day when Yahweh would intervene to put Israel at the head of the nations, irrespective of Israel's faithfulness to Him."[54] The prophet Amos declares, "Woe to you who long for

[52] Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament,* vol. 7, trans. James Martin (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002), 74.

[53] John A. Martin, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, eds. John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck, and Dallas Theological Seminary (Wheaton, IL: Victor, 1985), 1038.

[54] J. S. Wright, "Day of the Lord," *NBD*, 3rd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1982), 261.

the day of the LORD! Why do you long for the day of the LORD? That day will be darkness, not light."[55] The phrase "the day of the LORD" is about God chastening and judging His people whether the prophecy has already been fulfilled or has yet to be fulfilled.

Blaising sees no difference between the popular opinion about the phrase in the Western school of thought and the Augustinian school of thought.[56] Exposing his view about future events, Augustine writes,

> The whole church of the true God holds and professes the belief that Christ will come down from Heaven to judge the living and the dead. This is what we call *the last day*, the day of the divine judgment. We also call it *the last time*, for it is not certain how many days this judgment will take, since anyone … knows that the word *day* is often used in them to mean time. Also when we speak of the day of God's judgment we add the word *last* or *final* for God is judging even now.[57]

Augustine unequivocally understands the phrase "the day of the LORD" to be eschatological in and of itself. Augustine composed some letters to Hesychius wherein he detailed his eschatological ideas. In them, he quoted numerous biblical texts that highlight the phrase "the day of the LORD." A typical example is 1 Thes 5:1-5, where Paul reminded his audiences about the "day of the Lord" that will unexpectedly come. Augustine comments on these verses and interchanged the phrase "the last day" for "the day of the Lord." To Augustine, these terms are epithets of what he calls "the judgment complex" that will include the second advent of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, and

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[55] Amos 5:18, NIV.

[56] Craig A. Blaising, "Theme and Pattern in Biblical Theology: Traditional Views of the Day of the Lord," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 169 (January-March 2012): 3.

[57] Augustine, *De cimiate Dei* 20.1, in *Augustine*, *The City of God against the Pagans*, trans. R. W. Dyson (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 965.

the final judgment. Augustine also sees the phrase "the day of the Lord" as "the end time or the end of the world," which is a juxtaposition of his most popular distinction between time and eternity. Coupled to the above terms, Augustine also employed the phrase "the day of judgment," which he drew from Jesus' judgment statements against the Galilean cities in Mt 11:22, 24. Peter later used this phrase to mean "the day of the Lord" in 2 Peter 3.[58] Hodge expressed his thoughts concerning "the day of the Lord" and exposed his understanding of the final judgment as a time in the future when the eternal destiny of man and angels shall be determined and publicly manifested.[59]

The eschatological sense of the term "the day of the LORD" as used by the prophets in the OT is also embraced by other scholars besides Augustine and Hodge. Cooper, a biblical scholar, in one of his profound essays "The Judgment, or Judgments," asserts that the term "the day of the Lord" is everything about "the whole of the millennial dispensation."[60] Cooper connects "the day of the Lord" to the thousand year reign of Christ. He sees all the prophecies about this term as having everything to do with the Second Advent of Christ and how He will reign as King of kings in the world to come. In addition to Cooper's millennial understanding about "the day of the Lord," the common premillennial understanding about the term "the day of the Lord" in the early twentieth century was underlined in "The Scofield Study Bible" notes wherein it states,

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[58] Augustine, *Epistulae (ad Hesychius)* 197, 199. For a contemporary English translation see *Saint Augustine, Letters*, trans. Wilfrid Parsons, vol. 4 of *The Fathers of the Church* (New York: Fathers of the Church, 1955), 347-50, 356-401.

[59] Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1872-1873; reprint, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1973), 3:845-46.

[60] J. T. Cooper, "The Judgment, or Judgments," in *The Second Coming of Christ: Premillennial Essays of the Prophetic Conference Held in the Church of the Holy Trinity, New York City*, ed. Nathaniel West (Chicago, IL: Revell, 1879), 247.

"The day of Jehovah (called, also, 'that day' and the 'great day') is that lengthened period of time beginning with the return of the Lord in glory, and ending with the purgation of the heavens and the earth by fire preparatory to the new heavens and the new earth (Is 65:17-19; 66:22; 2 Pt 3:18; Rv 21:1)."[61]

Scofield sees the phrase "the day of the Lord" as encompassing everything about the second advent of Christ and events that both accompany or ensue it. In 1968, Mason, a biblical scholar, wrote an article called "The Day of Our Lord Jesus Christ" that effectively touches on the eschatological aspects entailing the term "the day of the Lord." He sees this popular day as everything involving the taking away of the Church and the judgments that follow it. He asserts that this event, "Extends from the translation of the church to the creation of the new heavens and new earth, after the close of the millennial age, and includes the period of the tribulation, the whole millennium, and the judgments following the millennium."[62]

Early biblical scholars and writers like Gunkel and Gressmann tried to dismiss the eschatological sense of the phrase. To them, the term originates from ANE cultures. This view seems unlikely since there are no exact verbal parallels in Babylonian, Phoenecian, Canaanite, or other alleged sources that agree to their claim.[63] Notwithstanding, Stuart

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[61] C. I. Scofield, ed., *The Scofield Study Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1917), 1349 n.

[62] Clarence E. Mason Jr., "The Day of Our Lord Jesus Christ," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 125 (July-September 1968), 357.

[63] See Hermann Gunkel, *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit* (Göttingen, Germany: Vanderhoeck & Ruprecht, 1895) and Hugo Gressmann, *Der Ursprung der israelitisch-jüdischen Eschatologie* (Göttingen, Germany: Vanderhoeck & Ruprecht, 1905). For an overview of interpretations of the day of the Lord see Ladislav Cerny, *The Day of the Lord and Some Recent Problems* (Prague: Nakladem Filosoficke Fakulty University Karlovy, 1948), 27-52. See also Kevin Cathcart, "The Day of Yahweh," in *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 2:84-85.

expatiates on the source of the Day of Yahweh concept and states, "The prophetic concept of the Day of the Yahweh may be influenced by a tradition not uniquely Israelite, but represented in a number of disparate Sumerian, Hittite, Egyptian, and Semitic texts from a variety of places and times."[64] He adds that an ANE tradition claims that a king by reason of his ultimate power and strength could overcome an entire war of conquest in a single day.[65] According to Stuart, the term "the Day of the LORD" came out of a larger context, which did not have an eschatological notion, nevertheless, it was later adopted by Israel then it came to be understood as prophetic or eschatological.

The uniqueness of the term "the day of the Lord" to OT prophecy cannot discount Mowinckle's hypothetical Yahweh-enthronement festival cult of Israel even though it has fallen out of favor today. Mowinckle believes that some of the psalms emphasize the rule of Yahweh as the Lord of all the earth.[66] Moreover, Von Rad asserts that the holy war traditions of ancient Israel birthed the term "the day of the Lord." He evaluated many textual references to this term and saw these texts as describing military engagements and the disparaging elements involving warfare.[67] Weiss challenges Von Rad's position by believing that some texts ignored by Von Rad concerning "the day of the Lord" negate what he is positing. He believes Amos 5:18 has no nexus with the element of war, but the

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[64] Douglas Stuart, "The Sovereign's Day of Conquest," *BASOR* 220/21 (December 1975-February 1976): 159.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Sigmund Mowinckel, *He That Cometh*, trans. G. W. Anderson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1956), 132-33. A defense of Mowinckel's view is given in John Gray, "The Day of Yahweh: A Study in Cultic Experience and Eschatological Prospect," *Svensk Exe-getiskArsbok* 39 (1974): 5-37.

[67] Gerhard von Rad, "The Origin of the Concept of the Day of Yahweh," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 4 (1959): 97-108.

reference of darkness reveals what he terms as "the phenomenon of theophany."[68] Weiss' understanding is akin to Mowinckel's perspective about the enthronement of Yahweh and his suggestive epiphany notion about "the day of the Lord." According to Weiss, "Theophany constituted the key idea in the day of the Lord, as presented in a number of contexts that include but are not limited to holy war."[69] In a nutshell, the phrase "the day of the LORD" was used in the past as a day of victory and awesome accomplishments by the ANE cultures; but, more importantly, it underlines events that will accomplish God's purpose and plan in the future. The day of the LORD will serve as a divine accomplishment of all that God has done, is doing, and will do in the future.

The prophetic ministry was an office designed by God to reveal His thoughts, plans, and purposes to His people. God called prophets to serve as mediators between Him and His people. These spoke to their people about issues that related to the immediate concerns of the people as well as those that concerned events earmarked for the distant future. The power that controlled these prophets to understand mysteries yet to happen was the Spirit of God. He moved and brooded over these prophets to know, understand, and deliver the messages that God gave them. An understanding of the nature of OT prophecy serves as a precursor for a critical analysis of Gn 49:1-28, which encapsulates everything about the purpose of God for Israel's past, future, and the last days. The next chapter is divided into two parts. The first part will deal with the historical and literal context of the book of Genesis as well as the passage under discussion. The second part will focus on the analysis of Gn 49:1-2, 8-12, 22-26, 28.

[68] Meir Weiss, "The Origin of the 'Day of the Lord'—Reconsidered," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 37 (1966): 29-30.

[69] Ibid.

Chapter 3

The Declaration of Jacob to Judah and Joseph

PART 1: Historical and Literary Contexts

To ascertain an overall understanding of Gn 49:1-2, 8-12, 22-26, 28, it is expedient to deal with its placement in the context of the book of Genesis. This chapter will focus on the following: the historical context, the literary context, critical approaches, and a review of the surrounding context of Genesis 49.

Historical Context

The book of Genesis describes the beginning and the source of life. Brodie calls Genesis a book that defines the origin of the universe, the human race, civilization, and Israel.[1] To Gibson, the Hebrew Bible opts for the name *Bereshith*, which agrees with the first phrase that opens the book, "In the beginning."[2] Even though the book itself does not state the name of its author, this paper embraces Mosaic authorship that accepts the early dating of the book of Genesis. Liberal scholars opt for a late dating around the fifth to ninth centuries, whereas others opt for a thirteenth century dating. A close study of biblical history in relation to the traditional view reveals that Moses lived during the fifteenth century BCE. His life is tied in to the exodus. Bright supports the thirteenth century dating, arguing that the Israelites were in Egypt during the reign of Sethos (1305-

[1] Thomas L. Brodie, *Genesis as Dialogue: A Literary, Historical, and Theological Commentary* (New York: Oxford University, 2001), 5.

[2] John C. L. Gibson, *Genesis: Volume 1* in The Daily Study Bible Series (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 1.

1290).[3] Merrill proposes a fifteenth century dating and calculates this using, among others, the historical notes of 1 Kings 6:1, which states that the exodus happened 480 years before the founding of Solomon's temple.[4] The audience of Moses is believed to be people who were already in the Promised Land or *en route* to occupy it. They comprise newly formed nation that needed to be informed about the God who created and delivered them from Egyptian bondage. This was necessary to encourage those who lost their self-identity and are bereft of hope regarding the future. Garrett thinks that majority of critical scholars do not propose Mosaic authorship, yet admire the integrated form and nature of its message for they believe that Genesis has a unified message with a unified background and purpose.[5]

There is no certainty regarding whether Moses wrote everything in the Torah. Yet, it is not wrong to assume that he wrote most of it. The LORD commanded Moses to write down many things or words "in a book" (Ex 17:14; 34:27). The Pentateuch reports that "Moses wrote all the words of the LORD" (Ex 24:4). He wrote about the wilderness journeys (Nm 33:2) and the "law" (Dt 31:9). David embraces Moses as the writer of the law (1 Kgs 2:3). During Josiah's time, they discovered the "Book of the Law of the LORD given through Moses" (2 Chr 34:14).[6] In the NT, Jesus made use of the phrase "the book of Moses" (Mk 12:26; Lk 20:37) and sometimes mentions the commands of

[3] For a detailed discussion on this, see John Bright, *A History of Israel* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1981), 123. Elwell explains that the dating of Genesis is a subject of great controversy (Walter A. Elwell and Philip Wesley Comfort, eds., "The Book of Genesis,"*TBD* [Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 2001], 521).

[4] See Eugene Merrill, *Kingdom of Priest*: A History of Old Testament Israel (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1987), 67-68.

[5] Duane A. Garrett, "The Theology of Genesis," *EDBT*, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1997), n.p.

[6] NLT.

Moses (Mt 8:4; 19:8; Mk 7:10; cf. Lk 16:31; 24:44). Finally, Jesus emphatically identifies Moses as the author of the Torah (Jn 5:46).

Critical Approaches to the Study of the Book of Genesis

Critical scholarship has challenged the traditional view that supports Mosaic authorship and thus opts for the "new documentary approach" (JEDP) originally popularized by Wellhausen.[7] Mills explains that this theory presupposes that the Pentateuch has gone through an evolutionary process that began with oral Hebrew traditions which were reduced to writing and later edited.[8] Leupold explains that biblical critics emphasize four different sources for Pentateuch that were later compiled by a redactor after the end of the exile about 400 BCE.[9] The names of these four documents or sources are: first, the Yahwistic (Jahvistic) document, abbreviated as J, and it is written by the Yahwist who usually employs Jehovah or Yahweh as God's name in his writings; second, the Elohistic document, abbreviated as E, and it is written by the Elohist who frequently uses Elohim in his writings; third, the Deuteronomic document, abbreviated as D, and written by the Deuteronomist; and fourth, the Priestly document, abbreviated as P, and written by a Priest who employs the name Elohim for God. Leupold adds that some critics acknowledge these writers as persons while others also consider them as literary

[7] J. Welhausen, "Die Composition des Hexateuchs und der historischen Bucher des Alten Testaments," *JDT* 21 (1876): 392-450.

[8] M. S. Mills, "Introduction to Genesis," *A Study Guide to the Book of Genesis* (Dallas, TX: 3E Ministries, 1999), n.p.; To read more about the intricacies of this hypothesis, see R. Knierim, "Criticism of Literary Features, Form, Tradition and Redaction," in *The Hebrew Bible and Its Modern Interpreters* ed. G Tucker and D. Knight (Philadelphia: Fortress; Chico, CA: Scholars, 1985), 146-48.

[9] H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis,* 2 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1942), 6.

schools.[10] Using this approach, Leupold therefore assigns Gen 49:1-27 to the Yahwist who could not give closing remarks and end speeches so that he gives way for the Priestly who continues the speech from vv. 28-33.[11]

As to form criticism, the basic notion of the form critic is that one should ask certain essential questions above and beyond what is offered in the Bible in order to understand the text in its oral tradition. According to Gunkel, the genre of this passage is birthed by a particular setting in life, which has its source from an oral tradition and never a written one. He argues that Genesis 49 is seen as a part of ancient folk poetry described as a legislative testament.[12] De Hoop explains that these original genres are believed to have been expanded and became the turning point in the history of ancient literature and he suggests that an element of wisdom undergirds the genre of Genesis 49.[13]

The *Sitz im Leben* of Gn 49:1-28 is identified with the life-setting of Jacob's prophetic declaration. Gunneweg thinks it is scattered throughout the book of Genesis. To him, the whole book of Genesis presents an expressed picture of the life-setting relating to the text involving Jacob and his sons.[14] De Hoop explains that it is defined with the assistance of three factors: stylistic, internal, and external factors. The stylistic factor takes into consideration the nature of the speech, from a father to his sons–from an old

[10] Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis,* 6.

[11] Ibid., 7-9, 586.

[12] Hermann Gunkel, "Die Grundprobleme der israelitischen Literaturgeschichte," in *Reden und Aufsätze* (Göttingen, Germany, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1913), S. 29-38, 33.

[13] Raymond De Hoop, *Genesis 49 in Its Literary and Historical Context* in Old Testament Studies Series (Leiden, Germany: Brill Academic, 1998), 49, 68.

[14] A. H. J. Gunneweg, "Uber den Sitz im Leben der sog. Stammesspruche: Gen 49, Dtn 33, Jdc 5," *ZAW* 76 (1964): 245-55.

man to young ones (1-2). The introductory pattern of the passage with that of the conclusion uniquely defines the father-sons relationship, which is the backdrop of the passage.[15] Then according to Kittel, the intent of this folk genre was to inform the tribes of Israel about the way forward with regards to their anticipated success and developments. He believes that the declaration of Jacob to his sons serves as a prophetic inspiration, which revs the spirits of the tribes to fulfill God's predestined plan for them.[16]

Genesis 49: A Poem and a Testament

Genesis 49 is not only considered prophetic, but it is undoubtedly poetic. Deffinbaugh defends the poetic style of Genesis 49 stating,

> This is poetry. We might tend to think that a man's last words, spoken with great effort, should be disorganized and difficult to follow. A look at this passage in the NASV reveals that we are dealing with Hebrew poetry, for the form is noticeably different from the preceding pages. There are numerous indications that these final words of Jacob were thought out carefully in advance. Jacob's words are ones that have been carefully planned and probably rehearsed.[17]

The poetic structure of Genesis 49 impels Deffinbaugh to advise that this passage should be approached with a poetic mindset in order to make sense of its nature and complexities. Wenham agrees with Deffinbaugh and sees this passage as the first long poem in the Bible and that its source and background have been a topic overwhelmingly discussed.[18]

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[15] De Hoop, *Genesis 49*, 48.

[16] H. J. Kittel, *Die Stammesspruche Israels: Genesis 49 und Deuteronomium 33 traditionsgeschichtlich untersucht* (Berlin, Germany: Diss. Theol., Kirchl. Hochschule, 1959), 66-79.

[17] Bob Deffinbaugh, *The Purpose of Prophecy (Genesis 49:1-28): An online series in Genesis from Paradise to Patriarchs;* available http://bible.org/seriespage/purpose-prophecy-genesis-491-28, (accessed 28 November, 2012).

[18] Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis*, *WBC* (Dallas, TX: Word, 2002), 468.

The schools of thought embracing the poetic structure of Gn 49:1-28 opt for an evaluation of its strophic structure.[19] Mills also assents to the passage's poetic nature and sees this passage as structured around "a ditich," packaged with a two-lined design. He states, "Verses 2-27 are a poem, and as Hebrew poetry rhymes ideas, not words, and we can expect repetition."[20] Surprisingly, Wenham reveals that the originality of this passage is questioned by some critical scholars, because the passage seems to be out of place in its setting. They claim that if Moses had excluded it from the narratives in Genesis, the flow of the narrative would not be confused.[21] They identify a disparity between the order of blessings in this passage with that of the blessings and curses given to the tribes in Deuteronomy 28. Moreover, they notice a discrepancy existing between the order of their birth given in Gn 29:32-30:24; 35:18 and the order identified in this passage.[22] According to De Hoop, "Genesis 49 is almost generally viewed as a collection of independent 'tribal

[19] M.C.A. Korpel and J.C. de Moor, "Fundamentals of Ugaritic and Hebrew Poetry," *UF* 18 (1986): 173-212; W. van der Meer, *Oude woorden worden nieuw: De opbouw van het boek Joel* (Kampen, Germany: Kok, 1989), 35-39; W. T. Koopmans, *Joshua 24 as Poetic Narrative*, *JSOTS* 93 (Sheffield: JSOT 1990), 165-180; J. Kim, *The Structure of the Samson Cycle* (Kampen, Germany, 1993), 118-127; and, P. Sanders, *The Provenance of Deuteronomy 32*, *OTS* 37 (Leiden, Germany, 1996), 99-102; 111-9; 132-6. Cf. also P. van der Lugt, *Rhetorical Criticism & the Poetry of the Book of Job*, *OTS* 32 (Leiden, Germany, 1995), 31-49; 460-503.

[20] M. S. Mills, "Gen 49:1," *Genesis: A Study Guide to the Book of Genesis* (Dallas, TX: 3E Ministries, 1999), n.p.

[21] Wenham, *Genesis, WBC*, 468.

[22] Jacob starts with a rebuke in the form of curses for three of his sons before launching into the more glorious future predictions for the other sons in the form of a blessing. In Deuteronomy, Moses begins the Lord's words with a blessing then the curses followed suit, so the pattern highlighted here in Genesis 49 is different and hence it being seen as the work of an outsider. Moreover, the order of the prophetic declaration is haphazardly arranged and it belies the order of the birth of these sons. Jacob's declaration begins from the sons of Leah (Reuben to Issachar), followed by the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, the maids (Dan to Naphtali), and finally Rachel's sons (Joseph and Benjamin). Wenham identifies another irregularity resulting from the birth arrangement. He analyzes and explains that relating to Leah's sons as identified in Gn 30, Issachar comes before Zebulon, but the case is different in this passage. Wenham thinks the reason is because Zebulon's destiny (49:13) is better than Issachar's (49:14-15). He continues that the order of the maids' sons, Dan, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, does not match 30:5-13, which is Dan, Naphtali (sons of Bilhah, Rachel's maid), Gad, Asher (sons of Zilpah, Leah's maid) (Wenham, *Genesis, WBC*, 469).

sayings,' brought together in this collection by an editor some time after their origin."[23] Peters defends the assertion that this passage was born out of many documents put together by an editor to form one complete poem.[24] However, the theory that defines this passage as independent sayings and calls it "tribal sayings" is espoused by Grebmann.[25]

Dillmann sees this passage as a testament from a dying patriarch. Even though the theme "tribal sayings" gained acceptance by many, De Hoop also identifies Gordon as another scholar who assents to Dillmann's option despite the fact that Gordon did not really care about identifying the right genre of Genesis 49.[26] In the passage of time, Dillmann's "testament"[27] came to be embraced as a better theme for Gen 49:1-28 rather than "tribal sayings" or even the famous theme "blessings."[28] Nordheim sees this text as a "testament." He argues that the whole book of Genesis relates and agrees to it more than the other themes presented. Nordheim presents the crucial features that define a

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[23] De Hoop, *Genesis 49*, 26.

[24] J. P. Peters, "Jacob's Blessing," *JBL* 6 (1886): 99-116 (113).

[25] Grebmann's belief is partially motivated by Herman Gunkel and as De Hoop explains, these "tribal sayings" is completely a separate saying in oral tradition, which expresses essential elements concerning the tribes. Dillmann on the other hand challenges Grebmann and Gunkel and refutes the notion that the prophetic declaration of Jacob is a collection of "tribal sayings" (De Hoop, *Genesis 49*, 5).

[26] De Hoop, *Genesis 49*, 45-46.

[27] In addition to "testament," the term "farewell speech" is utilized and embraced by critical scholars in relation to their writings. This is mainly influenced by New Testament scholars, who studied the several farewell speeches in the NT (for example, Jn 13-17; Acts 20:17-38) from a form-critical perspective (E. von Nordheim, *Lehre der Alten I: Das Testament als Literaturgattung im Judentum der hellenistisch-romischen Zeit* [*ALGHJ*, 13], Leiden, Germany: Brill, 1980, 5-7); Helmuth Pehlke, "An Exegetical and Theological Study of Genesis 49:1-28," (Dallas Theological Seminary, 1985), 23-36.

[28] W. F. Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan: An Historical Analysis of Two Conflicting Faiths* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1968), 265; Sarna, *Genesis*, 331; and, Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 468. Cf. also Koopmans, *Joshua 24*, 398; According to M. Philonenko, ("Testament," *BHH*, Bd. IV, 1954-5), the literary genre "testament" has the following basic pattern: "before his death a man of God directs a farewell speech to his people with admonitions and premonitions." According to him, Genesis 49 is a precursor of this genre.

testament, which includes: An *opening frame*, a *middle section*, and a *closing frame*.[29] The *opening frame* identifies the dying speaker as well as the hearers of the speech. The *middle section* contains a prolonged statement of the dying speaker to those around him and this speech possesses three specific areas: experiences of the past, instructions for the present, and a prediction about the future. These need not follow any particular order.[30] The *closing frame* agrees with that of the first. This highlights a unique way of closing the speech with a juxtaposition of funeral instructions.[31] These three elements are identified in Genesis 49 and so justify the reason for calling the passage a "testament." Pehlke challenges the "testament" genre of Genesis 49 and refutes all the reasons that defend it. He embraces the theme "blessings" and substantiates his stand with the use of the Hebrew word בָּרָכָה in verse 28.[32] Wenham stringently opposes Pehlke and states, "Gen 49:1-27, often called the Blessing of Jacob, is more aptly titled the Testament of Jacob, for these last words of the patriarch contain curses as well as blessings."[33] The

[29] E. von Nordheim, *Lehre der Alten II: Das Testament als Literaturgattung im Judentum der hellenistisch-romischen Zeit, ALGHJ* 13 (Leiden, Germany: Brill, 1985), 29-51; Nordheim's study of the different Testaments appeared in vol. 1: ibid, *Die Lehre der Alten I: Das Testament als Literaturgattung im Judentum der hellenistisch-romischen Zeit, ALGHJ* 13 (Leiden, Germany: Brill, 1980), 5-7; and, Pehlke, *Genesis 49:1-28,* 23-36. In this study, he discussed the following texts: the Testaments of the twelve Patriarchs; of 'Amram (4Q 'Amram); of Job; of the three Patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacb); of Adam; of Solomon; of Moses (*Assumptio Mosis);* of Hezekiah (*Ascensio Isaiae*). Von Nordheim, *Lehre der Alten I*, 229.

[30] Von Nordheim, *Lehre der Alten I*, 229..

[31] Ibid., 229-30.

[32] For further reading about Pehlke's explanation about his rejection of the theme "testament," read this: Helmuth Pehlke, *An Exegetical and Theological Study of Genesis 49:1-28* (Dallas: Dallas Theological Seminary, 1985), 51-58. He refers to G. Wehmeier, *Der Segen im Alten Testament* (Basel, Germany: Friedrich Reinhardt,1970), 98, 114-45. Cf. also Gerhard Charles Aalders, *Genesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zonderan, 1981), 193.

[33] Wenham, *Genesis, WBC*, 468.

context of this passage warrants “testament” as the best theme since it culminates the life and death of Jacob and his farewell blessings to his sons.

Literary Context of Genesis 49

The literary setting of this book is embedded in Moses’ purpose for writing Genesis, which is to explain to the people that even though there is nothing glorious about their present, their beginning reveals a picture of glory.

Chapters 1:1-11:26 reveal the beginnings of the world and life. God blesses humanity and commands them to be fruitful and multiply (1-2). It also identifies the beginning of sin and its effect on the future of man (3). The beginning of civilization is expressed through Cain, Abel, and Seth, who is the righteous line after the fall of man. The genealogical histories about humans before the flood are also presented here (4-5). God’s judgment against humanity is revealed through the flood and His separation of a righteous man, Noah for His future plans are all discussed in this section (6-8). Another beginning starts with Noah and his sons, which leads to the growth of humans resulting in the tower of Babel and the genealogical history of man after the flood (8:1-11:26).

Chapters 11:27-37:2a discuss the beginning of the nation of Israel having the sons of Noah as their foundation. God promises blessings to Abraham and his seed after him (Isaac, Jacob and his sons). This section narrates the stories about the blessings of God upon the patriarchs: Abraham (11:27-25:1-18); Isaac (25:19-28:9); and Jacob (28:10-37:2a).

Chapters 37:2b-50:26 reveal the life of Joseph (being loved by his father more than his brothers) until his father and brothers came to settle in Egypt with him. The

brothers of Joseph are seen as being jealous and envious of Joseph and harboring hatred against Joseph and selling him out to Egypt (37:12-36); the story of Judah's sinfulness surprisingly interrupts that of Joseph's and it is described in detailed by the narrator (38:1-30); Joseph finally reaches Egypt and he is sold to be a slave in Potiphar's house (39-46); the last days of Jacob, his prophetic declaration of blessings to his grandsons and his own sons, and his death (47:27-50:14). The book ends with a summary of Joseph's life, death, and burial (50:15-26).

Literary Context of the Blessings of Judah and Joseph

To have a better understanding of the declaration of blessing concerning Judah (Gn 49:1-2, 8-12) and Joseph (22-26, 28), it is important to have a bird's-eye-view of the related chapters that precede Gn 49:1-28. Genesis 49:1-28 identifies Joseph as the culmination of Jacob's blessings. It ends the story of Joseph's ordeal in life that started in Genesis 37. Moreover, the story of Judah's failure (Genesis 38) breaks into Joseph's ordeal (Genesis 37, 39). Moses throws light on the disturbing circumstances surrounding the formation and foundation of Israel, of which Judah and Joseph play a great role. Surprisingly, as Joseph was sold into slavery by his own brothers (Genesis 37), Judah was tricked into sin by his own daughter-in-law (Genesis 38).

As Judah willingly surrenders the symbols of his authority as a father (seal, cord, and rod) to Tamar (Gn 38:18), Joseph's glory and honor as a beloved son (coat of many colors) are forcefully taken away from him and torn into pieces by his brothers (Gn 37:29). Judah abused his own power and authority as father by refusing to give his last

son, Shelah, to Tamar. The right, authority, and power possessed by as a beloved son was trespassed and abused by his own brothers and then by Potiphar's wife also in Egypt.

Judah is identified as succumbing to the seduction of a woman under his authority as a father-in-law (Genesis 38), but Joseph is pictured as decrying the seductions of a woman above his authority as a slave (Genesis 39). Judah acknowledges his sins and confesses it before the community (Gn 38:26), but Joseph acknowledges and confesses the LORD's blessings upon him before his brothers (Gn 45:1-15). Judah abused his authority for selfish ambition–to save his last son, Shelah from dying (Gn 38:11), while Joseph's honor and glory was abused, which he recognized as ultimately resulting in a higher purpose–saving the lives of his brothers (Gn 45:7).

Joseph was taken away from his father by his own brothers (Genesis 37), but ironically, his own brothers brought their father to Joseph in Egypt (Gn 45:9-46:7). As Judah is promised that he will not lose his scepter (Gn 49:10), though he had lost his symbols that define his authority and identity in Gn 38:18, Joseph is prophesied to be the greatest among his brethren and his blessings will exceed and be greater than that of his ancestors (Gn 49:25-26). Judah's posterity is promised to be honored and worshipped as a future king (Gn 49:8), but in person, he with his other brothers bowed down and worshipped Joseph (Gn 50:18).

Having dealt with the first part of Chap. 3 (Part 1), it is essential to delve straightaway into the second part (Part 2), which deals with the translation of Gn 49:1-28 (even though this paper only focuses on the declaration given to Judah and Joseph), an outline of the declarations given to Judah and Joseph, and an analysis of this outline.

PART 2: Exegesis of Genesis 49:1-2, 8-12, 22-26, 28

This second part of Chap. 3 focuses on a complete translation of Gen 49:1-28.[34] It describes the structure and outline of the declaration about Judah and Joseph and later gives a thorough analysis of their prophetic declaration. The translation of the declarations concerning Judah and Joseph are highlighted in this section.

Translation of Genesis 49:1-28

Then Jacob called his sons and said, "Gather together so that I may tell you what will befall you in the last days (1)

Assemble and hear, O sons of Jacob; and listen to Israel your father (2)

Reuben, you are my firstborn; my strength and the beginning of my power, excellence in dignity[35] and excellence in power (3)
Uncontrolled[36] as water, may you not excel,[37] because you went up to your father's bed; then you defiled *it* - - he went up to my couch[38] (4)

Simeon and Levi are brothers; Instruments of violence are their weapons[39] (5)
O my soul do not enter into their council; my glory[40] do not be united[41] with their

[34] Refer to Appendix I for a chart that describes the whole sons of Jacob, the meanings of their names, the blessings and curses each received, and their future fulfilments.

[35] A textual variant suggests "ruin, disaster, or calamity," but the word "dignity" best explains the verse.

[36] Literally, "reckless," but this word does not match up with "water." The metaphorical sense of the word פַּחַז means "lusty" and this matches well with "water."

[37] The word תּוֹתַר has the same root as the word יֶתֶר used in verse 3. Both are rendered as "excellence or excel."

[38] The phrase "he went up to my bed" is an idiomatic expression meaning "he slept with my wife."

[39] The phrase "instruments of violence" is a description of their nature. The word "weapons" expresses who they are. This phrase means "they are full of violence."

[40] The *LXX* reads "mine inward parts or liver," but the MT rendition "my glory" is preferable because it agrees with the usage of the same word in other OT references.

[41] The Samaritan Pentateuch suggests "be angry," but the MT word "be united" best explains its counterpart on the verse line "enter."

assembly; because in their anger they slew a man, and in their will they crippled oxen (6)
Curse be their anger, for it is fierce; and their fury, for it is severe.
I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel (7)

You, O Judah,[42] your brothers will praise you; your hand will be on the neck of your enemies; your father's sons will bow down to you (8)
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 up? (9)
The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a ruler from between his feet,[43] until the one to whom it belongs[44] comes, and to him will *be* the obedience of the nations (10)
Binding a male ass to the vine, and the young of his female donkey to the choice vine, he washes his raiment in wine, and his robe[45] in blood of grapes (11)
His eyes are darker than[46] wine, and his teeth whiter than milk (12)

Zebulun will dwell[47] toward the seashore; and he *will be*[48] a coast[49] for ships, with his border on Sidon (13)

Issachar *is* a strong-boned[50] donkey lying down between burdens[51] (14)

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[42] The independent pronoun אַתָּה warrants a vocative rendition of the first part of the verse.

[43] The Samaritan Pentateuch proposes "his standards" in lieu of "his feet." The phrase "his feet" is used as an idiomatic expression to mean "coming out of one's lineage" or "being under one's tutelage or guidance," Therefore, a lawgiver is predicted to come out of Judah's lineage.

[44] Literally, read as the lexemes שֶׁ (relative pronoun אֲשֶׁר), preposition ל, and the third person singular suffix, the word "Shiloh" means "the one to whom it belongs" or "that which belongs to him." The Samaritan Pentateuch as well as many Hebrew manuscripts suggest that the word שִׁילֹה implies "a name of a place, a son." The Targum Onkelos suggests the phrase "whose is the kingdom or whose it is." This paper identifies this name with the seed of Judah (the Messiah), "to whom the [sceptre] belongs," which is also buttressed by the prophecy given by the prophet Ezekiel in 21:32. This paper will adopt the literal translation of the word "Shiloh," which is "one to whom it belongs."

[45] The Samaritan Pentateuch replaces MT's word סוּתוֹ, which is a hapax legomena with the word כסותו, meaning "his covering." The phrase "his robe" is not different from the phrase "his covering," therefore, this option seems unnecessary.

[46] The preposition מִן can be used in two ways as far as the context of this passage is concerned. It can be used as a result "from" or comparatively "than or more than." The literal as well as the metaphorical meaning of this verse accept the comparative option "more than" as compared to seeing the preposition as a result. Please refer to the exegesis about Judah (verse 12) to read the full explanation.

[47] Textual variant proposes a different emendation that is irrelevant for the context.

[48] It is implied to agree with the first reading, which also smoothens the reading of the verse.

[49] The same root חוֹף means "coast" and hence the need to opt for the same meaning "coast."

When he sees a good[52] resting place and that the land is pleasant,
He bends his shoulder to bear a load, and became a slave laborer[53] (15)

Dan shall judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel (16)
May Dan be a serpent on the way, a horned-viper[54] on the path, biting the heels of a horse, so that his rider falls backward (17)

I wait O LORD for your salvation[55] (18)

A troop will troop[56] upon Gad, but he will troop[57] upon their heel[58] (19)

Asher,[59] his bread shall be rich,[60] and he shall produce kingly delicacies (20)

Naphtali is a hind[61] let loose, he is in the habit of giving good [62] news[63] (21)

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[50] The word גָּרֶם has two basic meanings according to BDB. These are "bone and strength." This paper combines the two to mean "strong-boned," which suggests that Issachar is strong as a bone.

[51] Literally, "refuse-heaps" or "saddlebags."

[52] The Samaritan Pentateuch suggests the feminine form instead of the masculine opted by the MT. Wenham thinks the MT's option satiates the idiom כי טוב.

[53] *BDB* gives the literal meaning of מַס as "forced service." The other connected word עֹבֵד is a participle which means "worker or laborer." The combination of the two words can be taken as "forced slave laborer."

[54] The meanings "horned snake or horned viper" are offered by *BDB*. Any of these meanings can suit the word.

[55] Literally, "salvation." Every time the same word is used in the OT, salvation is meant. However, it can also be substituted by "deliverance."

[56] Literally, "attack."

[57] The same with the above note.

[58] Literally, "at the heel" or "hind part." *BDB* explains the play on of words opted by Jacob and explains the verse as thus: "*Gad, a troop shall troop upon him, but he shall troop upon the heel* (i.e. pursue them in their retreat). The Hebrew word עָקֵב is perfectly fine in context "he will attack on the heel." What is problematic is the first word of the next first – moving the letter ם. Adding this letter to the last word in the previous verse will render the verse thus: "he will attack on their heel." The correct Hebrew word should be עֲקֵבָם.

[59] Refer to the explanation given above. It suffices the option given by the variants.

[60] Literally, "his bread shall be fat." Textual variants suggest a masculine word for "fat" instead of MT's feminine option.

Joseph is a fruitful bough,[64] a fruitful bough by a spring; *Its* branches[65] climb over a wall (22)
Then the archers[66] embittered him and shot[67] arrows at him, acting with hostility toward him (23)
But his bow stayed[68] constant, and the arms of his hand were swift, because of the hands of a Mighty One of Jacob, because of the Shepherd, the rock of Israel (24)
Because of the God of your father who will help you, because of the Almighty who will bless you--*with* blessings from heaven above, blessings from the deep that lies beneath, and blessings of the breasts and of the womb (25)
The blessings of your father have surpassed the blessings of my ancestors up to the utmost boundary of the everlasting hills;[69] may they be on the head of Joseph and on the crown of the head of the one consecrated of his brothers (26)

Benjamin is a ravenous wolf; in the morning he devours the prey,
and in the evening he divides the spoil" (27)

These *are* twelve tribes of Israel and this is what their father said to them when he blessed them. He blessed them, each one with the blessing that they deserve (28)

The passage is set in three parts. First, it begins with an introduction to the prophetic declaration, which identifies the characters involved in these scenes and the

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[61] The *LXX* proposes "spreading stem" instead of MT's "hind." Wenham suggests that the emendation offered by the *LXX* and other variants is unnecessary. The same word is used in different OT references and it is rendered as "hind" and not "a stem."

[62] Literally, "beautiful." The phrase can also mean "delightful words."

[63] The *LXX* proposes "fruits" and other versions "fawns of fold" as against MT's option "words." These emendations are not necessary since the MT's option literally makes sense in relation to the meaning of the word in its context.

[64] There is a proposal to delete this word since the same Hebrew word is repeated. This proposal is unnecessary and that the MT's rendition makes perfect sense.

[65] Literally, "daughters."

[66]Literally, "the masters of arrows."

[67] The *BHS* editorial committee proposes an imperfect consecutive reading וירבו "and they shot." The literal meaning "shot" makes sense.

[68] The *LXX* suggests "break into pieces" instead of MT's "dwell, stayed, or remained." MT's option best suits the context.

[69] Many textual variants emend MT's option הורי "my ancestors" to הררי "steadfast/forever mountains." Even though this emendation looks reasonable, yet the MT's option makes sense.

purpose for which this declaration is given (49:1-2). Second, it progresses with the prophetic declaration of blessings describing the future of Judah as well as the past and future life of Joseph and his descendants (49:8-12, 22-26). Last, the narrator briefly closes this prophetic declaration with a summary about the nature of Jacob's sons and the nature of the prophetic declaration that was uttered to them (49:28).

Exegetical Outline of Genesis
49:1-2, 8-12, 22-26, 28

The narrator describes Jacob's prophetic declaration of blessings to Judah and Joseph and the summary of all these declarations.[70]

I. Introduction to Jacob's prophetic declaration to his sons (1-2)
    A. Jacob calls his sons and prepares them for what will happen in their future (1).
    B. Jacob commands his sons to gather together and listen to him (2).
II. The prophetic declaration of blessings to Judah and Joseph (49:8-12; 22-26)
    A. Declarations about Judah (8-12)
        1. Judah will be honored by his brothers and he will overcome his enemies (8).
        2. Judah will rest as a wild lion and no one dares disturb him (9).
        3. Judah will produce kings and to the Messiah will be the obedience of nations (10).
        4. Judah will be surrounded by the richness of vines, wine, and milk (11-12).
    B. Declarations about Joseph (22-26)
        1. Joseph is a fruitful bough by a spring whose branches grow up higher (22).

[70] Refer to Appendix 2 for an outline of the whole passage: Gn 49:1-28.

2. Joseph was bitterly assailed by archers and they hurt him badly (23).

3. Joseph is empowered God, the Shepherd and the rock of Israel (24).

4. Joseph will be helped by the LORD in every facet of his life (25).

5. Joseph will be greater than his ancestors and brothers (26).

III. The Summary of the Prophetic Declaration (49:28)

A. The Narrator identifies all the sons as twelve tribes of Israel (28a).

B. The Narrator identifies the words of Jacob as blessings and declares that the sons received blessings they deserve (28b).

A Commentary on Genesis
49:8-12, 22-26, 28

Constable identifies three elements in Jacob's prophetic declaration concerning his sons: "A synopsis of the son's personality, a hint as to his potential; and a prophecy of his future."[71] Crucial to this testament also is the comparative study of Jacob's blessings on the sons of Joseph (48:19-22) and his blessings on Judah and Joseph (49:8-12, 22-26). Jacob's testament included God's will for his sons and his blessings and prayers for them.

Moses strategically put this poem at the end of Genesis so that it could predate the beginning of a great nation in Egypt, their years in captivity, and God's deliverance of them from Egypt to the Promised Land. Ross categorically states,

> God gave His people this prophecy to bear them through the dismal barrenness of their experiences and to show them that He planned all the future. For Jacob's family, the future lay beyond the bondage of Egypt in the land of promise. But the enjoyment of the blessings of that hope would depend on the participants'

[71] Thomas L. Constable, *Notes on Genesis* (Sonic Light, 2012), 270; available at http: //www.soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/genesis.pdf; (accessed January 16 2013).

> faithfulness. So from the solemnity of his deathbed Jacob evaluated his sons one by one, and carried his evaluation forward to the future tribes.[72]

The words of Jacob drew their attention to the essence of this declaration. Constable adds that the scope of the prophetic declaration goes beyond the future of these sons.[73] These words were not directed at the near relations (sons and daughters) of these twelve sons, but, mainly, they were targeted at the posterity of these sons.

Moses also intentionally puts this story at the end of Genesis to highlight the essence of the consummation of God's purpose in building a great nation from these sons of Jacob. Sailhamer agrees with this view, stating,

> Jacob's last words to his sons have become the occasion for a final statement of the book's major theme: God's plan to restore the lost blessing [lost in the Fall] through the offspring of Abraham. By framing Jacob's last words between v. 1 and v. 28, the writer shows where his interests lie. Jacob's words look to the future–'in days to come'–and draw on the past, viz., God's blessing of mankind. It is within that context we are to read and understand Jacob's words.[74]

The first part of the introduction to the prophetic declaration informs all the children of Jacob (in this paper–Judah and Joseph) of their importance to the future of Israel. It educates them about the sense of belongingness and unity so that they may leave a legacy on how to live right. It informs them about the will of God for their future and their part in the dramatic plan of God's redemption for Israel. The second part also touches on the sense of urgency as he commands them to "gather together" to hear what he has to say to them.

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[72] Allan P. Ross, "Genesis," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament*, John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck eds. (Wheaton, IL: Scripture, 1985), 98.

[73] Constable, *Notes on Genesis*, 271.

[74] John H. Sailhamer, "Genesis," in *Genesis-Numbers*, vol. 2 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 12 vols, Frank E. Gaebelein and Richard P. Polcyn eds. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990), 274-5.

Introduction to Jacob's Prophetic Declaration to His Sons (1-2)

Moses narrates the blessings that Jacob gives to his grandchildren (Manasseh and Ephraim) in Genesis 48 and then decides to prophesy about the future of his children before he joins his ancestors. Moses sets the stage for Jacob's prophetic testament to all his children with two specific commands. Firstly, to gather together so that he can tell them what the future has in store for them. Secondly, to gather together so that they can hear what he has to tell them as their father.

Jacob Called His Sons and Prepares Them for what Will Happen in Their Future (1)

The Hebrew phrase קרא אל "summoned unto," also appears in Gn 28:1 (which talks about Isaac's farewell to Jacob and also in Gen 3:9; 22:11, 15) and Ex 19:3 (which talks about divine beings summoning humans). It is obvious that Jacob followed the example of his father, Isaac, who ministered a farewell blessing upon him before departing for Padan Aram. In the case of Jacob, this phrase carries a farewell notion prepared for his sons. They understood and were ready to embrace the urgency of this call. The Hebrew word אסף "to gather" is used in the imperative mood and it is connected to the phrase וְאַגִּידָה, which is a cohortative. It is from the root נגד, which is "to tell or declare." This construction (imperative plus cohortative prefixed by a *vav*) usually indicates a purpose or result clause.[75] Jacob commanded his sons to gather together *so that* he may tell them what will happen in the future.

[75] Bruce Kenneth Waltke and Michael Patrick O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 3rd ed. (Winona, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 573-8.

The expression בְּאַחֲרִית הַיָּמִים "in the last days" defines the time limit set for this prophecy. It carries the declaration from a known time to that which is unknown. Sailhamer sees this phrase as referring to the future deliverance of God of His people with a king at the center.[76] McKeown says, "Clearly, Jacob is not speaking simply as a wise old patriarch, but he is endowed with prophetic insight and is outlining the future history of the tribes with divine enabling. While the prophecies are addressed to individuals and may even be corollaries of their merits and faults, ultimately these predictions are about intertribal relationships and the future of the nation of Israel."[77]

The matters concerning most of the predictions in this chapter stretch from their immediate past circumstances to the time of the settlement in the land. It continues to the coming of the first advent of the Messiah and finally to His long-awaited second advent.[78] De Hoop addresses the problems surrounding this phrase. To him, it is never a problem of passage, but that of interpretation.[79] Sanders dismisses the distant future element and embraces a near future one regarding this phrase.[80] Mills thinks this phrase

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[76] John H. Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical-Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 233.

[77] James McKeown, *Genesis* in Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 184.

[78] NET Commentators and other scholars explain that the phrase "in the days to come" denotes something closer to the end of the age, or what is popular referred to as "the eschaton," or, better still what belongs to the end of days or the last days (NET Bible Notes, *Genesis 49:1* [Biblical Studies, 2007], electronic ed; C. Armerding, "The Last Words of Jacob: Genesis 49," *BSac* 112 [1955]: 320-28; H. Pehlke, "An Exegetical and Theological Study of Genesis 49:1-28"[Th.D. dissertation, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1985]; and, B. Vawter, "The Canaanite Background of Genesis 49," *CBQ* 17 [1955]: 1-18).

[79] De Hoop, *Genesis 49 in Its Literary and Historical Context*, 86.

[80] Sanders explains that not only does the phrase postulate an event in the distant future, but also a near future event. He then defends this with the translation "days hereafter." To him, it can mean "the next day or days that follow immediately after this declaration (Nm 24:14 and the exilic texts Dt 4:30; 31:29) (P. Sanders, *The Provenance of Deuteronomy 32, OTS* 37 [1996], 348-52).

throws light on what God has in store for the future of Israel. He says, "Scripture uses 'last days' as a technical term to define the Messianic Age; it covers Jesus' first and second advents, and the Church Age which intervenes."[81] Keil and Delitzsch explain that in prophetic language, the word אַחֲרִית refers not just to the future, but the most final future.[82] It embraces everything about the completion of the Messianic age (Is 2:2; Jer 30:24; 48:47; 49:39; Ez 38:8, 16). These verses reveal the futuristic aspect of the phrase בְּאַחֲרִית הַיָּמִים. Jacob stands in one horizon, but speaks about events that are encased in another. The Spirit of God moved Jacob to discern the future events. Hamilton identifies in the scriptures thirteen times where the phrase בְּאַחֲרִית הַיָּמִים is used.[83] Among these, nine have their source in the prophetic books. He states,

> In Gen 49:1 at least, the expression is not a *terminus technicus* for the eschaton, but an indefinite, long period …. There is no discernible impetus for these disclosures of the distant future by Jacob, no divine afflatus resting on him. Jacob speaks almost intuitively, as he did at the blessing of Ephraim and Manasseh. Jacob, now the discloser and interpreter of future events, is exercising a gift from God that his son Joseph had exercised on occasion (interpreting the dreams of others).[84]

Wenham explains that this phrase establishes the veracity that Jacob sees beyond the hardships his children will encounter in Egypt and the wilderness until the era of their

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[81] M.S. Mills, *Genesis: A Study Guide to the Book of Genesis*, Gen 49:1.

[82] Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, vol. 11, trans. James Martin (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002), 249.

[83] Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 18-50* in *NICOT* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 646.

[84] Ibid; Hamilton identifies these thirteen scripture references to "the last days" (Gn 49:1; Nm 24:14; Dt 4:30; 31:29; Is 2:2; Jer 23:20; 30:24; 48:47; 49:39; Ez 38:16; Hos 3:5; Mi 4:1; Dn 10:14); J. P. M. van der Ploeg, "Eschatology in the Old Testament," *OTS* 17 (1972): 90; E. Lipinski, "*b'hryt hymym* dans les textes preexiliques," *VT* 20 (1970): 445-8, esp. pp 446-7; and, G. W. Buchanan, "Eschatology and the 'End of Days,'" *JNES* 20 (1961): 188-93.

settlement in Canaan. The challenges of the past as well as the future are catalysts for unprecedented feats reserved for them.[85] In summary, the first verse not only serves as a part of the introduction to Jacob's testament, but it also introduces his sons as entities by which the future of Israel as a nation will be formed.

Jacob Commands His Sons to Gather Together and Hear Him (2)

Jacob's use of the phrase "listen to Israel your father" stresses the essence of what he is about to tell them. It also establishes the connection between himself and his sons: he is their father and as such, they must listen to him. The Hebrew verb קבץ is synonymous to the verb אסף used earlier. This command to "gather together" can also be a plea "to closely knit together as brothers" after some years of disagreements and discord. It is surprising that after the commands, Jacob drops the usual first person pronoun and says וְשִׁמְעוּ אֶל־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲבִיכֶם "and listen to Israel your father." He could have said "and listen to me your father," but he chose to highlight the words יִשְׂרָאֵל "Israel" and אֲבִיכֶם "your father." Wenham explains that Jacob employed both repetition and parallelism to stress his word of wisdom as well as his prowess as a prophet.[86] The foretelling element of this declaration is identified in the use of the word "Israel." Even though, Jacob is referring to himself,[87] later in the Bible, the mention of the word "Israel"

[85] Wenham, *Genesis, WBC*, 471.

[86] Ibid.

[87] This name was conferred on Jacob after he wrestled with the angel of the LORD at Peniel (Gen 32:28). The name became a household name used interchangeably with Jacob until these sons became a great nation.

as a substitute for the name Jacob is a direct reference to Israel as a nation.[88] Hamilton states,

> He refers to himself as *Jacob* and as *Israel your father,* thus using both of his names. The Joseph story opens and concludes with the plural imperative *pay attention* (*sim'u,* lit., "hear," 37:6; 49:2). Joseph has something to say and reveal to his brothers. Jacob has something to say and reveal to his sons. He appears like the wise father of Proverbs who counsels his child (ren) to hear *(s^{e}ma' b^{e}ni)* his instructions (Prv 1:8; 4:1, 10; 5:7; 7:24; 8:32).[89]

With his use of a double name (Jacob and Israel), Leupold suggests that Jacob is hereby speaking from two different facets or spheres. As *Jacob*, he is a man of the past full of wittiness and ambition, and as *Israel*, he is a new man, a prevailing prince, a man who decided to yield to God's instructions, a man of prayer, a spiritual man, and a man who will not just pursue his own ways but go God's way.[90]

The Prophetic Declaration of Blessings to Judah and Joseph (49:8-12, 22-26)

In *lieu* of focusing on the twelve sons of Jacob, this paper only focuses Jacob's declaration about Judah and Joseph whose declarations have a great impact on the future of Israel. The verses preceding this section reveal that the three elder sons (Reuben, Simeon, and Levi) received curses, while the other sons (Zebulun, Issachar, Dan, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, and Benjamin) received blessings. On the other hand, Judah and Joseph

[88] Ps 73:1; Is 45:17; 49:3. However, Micah, the prophet metaphorically uses the name Jacob to speak of Israel as a nation. He says, "For the transgression of **Jacob** *is* all this, and for the sins of the **house of Israel**. What *is* the transgression of Jacob? *Is it* not Samaria? And what *are* the high places of Judah? *are they* not Jerusalem?" (Mi 1:5, KJV). The name "Jacob" is paralleled with the phrase "house of Israel." Both names are juxtaposed to emphasize their similarity.

[89] Hamilton, *Genesis: Chapters 18-50*, 647.

[90] Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis*, 567.

received blessings greater than what their brothers received. Jacob's testament to Judah and Joseph mostly concerns their future instead of their past (except for Joseph whose declaration partly entails past experiences). Unlike their three older brothers, Jacob said nothing overtly negative about their lives (even though, in reality, Judah's past sins with Tamar, his daughter-in-law were equally awful as Reuben's). Jacob never rebuked any of his younger sons and therefore their declaration contains no curses, but blessings.

Jacob made declarations about Judah (8-12)

The prophetic declaration about Judah seems to be the hardest to interpret in light of the context of the whole passage, which bespeaks of the famous phrase "what will happen in the last days" (Gn 49:1). The eschatological elements regarding Judah's future cannot be dismissed, especially in verses 10-12, which will be dealt with in detail in chapter five of this paper. The metaphors[91] employed by Jacob are only representation of Judah, and not a totality of who he is or will be. Judah is pictured as a lion, female donkey, sceptre, vine, wine, and milk. All these metaphors have their relevance in the context of this passage. Good reflects on the uniqueness of Judah's declaration that depicts Judah as having a glorious name (8); as a conquering lion (9); as the soon coming שִׁילֹה (10); and as a male ass, female donkey, vine, wine, clothes, blood of grapes, and milk (11-12).[92] Although there is no caustic element in Jacob's declaration to Judah, Good and Carmichael think there is a subtle rebuke to Judah by the use of the images like

[91] Bullinger has another name for metaphors, which is *representation.* He defines it as "a declaration that one thing is (or represents) another: Ethelbert William Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1898), 735.

[92] Edwin M. Good, "'Blessing on Judah,' (Gen 49:8-12)," *JBL* 82, no. 4 (1963): 427-9; and, Callum M. Carmichael, "Some Sayings in Gen 49," *JBL* 88 (1969): 435-44.

"blood of grapes and clothes." To them, the use of "blood" alludes to the sin of Judah for his participation in tricking his father with the bloody coat of Joseph (Genesis 37).[93]

Verse 8 reveals a unique word play with the words יְהוּדָה "Judah" and יוֹדוּךָ "shall praise you" with יָדְךָ and "your hand." Good regards these as later insertion, since there is no evident connection between praise and the lion symbols. Furthermore, the root יָדָה diverges from what he later exposes as a condemnatory declaration on Judah.[94] De Hoop sees these words as a pun employed by Jacob, which highlights the common etymology of the name יְהוּדָה from the root ידה "to praise."[95] Bullinger calls this *paronomasia* or *rhyming-words.*[96] Judah's name connotes praise and this is justified when at his birth, his mother Leah called his name "Judah" because she said "Now will I praise the LORD." Even Jacob said יוֹדוּךָ אַחֶיךָ "your brothers will praise you." The word ידה is usually used for God and not for man as is the case here. There are only three instances where this word is used for man (Jb 40:14; Pss 45:18 [17]; 49:19 [18]). Westermann and Jenni propose that the word ידה in the *hiphil* stem "indicates achievement rather than essence that prompts this praise. Judah is being praised by his brothers for becoming a leader."[97]

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[93] Good, "Blessing on Judah," 427-29 and Carmichael, "Some Sayings in Gen 49," 435-44.

[94] Good, "Blessing on Judah," 428.

[95] De Hoop, *Genesis 49*, 114. Benno Jacob agrees with De Hoop, but explains that even though these words have a clear connection with folk-etymology, yet they are very difficult to understand and explain (Benno Jacob, *Das erste Buch*, 900).

[96] The figure is so-called because one word is *placed alongside of another*, which sounds and seems like a repetition of it. But it is not the same; it is only similar. The meaning may be similar or not, the point is that two (or more) words are different in origin and meaning, but are similar in sound or appearance (Bullinger, *Figures of Speech*, 307).

[97] Claus Westermann and E. Jennie eds., *ThWAT* (Munich: Kaiser, 1971), 1:674.

Calvin states, "The father adduces a new etymology, because his name shall be so celebrated and illustrious among his brethren, that he should be honored by them all equally with the first-born."[98] In addition to being praised by his brothers, Jacob told him thatיָדְךָ בְּעֹרֶף אֹיְבֶיךָ "your hand will be on the neck of your enemies." The phrase signifies a complete authority over one's enemies."[99] Three blessings are noted here: he will have complete victory over his enemies; his brothers will praise him; and then his brothers will also חוה "bow down" to him. Judah is magnified and elevated by his father. Not only will he be praised, but he will be honored and revered by his brothers. Sailhamer observes an allusion in the phrase "your father's sons will bow down to you" saying, "It is difficult not to see in this statement an intentional allusion to the dream of Joseph (37:10) in which his father's sons would come to bow down before him."[100] The praise of his brothers to him and his authority over his enemies put him on a pedestal of being אַרְיֵה "a lion" (9).

A series of metaphors is presented in this declaration. He is called גּוּר אַרְיֵה "a lion's whelp or a young lion." As a young lion, he is strong enough to overcome his prey and as an old lion no one dares stand before him. The increase of his strength by time is hereby pictured.[101] The phrase מִטֶּרֶף בְּנִי עָלִיתָ "from the prey, my son, you have gone up" highlights the certainty of Judah overcoming his enemies. Good sees this phrase as a

[98] John Calvin, "Commentary on Genesis 49:8," 1840-57.

[99] William White, *Theological Workbook of the Old Testament*, R. L. Harris *et al.* eds. (Chicago, IL: Moody, 1980), Gn 49:8. In scripture, the word עֹרֶף is employed in the same meaning for "back" and when the neck is turned, it expresses "fear and retreat of one's enemies" (Ex 23:27; Jo 7:8, 12). This is used of Israel turning her back.

[100] John H. Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical-Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 235.

[101] Numbers 23:24 and 24:9 utilize the same image and in both references, no one dares provokes the lion.

syntactical ambiguity and that it presents many possible meanings.[102] The phrase בְּנִי can be either a vocative as it is usually translated (i.e. "from the prey, my son, you have gone up) or as an appositive (i.e. from the prey, [that is] my son, you have gone up). Read appositionally, Good proposes an allusion to Jacob's mistaken assumption that Joseph (בְּנִי) had been taken as prey (טָרֶף) by a wild beast (Gn 37:33). Good continues that Judah, a false lion, had unrighteously deceived his father, a cruel trick Jacob is now bringing to the forefront.[103] Good seems to have overlooked the reality that this cruelty was not only staged by Judah, but by all his brothers excluding Benjamin (Gn 37:31-32). Reuben was censured for something other than being a part of this cruelty and the same is true with Simeon and Levi. Why was Jacob silent about this cruel trick when he rebuked the older sons? Coke considers the phrase as clearly portraying Judah having victory over his enemies, the prey, and returning to the mountains with the spoils of his enemies.[104] The "lion" image is seen as a symbol of authority and power. Good states, "It is generally taken as a metaphor of power with some royal overtones, since even to the Hebrews the lion may have been viewed as the "king of beasts."[105] Skinner explains that Jacob repeatedly uses "lion" as an image to establish the future growth of the tribe.[106] The image of power is earmarked for the future of Judah. Like the lion, he shall dwell chiefly

[102] Good, "Blessing on Judah," 428.

[103] Ibid.

[104] Thomas Coke, *Commentary on Genesis 49:9,* in Thomas Coke Commentary on the Holy Bible [article online] http://www.studylight.org/com/tcc/view.cgi?bk=ge&ch=49 (accessed 18 January 2013).

[105] Good, "Blessing on Judah," 428; Prv 30:30.

[106] The three terms of lion are sequentially used by Jacob to signify the tribe's youthfulness גּוּר, his maturity אַרְיֵה, and old age לָבִיא: John Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis,* 2nd ed. (Edinburgh: T&T. Clark, 1930), 519.

as a king and rule with authority over the forest (over the people in his kingdom). The phrase כָּרַע רָבַץ כְּאַרְיֵה "He couches, he lies down as a lion" is typical of lions after they have eaten their full and are resting. Coke attests to this premise and explains that in the den of lions, they will be seen couching and resting after a big catch.[107] Judah will rests chiefly as a king in his palace after rising triumphantly over his enemies. Verse 9 ends with the phrase וּכְלָבִיא מִי יְקִימֶנּוּ "and as an old lion, who shall arouse him." Jacob paints a moving picture of the life of Judah–from his youth through to his middle-age life until his old age. This has nothing to do with decline of strength and vigor, but an upsurge of his power and strength by the passage of time. Poole agrees with this stating, "As an old lion, or rather *a grown lion,* not a decrepit and impotent lion, but one come to his full strength; who shall presume or dare to disturb or provoke him? All shall fear him, and seek peace with him."[108] In his prime as a king, his invincibility will never wane and hence preventing his enemies from warring against him.

As a lion, a great Lion will come out from his lineage in the last days to establish every prophecy concerning Judah. The eschatological reign of this King will be dealt with in chapter five of this paper. Like the noble and undaunted attitude and character of the lion, the tribe of Judah is destined to be magnificent and fearless in every area of their lives. Van Groningen adds to this premise and says, "The idea of the victorious warrior is extended and enlarged through the image of Judah as a lion in v. 9. There is a progression, a process of development apparent in the lion metaphor. Judah is pictured as

[107] Coke, *Commentary on Gen 49:9*.

[108] Matthew Poole, *Matthew Poole's Commentary on the whole Bible* (n.p.: Hendrickson, 1685), Gen 49:9.

a playful, frolicking, fighting, and vigorous young one who develops into a powerful and awesome animal."[109]

Although this paper strictly embraces a laudatory declaration given by Jacob to Judah, it is imperative to highlight the position of Carmichael and Good, which settles for a caustic declaration. Carmichael regards verse 10 as the continuation of an ironic condemnatory pronouncement upon Judah. As Good views it, the never-ending retention of royalty–שֵׁבֶט "a scepter" and the מְחֹקֵק "ruler"–in the tribe alludes to the former loss of Judah's מַטֶּה "staff" to his daughter-in-law Tamar, through an illicit sexual act with her (Gn 38:18). The departure of the מְחֹקֵק, an emblem of law, from between his feet, portrays further the illegal aura of Judah's actions–here his refusal to give Shelah, his surviving son, as a rightful levirate husband to his daughter-in-law. These now retained emblems will not disappear until *Shelah*, the rightful husband of Tamar (Gn 38:11, 14, 26)–the *Shiloh* of Gn 49:10–assumes his responsibility of carrying on the line of Judah. This hope gets tarnished with the disobedience and death of his two sons, Er and Onan (Gn 38:6-10), but ironically continued, albeit illegally, through the ultimate union wherein Perez, a forefather of David, was conceived (Ru 4:18-22).[110] As novel a reading as this understanding strictly underscored by both Carmichael and Good, it proposes the less than obvious and departs from what is clearly a laudatory nature and tone tone fronting the pronouncement.

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[109] Gerard Van Groningen, *Messianic Revelation in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1990), 171.

[110] Good, "Blessing' on Judah," 427-32 and Callum M. Carmichael, "Some Sayings in Gen 49," 435-44.

The royal image שֵׁבֶט "a scepter" and מְחֹקֵק "a ruler" represent Judah's realm of authority and power. Other versions render מְחֹקֵק as "staff or ruler's staff." This word is from the root חקק, which means "to inscribe, decree, and govern."[111] Nevertheless, since the word מְחֹקֵק is a participle, verbals which often indicate a profession, it is expedient to translate this term as: A cutter, an inscriber, a law giver, an engraver, a ruler, a commander, and a governor.[112] Though the participle of the word can mean "a staff or rule," it does not correspond to the phraseמִבֵּין רַגְלָיו "from between his feet," because kings do not beget staffs, they only beget princes or rulers. Therefore, the option "ruler" suits the context of this passage. The term given to it is "royal insignia." Not only is Judah indomitable like a lion, but he is "a ruler who possesses a symbol of authority, the scepter," which marks his exceptional control and magnifies his realm of dominance. Jacob here underscores the perennial nature of Judah's kingdom with the use of the phraseלֹא־יָסוּר "will not depart" of the tribe of Judah as kings. Zlotowitz, an editor of an orthodox Jewish Commentary underlines the messianic element regarding v. 10 and makes this remark, "The general consensus [with a few exceptions] of rabbinic interpretation is that this phrase refers to the coming of the Messiah. This passage accordingly constitutes the primary Torah source for the belief that the messiah will come."[113] Good explains that many scholars present different views about the nature of

[111] NET, NAS. *TWOT*, 728: It explains here that the participial form מְחֹקֵק designates a ruler, lawgiver (Gn 49:10; Is 33:22), or commander (Jgs 5:9, 14).

[112] ASV, RSV, KJV, LXX (Prince), etc.

[113] Scherman and Zlotowitz, Gen. eds., *Bereishis* in Artscroll Tanach Series, vol. 6 (Brooklyn, NY: Mesorah, 1977), 2152-3.

this royal image "scepter."[114] The scepter imagery alarms many fanatics of the Judean culture about the advent of the Messiah. To Sailhamer, Jacob is establishing the view that Judah and his descendants will occupy the throne of Israel until the greatest king emerges.[115] This greatest King will establish and perfect the throne of Judah. Moreover, the phrase מִבֵּין רַגְלָיו "from between his feet" is an idiomatic expression signifying "one's lineage or family line." Wenham finds the phrase "from between his feet" as hard to fathom. He thinks its form and style in relation to the context suggest and that it carries an obscure meaning.[116] The textual issue here is that the Samaritan Pentateuch proposes דגליו "between his standards,"[117] but according to Wenham, this translation is aloof from the context of Gn 49:10.[118] Leupold is one of the proponents of rendering מָחֹקֵק as "ruler's staff" and he states,

> This translation agrees so very well with the following phrase, because the long ruler's staff would be placed between the feet as the ruler sat on his throne and would then either rest against his shoulder or be held in the hand. Commentators here usually refer to monumental carvings of old Persian kings. A very good

[114] Good, "Blessing on Judah," 428. Moreover, Good explains that the noun רֶגֶל is a euphemism for the sexual organ (2 Kgs 18:27; Is 36:12, which corresponds with Is 7:20; Ez 16:25). As stated above, Good notes that this particular word is an allusion to the departure of his rod resulting in incest/cohabitation with Tamar and the ultimate denial of regal status to Shelah that ended up coming through Perez to David. All the while quite the opposite of the upholder of law seen in the participle מָחֹקֵק, which is a truly illegal action when he should have done rightly (righteously) by granting Shelah to Tamar (Good, "Blessing on Judah," 429-30). It seems Good is fixated with Judah's past sin with Tamar and he thinks being censured by his father will be appropriate, hence connecting this declaration to a past event (Genesis 38). The underlying objection to this view is that, Reuben, Levi, and Simeon were directly and harshly rebuked and cursed for their past actions. Undoubtedly, if this declaration was meant to be a rebuke, Jacob would not be ironical about it. He would have been direct and harsh as he was with the older brothers.

[115] Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical-Theological Commentary,* 235.

[116] Wenham, *Genesis, WBC,* 476.

[117] A. F. von Gall ed., *Samaritan Pentateuch, Der Hebräische Pentateuch der Samaritaner*, (Giessen, Germany: Verlag von Alfred Topelmann, 1918), "Gen 49:10–רַגְלָיו."

[118] Wenham, *Genesis, WBC,* 476. In scripture,דֶּגֶל "standard" is used to represent "a flag, banner, or a tribal division" (*TWOT* 402: Nm 1:52; 2:3). These translations have nothing to do with the context.

> illustration… is that of King Tutankhamen found in Barton's, *Archaeology and the Bible* (1937).[119]

All these verses (note 122) given by Leupold to support the option "ruler's staff" do not fit the context of Gn 49:10, since the passages talk about rulers literally "holding, possessing, or owning" staffs instead of rulers figuratively having their "staff" coming out of their feet, which means giving birth to rulers as this passage asserts. Ancient versions[120] acquiesce to the option "ruler" based on Dt 28:57, which inevitably fits this context. Deuteronomy 28:57 is a reference about the lineage of Judah. Children will come out from "between his feet." Wenham states "'Feet' are a regular euphemism for the private parts (e.g. Jgs 3:24; 1 Sm 24:3; Is 7:20). In other words, a descendant of Judah will always be a national leader."[121] Jacob prophesies that princes and rulers will forever proceed out of Judah's lineage. He is blessed with an everlasting kingdom and a perennial hegemony.[122] Jacob predicts that regardless of what the future may bring, the "scepter" of kingly authority will never be moved from the kingly tribe, Judah.[123] The first part of v. 10 reveals a synthetic parallelism, because even though the second line corresponds to the first, yet it builds upon the notion of the first.

> The scepter shall not depart from Judah,
> Nor a ruler from between his feet

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[119] Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis*, 575. He thinks this option is supported by Nm 21:18; Ps 60:7 (KJV): Ps 108:8.

[120] LXX, Vulgate, Talgums.

[121] Wenham, *Genesis, WBC*, 477.

[122] It could be a plausible conjecture to think that if the older sons were deprived of their rightful blessings by reason of their past sinful ways, then Judah's past mistakes could negate his hegemony as tribe of kings. Nevertheless, he is in no wise censured, but blessed by his father.

[123] On the contrary, Edwin Good reveals that von Rad thinks it is quite wrong to conclude that the "scepter" image is royal apparel (Good, "Blessing on Judah," 428).

There is an ellipsis on the second line and the word missing is "depart." The unit above can be rendered as:

> The scepter shall not depart from Judah,
> Nor a ruler *depart* from between his feet

The "scepter" is an image of authority, and "ruler" is a person of authority. The scepter will not depart from Judah and the ruler will not depart from Judah's lineage. The second line seems to repeat the first line, but utilizes words that bring out the deeper meaning, which corresponds to the notion of the first. A subtle form of repetition is employed here to certify the surety of this prediction, which is that the kingship authority designated for Judah will never be abrogated. The "ruler" holds the "scepter" and "Judah" produces "rulers" out of his "loins." Judah will keep reigning as king and his lineage will reign as kings עַד כִּי־יָבֹא שִׁילֹה, which is often translated "until Shiloh comes." Textual issues presented here are related to the word שִׁילֹה. The following is an outline of these issues:

> MT (Kethiv): שִׁילֹה;[124] Multi Mss: שִׁלֹה–The name of a place;[125]
> *LXX*: ᾧ ἀπόκειται–Whose it is or whom it belongs;[126]
> Vulgate: שִׁלֹה = שָׁלֵחַ, *qui mittendus est*–"He who is to be sent"[127]

The *LXX*, Peshitta, and twenty plus medieval Hebrew manuscripts present the Hebrew word שִׁילֹה to be a compound word. There is a slight change with the MT, which ranges from שִׁילֹה to שִׁלֹה. Miller explains that this change is "comprised of the relative particle שֶׁ (short for אֲשֶׁר) meaning 'who, which or what,' plus the preposition לְ, and the

[124] KJV.

[125] Dillman, Delitzsch, Tuch, ARV in the margin.

[126] Syrian Version, Samaritan Version, Symmachus, the Old Latin, Onkelos, the Peshitta, Diodati, Moffatt, Oesterley, RSV, NIV, NEB.

[127] The Latin translation of Jerome.

third person singular pronominal suffix ה. The phrase would then read 'until he comes to whose it is' or 'to whom it belongs.'"[128] Lacking only the conjunction כִּי, Ez 21:32 contains the same lexemes[129] and it reads עַד־בֹּא אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ "until he comes to whom it belongs," buttressing the rendition offered by the LXX, which reads ἕως ἂν ἔλθῃ τὰ ἀποκείμενα αὐτῷ "until there come the things stored up for him." On the other hand, the rendition of the LXX is akin to the Vulgate, rendering it as being referred to someone who will come later in the future. Luther renders the phrase as "'bis dass der Held komme,' which means 'until the hero or champion comes.'"[130] Wenham explains that elsewhere in Scriptures, the name of a place is wrongly written as שׁלה. He gives a similar explanation to that of Miller stating, "But the versions, in reading שׁלה, evidently take it as לה + שׁ 'which is to him.' Wenham outlines four possible renditions for this verse and opts for the last, which is a product of merely repointing the vowels. Wenham splits the words and repoints them as thus: לה "to him" שַׁי "tribute" יָבֹא "is brought,"[131] which reads "until tribute is brought to him." Regardless of the many options, Wenham and Miller identify the eschatological element with this prophetic declaration to Judah. Miller touches on another option, which takes the phrase שִׁילֹה as a proper name possibly "man

[128] John A. Miller, "Exegesis of Genesis 3:15; 12:3; and 49:10: Advent Text," A Message Delivered at the Chicago Conference, SEW District of the WELS at Lord and Savior Ev. Lutheran Church Crystal Lake, IL, September 12-13, 1988, 11.

[129] In the English translations it is found in Ez 21:27, but it is Ez 21:32 in the Hebrew Bible.

[130] Miller, "Exegesis of Genesis 3:15; 12:3; and 49:10: Advent Text," 11. The old Jewish interpretation in the Targums of which Luther and Calvin support takes שִׁילֹה as a word sourced from the etymology שִׁלְיָה, which is perceived to mean "his son." Miller disregards this point of view by explaining that there is no other place in Scripture where this word means "son," but on the contrary, the word means "afterbirth" (Miller, "Exegesis of Genesis 3:15; 12:3; and 49:10: Advent Text," 11).

[131] Wenham, *Genesis, WBC*, 476-7.

of rest" or "bearer of rest," which is from the root שׁלה[132] meaning "to rest on or Shiloh, which is a name of a place." The LXX's option "to whom it belongs" and that of KJV's transliteration "man of peace" are not the same, yet both have a Messianic inkling. To Miller, the context of Genesis 49 accepts KJV's option as the safest and he states, "Hebrew names packed with such meaning and pointing to the personality or work of the person bearing them are not at all unusual in Old Testament writing. In either case, the fulfillment of Jacob's words as recorded by Moses is found in none other than Jesus Christ, in whose hand the ruling scepter and the right to rule belongs."[133] Good and Carmichael argue that *Shiloh* is an ironic reference to *Shelah,* the son Judah denied Tamar in Genesis 38.[134] This argument detracts from the far reaching implications of the pronouncement controlled by the adverbial phrase used by Jacob in the introduction of this passage (1), which isבְּאַחֲרִית הַיָּמִים (in the last days).

All these options are possible renditions for שִׁילֹה, but this paper will embrace the translation, which is "to whom it belongs." This is supported by the *LXX* and also buttressed by Ez 21:32. Putting all the above renditions and options together, Wenham explains that the messianic overtone is still present in most of the possibilities proposed, except for the one that sees שִׁילֹה as a location. He states, "Whichever of these interpretations is adopted, and, though we prefer the last, we acknowledge that the alternatives are possible, all at least agree that this line is predicting the rise of the

[132] Hermann J. Austell, שָׁלָה, which means "to be at rest, prosper." *TWOT,* 2392. Miller, incorrectly suggests שָׁיְלָה. Miller, "Exegesis of Genesis 3:15; 12:3; and 49:10: Advent Text," 11.

[133] Miller, "Exegesis of Genesis 3:15; 12:3; and 49:10: Advent Text," 11.

[134] Good, "Blessing on Judah," 427-32 and Carmichael, "Some Sayings in Gen 49," 435-44.

Davidic monarchy…the coming of a greater David. And if the primary reference is to David, traditional Jewish and Christian exegetes would agree that like other Davidic promises, it has a greater fulfillment in the Messiah."[135] Accepting this word as a name of a place seems unlikely since the phrase וְלוֹ suggests a person. Therefore, the declaration about Judah undoubtedly concerns the coming of someone who will come out of the family line of Judah to lead Israel in the future. Rashi and other Jewish sources believe that verse 10 is the crux of Jacob's prophetic declaration.[136] It is not surprising for Riskin to state "our sages understood that the initial reference to the emergence of a messianic line in Judaism is to be found in the blessing to Judah, who is the progenitor of Boaz, Yishai, and David, model and ancestor of the long-awaited Messiah."[137] The eschatological aspect of "the one to whom the scepter belongs" will be explained in detail in chapter five of this paper. Jacob prophesies about the unending reign of Judah's lineage, which will even persist until the first and second Advents of the Messiah. The phrase וְלוֹ יִקְהַת עַמִּים "and to him shall be the obedience of the nations" establishes the supra-cultural element of the Messiah's reign in the last days. He shall command obedience not only from His own people (Israelites), but also from other nations around the world. The scope of the Messiah's eschatological ministry will be worldwide.

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[135] Wenham, *Genesis*, *WBC*, 478.

[136] Rabbi A. M. Silbermann and Chumash with Rashi, *Bereshit* (Jerusalem, Israel: Feldheim, 1994), 245; Zlotowtiz, Vol. 6, 2152; Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *Messianic Christology* (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 1998), 20; Rachmiel Frydland, *What the Rabbis Know About the Messiah* (Columbus, OH: Messianic, 1991), 16-17; and, Burt Yellin, *Messiah: A Rabbinic and Scriptural Viewpoint* (Denver, CO: Congregation Roeh Israel, 1984), 90.

[137] Riskin Shlomo, "Awaiting the Messiah," *The International Jerusalem Post*, January 12, 2001, 39.

Verse 10 ends with a description of the coming ruler, the holder of the emblems of power, who will continue the everlasting kingdom of Judah. Jacob then continues his metaphors like vine, wine, garments, ropes, and blood of grapes. The herculean question worth asking is: should vv. 11-12 be interpreted in light of the future king (the Messiah) or does it still concern Judah or both? Many scholars who see verse 10 as messianic continue to interpret the succeeding verses (11-12) as messianic as well. Since this Messiah is a product of Judah, this paper sees the ensuing verses as concerning Judah and his future, which includes the Messiah. Judah is greatly praised, elevated, and blessed and this is substantiated by the Messiah's advent from his lineage. Constable states, "Because Reuben, Simeon, and Levi had disqualified themselves, Judah received the leadership of the tribes and the blessing that normally went to the first-born. This is how the leadership of the tribes and the Messianic line fell to Judah. Jacob evidently forgave Judah's earlier sins because he repented and later sacrificed himself for Jacob's wellbeing."[138]

Verse 11 begins with a series of parallel units that explain the fruitfulness and richness of Judah's lineage, which is fully realized in the coming of the Messiah.

> Binding a male ass to the vine,
> And the young of his female donkey to the choice vine;
> He washes his raiment in wine,
> And his robe in blood of grapes.

These parallel units have an ellipsis in the second lines. The first unit of parallelism contains a synthetic relationship. The second line develops on the idea of the first–male ass for female donkey and vine for choice vine. The word omitted from the second line is "binding." The second unit below the first gives a synonymous parallelism since both

[138] Constable, *Notes on Genesis*, 273.

lines have the same idea, even though they are described in different words. Raiment is synonymous to robe and the same is true with wine and blood of grapes. The omitted phrase on the second line of the second unit is "he washes." Verse 11 can then be rephrased as follows:

> Binding a male ass to the vine,
> And *Binding* the young of his female donkey to the choice vine,
> He washes his raiment in wine,
> And *he washes* his robe in blood of grapes.

To begin explaining this verse, there is the need to deal with a textual issue that ends the second line of the second unit. The presentation of this issue is as follows:

> MT: סוּתֹה
> Sam. Pent: כסותו

The MT's option סוּתֹה is from the root סוה meaning "vesture or robe." Since this word is only used here, the Samaritan Pentateuch suggests כסותו "his covering" to replace the MT's word. This proposal is vague and hence unsupported by ancient versions and is only synonymous to סוּתֹה of the MT. Moreover, it is unfounded by other versions and since MT's option is supported by different versions, it is the best option. The parallel units presented above are decorated with many figurative expressions. These parallel units describe the exquisite territorial location of Judah and his lineage. Good and Carmichael offer allegorical interpretations of this verse by attempting to connect it to the historical rather than futuristic events, yet differ significantly in their intratextual associations in the Joseph story.[139] They think as Reuben, Simeon and Levi were reprimanded for their past evil ways, so Judah should also suffer for his unjust actions.

[139] Edwin M. Good, "The 'Blessing' on Judah, Gen 49:8-12," 427-32; Callum M. Carmichael, "Some Sayings in Gen 49," 435-44.

Although their claim about Judah's past is accurate, defining Judah's declaration as caustic is problematic.[140] Judah's past sins with Tamar are never overtly alluded to by Jacob in his declaration to him as they are with past actions of the older brothers. Although interesting, Good's and Carmichael's explanations are less than obvious and certainly not compelling. The beauty of this verse and its appropriateness to its context are identified when one sees this verse as a continuation of Judah's future exploits, which will reach its zenith in the first and second advents of the Messiah. This declaration perfectly follows that of v. 10, which alludes to the coming of the Messiah, who will command obedience from all nations.

Hamilton thinks the phrase "binding his male ass to the vine" suggests that the ass will readily consume the vine and eat it. This is an epithet of an abundance of pasture for the descendants of Judah. He says, "It would be like lighting a cigarette with a dollar

[140] Good connects it to the past deceitful cohabitation of Judah and Tamar and the resulting birth of twins (Gn 38:12-30) as well as Judah's deceitful handling of Joseph and his father (Gn 37:26-27). In his explanation, the imagery of the שֹׂרֵקָה ("choice vine") in 49:11 alludes to a שֹׂרֵק wadi leading from the Shephelah to the coast, a valley with a city named Timnah (Jo 15:57), an area Judah went to shear sheep and on whose road Tamar sat in deception awaiting him (Gen 38:13-14). Finding her, he tethered his ass to the vine (49:11) and went in to her (38:18). "Washing his robe in the blood of grapes" alludes to Judah's yet earlier disposing of Joseph to Egypt (Gn 37:26-27) and his complicity in deceiving his father into thinking his brother had been slain through the trick of his (not Judah's) colorful tunic dipped in the blood of a slain animal (Gn 37:31-34). Carmichael on the other hand connects the imagery of verse 11 to Judah's deceased sons (Gn 38:6-10). Just as שִׁילֹה ("Shiloh") of 49:10 is an extended consonantal allusion to שֵׁלָה ("Shelah") of Gn 38:5, 11, 14 and 26, so the עִיר ("male ass") of 49:11 hints at עֵר ("Er") of 38:3. Furthermore, the אָתוֹן ("she-ass") of 49:11 is a covert reference to אוֹנָן ("Onan") of 38:4, 8-9, a proper name with the same vowels, albeit reversed, and two of the same consonants. Read thus, these deceased sons of Judah tied to their father's vine (an allusion to Judah's progeny), would do nothing but consume it to destruction. Only the progeny produced by Shelah coming into (impregnating) Tamar (covertly expressed in 49:10) could rightly rectify the problem of Judah's continued line. Utilizing imagery evoking the recollection of Judah's disposing of Joseph into Egypt and the torn robe dipped in animal blood convincing Jacob of Joseph's extinction (Gn 37:26-31), the phrase "he washed his robe in the blood of grapes" signifies Judah acknowledging the real death of Er and Onan, the loss of his offspring, the vine. These explanations given by both Good and Carmichael are less than obvious. Furthermore, in Gn 37:31, the pronoun used is "they," which means not only Judah washed Joseph's coat in blood, but all the ten brothers excluding Benjamin. So why is only Judah receiving a rebuke about that atrocity and not his other younger brothers who were equally guilty of this crime (Good, "Blessing on Judah," 427-32; and, Callum M. Carmichael, "Some Sayings in Gen 49," 435-44)?

bill."[141] He explains further that to "wash his clothes in wine" also depicts an element of opulence for the future of Judah and the Messiah.[142] Skinner on the other hand interprets this verse literally and sees as giving a splendid picture about Judean environs. He thinks that the use of vine and wine in this verse attests to the popularity of vine trees in the land of Judah and the raiment being washed in wine bespeaks of its abundance in the land of Judah.[143] The verse begins with the participle אֹסְרִי from the root אסר meaning "to bind, harness, gird, imprison, and the one most scholars use–tethered"[144] According to Leupold, the participle element suggests the habitual attitude of Judah and his lineage– they will have the habit of always *binding* their male asses to the vine. In agreeing with Skinner, Leupold states,

> His reason for so doing is because vines grow in such profusion in the land–as they still do in the vicinity of Hebron in Judah–that a man will have no hesitation about tethering the ass to them. What if one vine be damaged? The loss is not felt because there is no end of vines. For that matter, a man would not even show hesitation about binding the more restless "ass's colt to the choice vine" (*sereqah*).[145]

Undoubtedly, many scholars like Skinner and Leupold embrace the literal aspect of a greater part of v. 11 especially the first part of the verse and connect the abundance of vine trees with the abundance of Judah's territory.

Other scholars like Wenham believe that this verse refers to the Messiah and His marvelous reign in the future. He explains that the first part of v. 11 reveals Jacob's

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[141] Hamilton, *Genesis: Chapters 18-50*, 662.

[142] Ibid.

[143] Skinner, *Genesis*, 524-5.

[144] *TWOT*, 141.

[145] Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis*, 578.

artistic mind and eye toward not just the Ruler, but the fruitfulness of His land, Judah. Wenham states, "There will be so many vines that the ruler will not worry about his ass eating the choicest vines, as it surely would if tethered to them."[146] Wenham explains further that the territory owned by Judah is perfect for viticulture.[147] To Hamilton, the mentioning of "wine" is never the same as the phrase "the blood of grapes."[148] Contrary to Hamilton's view, if this verse is embraced as figurative, then the phrase "blood of grapes" should be seen as synonymous to the word "wine" on the first line of the first unit. Wine is the juice gotten out of grapes and the "blood of grapes" figuratively suggests the "red juice" gotten out of grapes. Although this passage is considered poetic, there are literal elements that underscore its conspicuousness. Jacob speaks literally about the abundance of vine in the land of Judah, which signifies prosperity and plenty. The mentioning of a male ass alludes to the eschatological ministry of the Messiah prophesied by the prophet Zachariah (9:9). He is identified and pictured as riding on "an ass and upon the foal of an ass."[149]

The Hebrew *piel* stem verb כִּבֵּס meaning "to wash," should not be taken literally since one does not literally launder or bathe with wine. However, in contrast with the literal sense of the word, the metaphorical sense of כִּבֵּס should be held in high esteem.

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[146] Wenham, *Genesis, WBC*, 478.

[147] The cultivation of grapes and grape vines; grape growing.

[148] Hamilton explains that "wine" has everything to do with the finish product, while "blood of grapes" deals with the crushing of the grapes. He sees a pastoral image pictured here within which there is an element of violence with the reference to "blood," which connects to both "washing in wine" and a "washing in blood." Hamilton concludes that this refers to the advent of the Messiah and he states, "to his own this one will bring joy and fullness; to those who reject him he brings terror" (Hamilton, *Genesis*, 662).

[149] M. Noth notes that the phrase "a male ass" is akin to an Akkadian phrase *mār atānim* (M. Noth, *The Laws in the Pentateuch and Other Studies* [Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1966], 111).

Leupold suggests that the phrase "merely describes graphically a picturesque episode from the time of treading out the grapes after the grape harvest."[150] He explains that the press will be so full that the grape pressers will look like they have bathed themselves in wine.[151] This understanding establishes the view that the abundance of wine will be evident even in the lives of the inhabitants of Judah. Wenham adds to Leupold's interpretation and states, "There will be such an abundance of grapes that those trampling them in the wine press will not just splash their garments (Is 63:1-3) but soak them. Or the image may be of such a surplus of wine that people will not worry about using it to wash clothes in!"[152] The destiny of Judah and his lineage is an avalanche of opulence and affluence. With reference to Judah's future prosperity, Mills states, "The fertility and productivity of Judah's possession in the promised land was then assured (vv.11-12), so Judah was blessed both materially and spiritually. Nothing in the history of Judah as recorded in Genesis presages these superlative blessings. One must recognize the element of inspiration in Jacob's pronouncement!"[153] Verse 11 summarizes prosperity in the future of Judah–the second advent of the Messiah. It will portray cessation of famine, poverty, and war. Moreover, tranquility and stability will color His millennium reign. This leads to v. 12, which describes the wonder and splendor of the future of Judah.

Verse 12 is entirely figurative and hence should be interpreted metaphorically. Words that establish the metaphorical sense are: eyes, wine, teeth, and milk.

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[150] Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis*, 578.

[151] Ibid.

[152] Wenham, *Genesis, WBC*, 479.

[153] Mills, *Genesis*, Gn 49:11, 12.

Metaphorically, eyes and teeth refer to Judah, his descendants, and especially the Messiah. The metaphors "wine and milk" suggest physical abundance of wine and milk and the metaphorical sense of superabundance. The parallel division of this verse is as follows:

> His eyes are darker than wine,
> And his teeth whiter than milk.

This is a synthetic parallelism since the second line expands the idea of the first. The second line presents quite a different thought from the first. Jacob uses "teeth" to contrast "eyes" and "white," to contrast "dark," which is the same word as "dull,"[154] then he used "milk" to contrast "wine." The pronoun "his" is very prevalent in this verse and it solely refers to Judah and his descendants who are being spoken to by Jacob. Good and Carmichael interpret this verse as punitive and not as a blessing as this paper espouses. Carmichael sees this imagery as a drunken person who commits illicit sex with a harlot–an allusion to Judah/Tamar.[155] There is no identification of a subtle rebuke addressed to Judah, much less a harsh one from vv. 8-12. Jacob started Judah's declaration from calling him "praise" to the height of connecting him with "milk," which is an epithet of nourishment and fruitfulness. Wenham convincingly refutes Good's interpretation and explains that the whole verse is a description of Judah's beauty and splendor. As destined

[154] *BDB*, 3031.

[155] Good thinks that the whole of Jacob's declaration to Judah is an ironic reflection on Judah's past sins and for this reason, there is no prophetic element regarding Jacob's testament to Judah. Good sees every symbol used for Judah as an expression of rebuke from his father, especially with the inclusion of the word עֵינַיִם "eyes," which can also mean "two springs." Good settles on the second meaning and connects it to Gn 38:14 where Tamar sat to waylay Judah. This explanation from Good is far-fetched, because if these sayings were meant to reprimand Judah, then Reuben, Simeon, and Levi were treated unjustly by his father and God. Meaning, their claim suggests that Jacob rebukes Judah indirectly through irony, hence a subtle form of discipline, whereas the rebukes of the three older brothers were direct and harsh. Why should Jacob rebuke Reuben, Simeon, and Levi harshly, but rebuke Judah softly? This assertion from Good is implausible (Good, "Blessing on Judah," 432; and, Carmichael, "Some Sayings in Gen 49," 439).

to birth kings, leaders, and the Messiah, his future will be embellished with awesome beauty.[156] These imageries are ridiculous if taken literally, but metaphorically they make sense and allude to the future of Judah in the promised land,[157] the prophetic messages about the last days,[158] and the future of the Messiah (Is 7:21-23). Versions interpret the preposition מִן variously.[159] The context of Judah's declaration suggests "abundance of richness" and hence this paper embraces the comparative rendition of the verse–the option of both *LXX* and *NIV*.

> NIV: His eyes will be darker than wine,
> His teeth whiter than milk
> LXX: His eyes shall be more cheering than wine,
> And his teeth whiter than milk

These two versions satisfy the context and they perfectly reveal the meaning of the verse both literally and metaphorically:

> Literal Sense: Judah's eyes will be darker (more cheering) than wine
> And his teeth will be whiter than milk
> Metaphorical Sense: He shall be rich more than the richness of wine
> And nutritious and fruitful more than the nourishment of milk

This verse rounds up the unique future of Judah. The Messiah's life will be full of splendor and wonder. Isaacs states that the word "milk" is figuratively used in the Old

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[156] Wenham, *WBC*, 479.

[157] Ex 3:8, 17; Nm 13:27; Dt 6:3.

[158] Gn 49:1; Jer 11:5; Ez 20:6; 20:15.

[159] To name a few, the KJV interprets it as "with," which is akin to NAS's option "from." The LXX interprets it as "more than" and the NET interprets it as "will be." The NET rendition is far from the usual and hence not worth explaining. The NAS (from) connotes result while KJV's (with) connotes instrumental. The KJV literally suggests that with the use of wine, Judah's eyes will be dark and, with the use of milk, his teeth will be white. The NAS literally submits that wine will make Judah's eye red and milk will make his teeth white. In the literal sense, one is forced to ask, "Does wine make one's eye red and does milk make one's teeth white scientifically?" Obviously, too much wine can make one's eye dark or red, but scientifically, too much drinking of milk can never make one's teeth white. Therefore, in the literal sense, the KJV and NAS can certainly suffice the first part, but the same sense frustrates the last part.

Testament to mean "abundance (Gn 49:12)[160] and blessings (Is 55:1; Jl 3:18).[161] Isaiah 7:21-23 touches on the over-abundance of milk and vineyards. In attesting to the meaning of "red or dark" as words that express abundance and prosperity, Demsky and Paul explain that in Akkadian culture, the word *ekēlu* occurs in connection with prosperity, meaning "to be dark."[162] Figuratively, both milk and wine are epithets of physical and spiritual fruitfulness. Judah will advance in abundance of prosperity in every facet of life. The darkness of wine attests to its rich and intoxicating effect. Wenham states, "In an Arabic proverb, being 'red with wine' is metaphorical for being very rich."[163] The spiritual blessings allocated for Judah and his descendants will be more than the physical (vine plantations and milk production). Wine and milk will be abundant in the future of Judah, yet, it cannot be compared with the spiritual blessings the Messiah will bring.

Jacob Made Declarations about Joseph (22-26)

Instead of animal imagery like the other sons, Joseph is referred to as בֵּן פֹּרָת, which literally means "a son of a fruit-bearer or a fruitful bough."[164] This peculiar metaphor forces scholars to emend MT's option for an animal image. These textual alterations have opened the door to erroneous conjectures that have resulted in erroneous rendering of these verses. Leupold identifies Meek as the author of one of such translation:

[160] Also a loved one's charms (Cant 4:11).

[161] Nathan Isaacs, "Milk," *ISBE*, 1915 ed. James Orr (Albany, OR: Ages Software, 1999), n.p.

[162] A. Demsky, "'Dark wine' from Judah," *Israel Exploration Journal* 22 (1972): 233-34; and, S. M. Paul, "Classification of Wine in Mesopotamian and Rabbinic Sources," *IEJ* 25 (1975): 42-44.

[163] Wenham, *WBC*, 479.

[164] *BDB*, 7828.

> Joseph is a young bull, a young bull at a spring, A wild ass at Shur (22)
> Shooting at him in enmity, then archers fiercely assailed him (23)
> But their bow was broken by the Eternal, and their arms and hands trembled
> At the might of the Mighty One of Jacob, at the name of the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel. [165] (24)

This rendition is an erroneous treatment of the MT, which Leupold refutes as either intentionally or inadvertently aimed at destroying the credibility of the MT. He says, "The impression created upon the uninformed by such a translation is that the Hebrew text must be in a deplorable state–a thing which is by no means the case. Besides, such unwarranted alterations undermine very effectually the confidence in God's Word."[166] After a close study of the passage, the following is a rendition based on MT's option:

> Joseph is a fruitful bough, a fruitful bough by a spring; *its* branches climb over a wall (22)

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[165] Numerous textual issues are presented here and they are proposals offered mostly by the Samaritan Pentateuch and the LXX. Several possible translations are presented here and these options totally stand against the MT. The following are the textual issues in vv. 22-24: First: the first phrase בֵּן פֹּרָתis suggested to be deleted perhaps by reason of it being repeated in the beginning of the verse. This suggestion is unreasonable and hence the MT's option should be maintained. Second: the second phrase בֵּן פֹּרָת is suggested to be emended for בֶּן־ פָּרָה to establish a correct pointing. This proposal is grammatically right, but the MT's option does not affect the essence and sense of the phrase to the understanding of the verse. Therefore, this option is also not necessary. The third: the word בָּנוֹת if connected toצָּעָדָה literally becomes "daughters climb over," but according to Wenham, it is said to be equivalent to the Arabic phrase *banāt sa῾adat* meaning "wild asses," which is also a suggestion first made by Vater in 1802 (Wenham, *WBC*, 485). This third proposition impels scholars to prefer the "wild ass" imagery to the "fruitful bough" imagery. This option is unreasonable since the MT's option is clear and understandable. An explanation will be given later to establish this premise. Fourth: The BHS editorial committee reads וְרֹבּוּ as וירבו imperfect and renders the verse as "and they shot him" so as to harmonize the consecutive forms, which is the narrative past form. Nevertheless, the Samaritan Pentateuch, the Vulgate, and the LXX read וירִיבהוּ "and they strove with him" (Wenham, *WBC*, 458). Fifth: the LXX proposes καὶ *συνετρίβη* "and was broken into pieces," which is the Hebrew וַתִּשָּׁבֵר. The MT's option makes perfect sense, therefore this option is not necessary. Sixth: A proposition to follow LXX and Syriac version "the sinews of their arms were slackened" in lieu of MT's reading "the arms of his hands were made strong." Again, the MT's reading makes perfect sense, hence the implausibility of this proposal. Seventh: The MT presents the phrase מִשָּׁם רֹעֶה אֶבֶן, which is literally translated as "from there a shepherd, a stone." The textual variant proposed is עֹזֵר מִשֵּׁם "from the name of a helper." This agrees with translation of the Syriac and Targum version. Another variant offered is מִשֹּׁמֵר אֶבֶן "from the one who guards, a stone . . . ." Even though the variant מִשֵּׁם עֹזֵר has two supports, the MT's option should be maintained since it is understandable in context (Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis*, 582).

[166] Ibid.

> Then the archers embittered him and shot arrows at him, acting with hostility toward him (23)
> But his bow stayed constant, and the arm of his hand were swift, by reason of the hands of a Mighty One of Jacob; from there is a Shepherd, a Stone (Rock) of Israel (24).

There is clarity and understanding with what the MT has given. Comparing the MT's rendition to Meek's emendation, the disparity lies in v. 22, where "fruitful bough is exchanged for a "son of a bull." There is no need to seek emendations when what is offered by the MT makes perfect sense. To justify the option of the MT, it is expedient to understand that Joseph is being called a "shoot of a fruitful branch" or literally "the son of a fruit-bearer." The word בֵּן is commonly used to express a "descendant or son," so it suggests an element that is birthed by another. Indisputably, Joseph is a son of Jacob, who is seen in Genesis as fruitful, successful, and productive in his life and calling. Therefore, Joseph automatically become immersed in his father's fruitfulness. Consequently, the above explanation substantiates the translation, "Joseph is a fruitful bough." The Hebrew word פֹּרָת is the feminine participle of the root פרה, which is "to bear fruit"[167] Leupold imagines this beautiful picture painted by Jacob as revealing that this "bough or shoot" started small or insignificant, but by virtue of its connection to a spring, it grows to become glamorously prosperous. This is clearly pictured in its ability to צָעֲדָה עֲלֵי־שׁוּר "climb over a wall." The perfect verb צָעֲדָה expresses the growth of the bough from its birth until it has already climbed over a wall. Leupold states, "The supporting wall…furnishes a good hold for the vine and protection from inclement weather. Such a healthy, thriving, full-grown, well-supported, fruit-bearing vine well

[167] *BDB,* 7828.

portrays the fruitful sturdy tribe of Joseph or Ephraim and Manasseh."[168] Jacob foresees the thriving future of Joseph and his sons. Even though Jacob had already prophesied the greatness of Manasseh and Ephraim in the previous chapter (48), God still affirms the fruitfulness of their future through their father, Joseph. The verb פרה can be identified with the name Ephraim, whose name depicts "fruitfulness."

Verse 23 reveals a scenario different from what has been expressed about Joseph in v. 22. The fruitful bough is hereby afflicted and persecuted by others. Like Reuben, Simeon, and Levi, the past life of Joseph is addressed in addition to his future. The scene of affliction and persecution has a nexus with his brothers' brutal treatment against him. It also talks about the future afflictions of his descendants, Manasseh and Ephraim included. In studying this verse, one must approach it with a dual understanding of Joseph's past and that of his future. Pink affirms this view stating, "These words of Jacob concerning Joseph are to be divided into two parts: what is said in verses 22 to 24 is mainly retrospective; what is recorded in verses 25, 26 is prospective."[169] For Pink to see the first part of Jacob's words to Joseph as only referring to his past is questionable since the descendants of Joseph as well as that of his sons experienced the bane and pain of their grandfather. Joseph's enemies are described as "archers," described in Hebrew as בַּעֲלֵי חִצִּים "masters of arrows." These enemies who are skillful archers וַיְמָרְרֻהוּ וָרֹבּוּ

[168] Ibid. The significant phrase בֵּן פֹּרָת is repeated to serve as an emphasis or a focus for this declaration and it is added to the colorful phrase עֲלֵי־עָיִן "by a spring." The Hebrew employs the preposition עַל literally "over," so this part can be rendered as "over a spring." A robust, secured, and firm vine can stand erect higher than a fountain or it can spread its branches longer across and above a spring (Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis*, 583). From the beginning of this verse until this stage, there is no iota of doubt that Jacob was talking about something that assures the essence of a "fruit." This bough is enriched with ample water to make it grow over the spring wherewith it gets its nourishment.

[169] A. W. Pink, *Gleanings in Genesis* (Escondido, CA: The Ephesians Four Group, 2000), 337.

"bitterly assailed him" which means "they made life very bitter for him," "and shot arrows at him," and this is because וַיִּשְׂטְמֻֽהוּ "they were hostile toward him." The life of Joseph from when he was sold by his brothers until he was a slave in Egypt perfectly fit the description of these afflictions.[170] However, not only do these descriptive images connect with his past, but also Jacob prophesies about his descendants having a taste of persecutions, which their ancestor or father suffered. Verse 24 underlines the stability of Joseph and the strength to have stayed alive or the descendants staying alive in the midst of the storms.

Verse 24 begins with the verb וַתֵּ֣שֶׁב. Leupold believes it is a *waw adversative* form and it counteracts what was said before in verse 23.[171] His enemies will deal with him drastically, but "his bow will stay constant or remain firm."[172] Joseph, the persecuted, had his own defensive bow that did not stay down after countless throws. "It remained constant or it stayed firm." In light of his past life, all the persecutions from his brothers and that of Egypt were directed at keeping him from his future, but he never gave up. He stood firm, and kept his faith in the mighty One of Jacob. The text reveals that וַיָּפֹ֖זוּ זְרֹעֵ֣י יָדָ֑יו "the arm of his hand was swift." This statement is justified by the constant reflexes of archers in continuously throwing the arrow in times of war. Their arms and hands become tired, but Joseph is described as having his arms and hands "supple or agile." Leupold affirms this notion saying, "With quick movements, taking off

[170] Genesis 37-39; Ps 105:17-19.

[171] Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis*, 583.

[172] Wenham reveals that some versions see a problem with the phrase קַשְׁתּוֹ "his bow," because, though it is literally correct, he thinks it should be referring to his enemies, not Joseph (Wenham, *Genesis, WBC*, 458).

the arrows from its quiver, placing it in position on the bowstring, bending the bow, steadying it for aim, letting it fly. Every movement is eloquent with suppleness."[173] With all the dexterity of his hand and the strength of his arm, his "bow remained constant and firm." His strength and swiftness are caused by the One whose hands are mightier and stronger than his. The text again establishes the source of Joseph's strength and agility.

A second parallel statement substantiates the source of Joseph's strength and power and is introduced by the phrase מִשָּׁם "from there." Jacob speaks of the protective power that has brought him thus far and he says this by the phrase "the hands of a strong One of Jacob;" and by the help of רֹעֶה אֶבֶן יִשְׂרָאֵל "a Shepherd, the Stone (Rock) of Israel." As a shepherd protects the flock from any brutal animal or enemy, God, the Great Shepherd, will be Joseph and his descendant's Savior and Helper. Sailhamer sees "Shepherd" as an allusion to Jacob's blessings to Joseph's sons. Jacob prayed that, "May God who has been my Shepherd all my life long to this day … bless these lads" (Gen 48:15, 16).[174] The Shepherd who fed and led the father (Jacob) will certainly lead the son (Joseph) and his descendants forever. The eschatological element concerning the use of the words "Shepherd and Stone or Rock" will later be dealt with in Chap. 5. God is seen as the Stone or Rock, the One who is reliable and trustworthy–the Rock of ages. To Leupold, this pictures Yahweh's sturdy strength and unwavering helpfulness. Ancient gods and goddesses were pictured as shepherd kings and queens, who lived to protect the

[173] Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis*, 584. The text again establishes the source of Joseph's strength and agility. The phrase מִידֵי underlines the reason why "his bow stayed firm." The preposition prefixing the nounיָד can be rendered as "from, out of, by, and by reason of," but here, the best preposition, which suits this context, will be "by reason of." Joseph's hands stayed firm and constant because of the יְדֵי אֲבִיר יַעֲקֹב ("hands of the strong One of Jacob").

[174] Sailhamer, *Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical-Theological Commentary*, 237.

lives of their worshippers. The same is true with some of the ancient kings, who reigned and ruled like great shepherds.[175]

Verses 25-26 underscore Jacob's prayer for Joseph and his lineage. Besides the above wonderful blessings, the patriarch, in the spirit of prayer prophesies about Joseph's future greatness. There are a few textual issues presented in these verses, which need to be addressed. First Issue: וְאֵת of which some Hebrew manuscripts, the Samaritan Pentateuch, Geniza, and the Syriac read ואל, which is "and *El*." The MT has ואת, which is "and with or also." This option certifies a great balance and harmony with that of the first line: "the God of your father." The MT's option must be retained since it makes perfect sense in its context.[176] Second Issue: The phrase הוֹרַי עַד־ is seen as faulty. The LXX proposes *ὀρέων μονίμων* "forever/lasting mountains" in *lieu* of MT's participle "my ancestors." Although the MT's option is seen as unusual, it makes sense in this context. The phrase "my ancestors" can be a reference to the "many descendants of Joseph" that are more than that of Jacob's. Therefore, the MT's option should be retained. Third Issue: Some versions propose that the MT option תִּהְיֶיִן should have ended with ן to present a fully written imperfect verb. The following is Jacob's prayer for Joseph:

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[175] Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis*, 584. Ancient gods and goddesses were pictured as shepherd kings and queens, who lived to protect the lives of their worshippers. The same is true with some of the ancient kings, who reigned and ruled like great shepherds. To read more about the "Shepherd kings" in *ANE* times, confer the following books (B. Pritchard, *ANET*, 3rd ed. [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969], 114, A-1i; and, Stephen Langdon, "The Legend of Etana and the Eagle," vol. 12 [Babyloniaca, 1931], 9). The above explanation about the Ancient Near Eastern culture is alluded to in Ps 80:2 (1), where God is called the "Shepherd of Israel and the One who leads Joseph like a flock." Brettler reveals that the oldest title used by the ANE kings is "the Shepherd king" (Marc Zvi Brettler, "God is King: Understanding an Israelite Metaphor," *JSOTS* 76 [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1989], 36).

[176] Wenham, *Genesis*, *WBC*, 458.

> Because of the God of your father who will help you because of the Almighty who will bless you *with* blessings from heaven above, blessings from the deep that lies beneath, and blessings of the breasts and of the womb (25). The blessings of your father have surpassed the blessings of my ancestors up to the utmost boundary of the everlasting hills; may they be on the head of Joseph and on the crown of the head of the one consecrated of his brothers (26)

Verse 25 is a direct continuation of the source of Joseph's strength and swiftness: "from there a Shepherd, the Stone (Rock) of Israel" (24). Jacob's prophetic declaration about Joseph is exceptional. He reminisces about his past, he talks about his future, and establishes every word with series of prayers. He establishes that the source of Joseph's blessings in his prayers is also the God of Jacob himself. He prays that this very God would "help Joseph." Another name of God is added to the ones given, שַׁדַּי "the Almighty" to whom Joseph belongs and who will offer him help. Jacob then moves to discuss where the Almighty's blessings will come from: First, שָׁמַיִם "the visible and invisible heavens."[177] Jacob said, "of the heavens above" (which can be the elements such as seen in the heavens and come down on the earth) like the rains, sunshine, dews, lightening, thunders, etc. Second, he continues with those that will be of the תְּהוֹם "the subterranean waters," of which Jacob describes as "blessings of the deep that lies beneath."[178] Third, they are of the שָׁדַיִם וָרָחַם "breasts and womb," of which Jacob describes as "blessings of the breasts and of the womb." This phrase does not only refer to humanity, but also animal fruitfulness. These blessings are subject to the time frame underscored by Jacob in the introduction to the prophetic declaration about his sons in

[177] *BDB*, 10062.

[178] *BDB*, 10447. Leupold highlights the kinds of blessings being referred to by Jacob here and states, "This involves the waters stored in the earth that are so essential to all vegetable growth as well as the sources of the much needed streams and of the fountains" (Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis*, 584).

verse 1–"tell [them] what shall befall [them] in the last days." All these blessings were to be fulfilled immediately after they were pronounced and stretching to the end of time. Joseph obtains greater physical blessings than any of his brothers. Nevertheless, Mills and Leupold think Joseph did not receive any "spiritual blessing."[179] They have mistaken the word שָׁמַיִם to refer only to the physical and visible, but *BDB* categorically sees the word as also referring to the invisible heavens.[180] It also refers to "a part of a future glory" and "the abode of God."[181] Moreover, spiritually, the tribe of Joseph is destined to be helped by the Mighty One of Jacob, the Shepherd, and the Stone (Rock) of Israel.

Verse 26 presents a phrase that should be explained in light of its context. The phrase בִּרְכֹת אָבִיךָ "blessings of your father" is genitive in form. The question worth asking is this: Is the phrase "of your father" objective or subjective? A close study of the verse will not allow a subjective genitive, since it will be haughty on the part of Jacob to claim or own a blessing. The objective genitive will warrant the explanation "the blessing that your father received." Therefore, Jacob will mean "God has blessed me greatly more than my ancestors." Leupold explains the greater blessings of Jacob that surpasses that of his ancestors and says, "Abraham had one son of promise; Isaac had two children; Jacob

[179] Mills, *Genesis: A Study Guide to the Book of Genesis*, Gen 49:26.

[180] Mills states, "Joseph's blessings are essentially material: abundance of produce, abundance of offspring; there is no spiritual blessing as such, for that would come through Judah. This surely, more than anything, demonstrates the divine source of Jacob's oracle, for any purely human oracle would have favored the favorite son, a son who also had an impeccable record, yet whose progeny would deviate from their illustrious father's example!" (Mills, *Genesis: A Study Guide to the Book of Genesis*, Gen 49:26). Leupold embraces Mills assertion and adds that, "If no spiritual blessings are foretold in the case of the offspring of this favorite son, it seems to us that this was because the Spirit of truth Himself could foresee none of particular moment. This very silence must have constituted a warning and a lesson to Joseph's descendants. Spiritually they never excelled. It was among the tribe of Ephraim that one of its sons, Jeroboam, instituted the calf worship, whereby he 'made Israel to sin'" (Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis*, 584).

[181] *BDB*, 10062.

had twelve sons destined to be heads of tribes. When Jacob came down to Egypt with his family according to Gn 46:27, his descendants numbered seventy."[182] The word הוֹרַי, which is a participle for the root הרה meaning "to bear, conceive"[183] seems unusual in this verse, yet it is preferable in this context, where it can mean "progenitors."[184] Jacob says, "The blessings of your father have surpassed the blessings of my ancestors" and he added the phrase "up to the utmost bound," which is encased in the word תַּאֲוַת of the גִּבְעֹת עוֹלָם "everlasting hills." The blessings of the descendants of Joseph will exceed the borders of his own land and territory up to the topmost of the mountains. Jacob then proclaims a wish for Joseph for the blessing to be on his head and on the קָדְקֹד "crown" of the one נָזִיר "separated and consecrated"[185] of his brothers. The preeminence and excellence designated for Reuben (Gn 49:3) is hereby declared upon Joseph. Moses summarizes the prophetic declaration concerning the twelve tribes of Israel.

A Summary of the Prophetic Declaration (49:28)

The narrator closes Jacob's words with a summary statement on three specific elements. First, he identifies the nature of the sons of Jacob; second, he identifies the nature of the words Jacob declared to each son; and third, he identifies that each of these sons receives the blessings each one deserves. These sons are identified by the narrator as twelve tribes of Israel.

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[182] Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis*, 585.

[183] *BDB*, 2470.

[184] *TWOT*, 515.

[185] *TWOT*, 1340.

Sons, Identified as Twelve Tribes of Israel (28a)

The phrase שִׁבְטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל שְׁנֵים עָשָׂר "twelve tribes of Israel" first occurs here. The Narrator gives this revelation to establish the impact of this declaration on the future of the nation of Israel. It is a testament establishing the future of a great nation. Each declaration reserved for each son is to create awareness that as brothers, they are destined to become great tribes and a great nation. Unlike their ancestors, they will grow to become families, clans, and tribes. Leupold explains that the number twelve is a number representing covenant and, hence, this declaration has a positive bearing upon the covenant existing between Israel and God.[186]

Declarations, Identified as Blessings from Jacob (28b)

The narrator reiterates the source of this prophetic declaration (1, 2) identifying Jacob as the speaker calling his declaration בְּרָכָה "blessing."[187] Ironically, irrespective of the censures barraged at the elder sons, the narrator deems it suitable to call them "blessings." Therefore, it is wise to conclude that the admonition given to Reuben, Simeon, and Levi were meant to straighten and refine them and not to castigate and crush them. They were not meant to be destructive, but redemptive. With the focus of this paper, the declaration about Judah and Joseph perfectly suits the description "blessings." Each received what was designed for him by God through their father. Every one obtained what is prepared for him by God.

[186] Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis*, 586.

[187] *BDB*, 1469.

Declarations, Identified as Blessings
Each Son Deserves (28c)

A textual issue presented here concerns the word אֲשֶׁר, which is deemed by many versions as awkwardly placed. Wenham believes that it would be more plausible if it were placed after the phrase כְּבִרְכָתוֹ.[188] For this reason, some Hebrew manuscripts omit it. Moreover, *BHS* proposes an emendation of אשׁר to איׁש. Skinner calls the construction אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר as impossible and implausible for the context.[189] Nevertheless, Leupold addresses Skinner's negative assertion and refers to Koenig's view on this phrase, which asserts that "'*asher* is the cognate object and, hence, it should be translated as 'with which'"[190] and not just "which." Therefore, the last phrase can be rendered as "each with that appropriate to his blessing he bless them."

In a nutshell, the future of Israel as a nation is embedded in the birth, maturing, and culmination of each son or tribe. It is very crucial to understand the beginning, formation of the nation of Israel from the perspective of Judah and Joseph. Judah's past weaknesses and strengths contribute to the challenges and successes of Israel as a nation. An understanding of the prophetic declaration of Jacob to both Judah and Joseph will prepare one's mind for the impact of these prophetic sayings on the individual lives of these two sons as well as the future of Israel. The next chapter will highlight the fulfillment of the prophecies given to Judah and Joseph and their impact on the future of Israel as a nation.

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[188] Wenham, *WBC*, 458.

[189] Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis,* 533-35.

[190] Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis*, 590.

Chapter 4

The Fulfillment of Jacob's Prophetic Declaration about Judah and Joseph and Its Impact on the Future of Israel

Prophecies are given to inform and prepare the hearers about what God has designated for them in the future. Irrespective of the element of time, every God-given prophecy has a future fulfillment. The prophet Isaiah established that God's word will never return to him unfulfilled (Is 55:11). This chapter will highlight the fulfillment of Jacob's prophetic declaration about Judah and Joseph and its impact on the formation of Israel as a nation as presented both in the OT and NT. A major part of these fulfillments will encompass biblical history. This section will focus on the family background of Judah and Joseph, which is described in Genesis, the time of exodus into the wilderness, the time of the Judges to the monarchy, the pre-exilic and exilic times to the close of the OT, and a brief part of their NT. The question that this chapter will answer is that: How was Jacob's declaration about Judah and Joseph fulfilled in biblical history and what impact did it have on Israel's future?

The prophetic declaration of Jacob to Judah and Joseph fulfills one purpose: to reveal what is earmarked for them in the last days (Gn 49:1). Although the declaration was given to them individually as sons, these were geared towards their being part of the establishment of the nation of Israel as individuals. The nation of Israel began as individuals, but they grew into a big nation. One important element of the prophetic declarations was to instill in them the spirit of unity regardless of their differences and uniqueness. The need for unity was expressed in Jacob's repetitive command for them to

"gather together" (Gn 49:1, 2). Regardless of what would confront them in their future, they must stay united. As already underscored in the beginning of this paper, Jacob as a father has the authority and the leeway to declare to each son about what the future has in store for him behind closed-doors; but he chose to make it public so that each son, by hearing what is declared about the other would learn a great deal from it. These prophecies given to each son and, more especially to Judah and Joseph with his sons as well as their tribes, were to be fulfilled in the last days when they will have become a great nation. The prophecies surprisingly outlived the existence of all of these individual sons (including the other 10 sons) and none of them lived to experience a manifestation of a greater part of their father's prophetic declaration. This establishes God's import for speaking through the patriarch about the future of his sons, concerning the birth, growth, and maturation of the nation He promised Abraham a great nation (Gn 12:2, 3). The focus of Jacob's declaration was never these sons, but the nation that was yet to germinate, grow, and become great.

This chapter will briefly highlight the development and growth of the tribe of Judah and Joseph (with Manasseh and Ephraim) after Jacob's prophetic declaration. It will also emphasize the fulfillment of each prophetic declaration and their impact on the future of Israel. In the course of highlighting these fulfillments, the blessings of Moses given to these tribes in Deuteronomy 33 will also be juxtaposed and briefly explained in nexus with the future of each tribe. The character and attitude of Judah and Joseph described through the metaphors will be addressed as well. The maturation of each of these four tribes (Judah, Joseph, Manasseh, and Ephraim) will surround three specific areas: The beginning or rise of each tribe toward the development of Israel as a nation,

the successes or failures of each tribe in their formation and development as a nation, and the culmination of each tribe as part of Israel's designated future.

Judah: The Lion Will Be Praised

As the praised one, he was prophesied to be a cub, growing lion, and a matured lion (Gn 49:9). His father referred to him as a lion and that "his eyes will be darker than wine and his teeth, whiter than milk" (Gn 49:12). This translation encompasses both physical and spiritual blessings designed for this tribe. Physically, they will increase in agriculture (more vines in their farmlands and more milk from their cattle rearing). Spiritually, the advent of the Messiah from this tribe enriches their posterity and hence surpasses the physical blessings. In the land of Egypt, this tribe grew immensely and it numbered as one of the greatest tribes in Israel. During their exodus from Egyptian slavery, they overwhelmingly numbered 74,600 fighting men (Nm 1:16, 27). Their number increased to 76,500 when they reached the wilderness (Nm 26:22). As the tribes marched through the wilderness, Judah's tribe went first (Nm 10:14). Moses blesses them and prayed to the Lord that He should hear Judah's prayer and brings him to his people (Dt 33:7). This prayer could be a cry for Judah to return from captivity and not to be dispersed like the other tribes. Judah occupied the largest portion of the southernmost part of the land when Joshua divided it among the tribes. Renney explains that the portion of the land given to Judah was enriched with fertile plains, hills, and phenomenal basins. Springs decorated the land coming out from the mountains. The land was having an abundance of corn, wine, fruits and many more vegetables. This land was considered the

largest and the most significant section in the southern part of the land of Canaan.[1] Elwell has this to say about the abundance of Judah,

> Half of Judah might be desert, but the rest had reasonably good soil, and on the western slopes the rain was usually adequate. Wheat, barley, olives, figs, and especially vineyards, grew freely. The land might be stony, but stones could be collected and used for walls and buildings. Not as rich as the great northern valleys like Jezreel, Judah was still good mixed farming country, although it required hard work. Sheep and goats were plentiful, and that meant wool and milk. Cattle were probably rarer; Judah was not cattle country like Bashan (Nm 32:1). Wool meant cloth, and hide meant leather. In those days the hills were forested, which meant fuel and building materials. Clay for pottery was readily available for domestic utensils. Copper came from Edom in the south, and iron from Philistia in the west; these could be obtained by bartering agricultural produce. Whether they realized it or not, God had dealt graciously with the people of Judah in giving them adequate resources.[2]

This tribe enjoyed overabundance far beyond the other tribes. It became the praise of the other tribes both physically and spiritually. The fact that the name of this tribe was not mentioned in the song of Deborah does not discount their presence in the battle that brought victory. This tribe grew strong and sufficiently numerous in Israel to obtain preeminence among the inhabitants of Israel. Ellison states that since the land allotted for Judah was the best of all, "Judah voluntarily abandoned to Simeon (Jo 19:1, 9), it is reasonable to suppose that he hoped to have Simeon as a buffer between him and the unconquered coastal plain."[3] The beginning of this tribe was colored with abundance and prosperity in growth and leadership.

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[1] Robert Renney, *The Prophetic Blessings of Jacob and of Moses Respecting the Twelve Tribes of Israel, Explained and Illustrated: An Argument for the Truth of Divine Revelation* (London: J. G. & F. Rivington, 1832), 34.

[2] Walter A. Elwell and Philip Wesley Comfort, "The Tribe of Judah," *TBD* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 2001), 747.

[3] H. L. Ellison, "Judah," *NBD,* 3rd ed., D. R. W. Wood and I. Howard Marshall eds. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996), 617.

Excellence and success were the very foundation and structure of this tribe in relation to their presence in the development and transformation of the nation of Israel. Ellison states, "The crowning of David as king over 'all Israel' (2 Sm. 5:1-5) made him king of a dual kingdom in which Judah kept its separate identity. Certainly during Absalom's rebellion Judah seems to have maintained its neutrality, while the Northern part followed the rebel."[4] The first judge and deliverer of Israel, Othniel, was from the tribe of Judah (Jgs 3:9). During Saul's war with Nahash, the number of the fighters of the tribe of Judah were 30,000 and the other tribes were numbered 300,000 (1 Sm 11:8). The tribe's character and attitude reflects the authenticity of Jacob's prophetic declaration concerning them. Renney underscores three specific areas in the life of the tribe that certify the accomplishment of Jacob's declaration regarding them. These areas are: the piety of the tribe towards God; the courage of the tribe, which is depicted by the lion metaphor; and the dignity of the tribe identified through the emblem of a scepter.[5] First, the piety or spirituality of the tribe is seen with its ability to lift the placard of righteousness against deceit. When the kingdom of Israel was rebuked and denigrated for the deceit found in and within them, Judah's tribe was praised for their veracious attitude and character. Hosea 11:12 says, "Ephraim has surrounded me with lies; the house of Israel has surrounded me with deceit. But Judah still roams about with God; he remains faithful to the Holy One."[6] All Israel is seen to have doubled themselves in the bane of deceit, yet, Judah stands in truth and faithfulness with God. Second, in their courageous

[4] Ellison, "Judah," *NBD,* 617.

[5] Renney, *Prophetic Blessings,* 35-54.

[6] Ibid., 35.

attitude like the lion, they were leaders in war, for they marched in front of all the other tribes during battle (Nm 10:4). In the days of Joshua, Caleb, who is from the tribe of Judah expressed the spirit of courage when they were sent as spies in Canaan. Among twelve spies, only Caleb and Joshua professed positively about their ability to overcome the enemies (Nm 13:1-14:9). After the death of Joshua, God appointed this tribe to go up first against the Canaanites and surprisingly, they brought victory to Israel (Jgs 1:2).

David came out of this tribe and with boldness, his last words fulfilled that of Jacob's declaration given to his great ancestor that his hands will be on the neck of his enemies (Gn 49:8). In 2 Samuel 22:41, David says "Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies, that I might destroy them that hate me. The prediction of Jacob has its fulfillment in the lives of the kings of Judah, especially David, who had many victories over his enemies. David won his battle over Goliath as a young lion (1 Samuel 17). In his matured age, he killed thousands, and he proclaimed victory over his enemies in his last days. Jacob's prophetic declaration to Judah can be identified in the life of David. As the lion *couches* and *lies down,* the victories of David (1 Chr 18:11) attracted great peace and prosperity for Judah and all Israel in the time of Solomon; of which it is said that Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine, and under his fig-tree, from Dan even to Beersheba (1 Kgs 4:24, 25). Genesis 49:8 expresses the obeisance that will be offered to Judah by his brothers. This prophetic declaration was literally fulfilled in the life of David and Solomon, who were respected and bowed down to as kings. The kingship lineage of Judah was hereby underscored by Jacob.[7]

[7] Renney, *Prophetic Blessings,* 37.

The third and last area also underlines the culmination of Judah's impact in the nation of Israel. The dignity of Judah is expressed in v. 10 of Genesis 49, where Jacob prophesied about the coming of "the one to whom the scepter belongs." As already explained in chap. 3, Jacob was referring to someone who will appear in the "last days" from the tribe of Judah unto whom "all nations" shall render obedience (Gn 49:10c). Even though the tribe of Judah produced Othniel (Jgs 3:9-11) and Ibzan (Jgs 10:8), who had great strength and wisdom as judges, the coming of the one to whom the scepter belongs did not take effect in their days. To Renney, the coming of the one to whom the scepter belongs gets its foothold 630 years after the death of Jacob, the patriarch and prophet. He explains further that David's succession on the throne spearheaded the beginning of the long awaited kingdom of this individual.[8] The tribe of Saul, Benjamin, disqualifies him from fulfilling the prophecy of Jacob, so the rise of David on the throne served as a catalyst to the manifestation of the "One to him the scepter belongs." Renney picks up on the nature of the scepter and explains that the notion that the scepter, which is the epithet of power and authority (kingship), remained in the house of David for 470 years in which time the kingdom threaten to be divided, averted, and destroyed especially in the days of Ahaz (Is 7; 2 Kgs 16: 5; 2 Chr 28:1-8).[9] Elwell says, "The chief glory of the tribe of Judah, now as ever, was that the house of David sprang from it."[10] In Psalm 89, the psalmist reacts to the long-lasting covenant God has with David and says, "His

[8] Renney, *Prophetic Blessings*, 37-38.

[9] Ibid., 38.

[10] Walter A. Elwell and Philip Wesley Comfort, "The Tribe of Judah," *TBD* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 2001), 747.

seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before me" (36). The prophetic declaration of Jacob (Gn 49:10) is confirmed by the psalmist that David's seed shall hold the scepter to reign forever. Jacob's declaration alludes to the coming of the Messiah, to whom shall be the obedience of all nations. The psalmist identifies the Messiah's kingdom as everlasting. In explaining the relationship between the scepter and the lawgiver, Renney states, "When the scepter ceased, the lawgiver succeeded; and when both were gone, the Messiah appeared."[11] Jeremiah unequivocally touches on the failure of the scepter and says, "Write ye this man [Coniah, 22:30 or Jeconiah, 1 Chr 3:16, or Jehoichin, 2 Kgs 24:8] childless, a man of his seed shall prosper sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling anymore in Judah" (22:30). Jeremiah is seen as condemning the demise of Solomon's reign, pronouncing woes against the shepherds and pastors who partook in the failure of the scepter (23:1, 2), and then foretelling about the everlasting rule of the kingdom of David (23:5, 6). The prophet then prophesies about the coming together of all the house of Israel from the *diaspora*. Ezekiel also is seen prophesying at the time Nebuchadnezzar sought to take away the scepter. He wonderfully confirms Jacob's prophetic declaration about Judah and says, "Thus saith the Lord GOD; Remove the diadem and take off the crown: this *shall* not *be* the same: exalt *him that is* low and abase *him that is* high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn it: and it shall be no *more*, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it *him* (Ez 21:26-27).[12] This prophecy of Ezekiel gives a glaring view about the cessation of the monarchy. Josephus says, "And after this manner have the kings of David's race ended their lives, being in number twenty-one,

[11] Renney, *Prophetic Blessings*, 39.

[12] KJV.

until the last king, who all together reigned five hundred and fourteen years, and six months, and ten days; of whom Saul, who was their first king, retained the government twenty years, though he was not of the same tribe with the rest."[13] The prophet Hosea in 13:11 prophesies about the reign of the Messiah as far as the future of Israel is concerned. He states, "I gave thee a king in mine anger, and took *him* away in my wrath.[14] As the Lord rejects a king, He reserves the throne for "he to whom it belongs," the Messiah, who will reign as the long awaited true King, unto whom the angel told Mary that the throne of David will be given by the Lord. He will rule over the house of Jacob forever (Lk 1:32, 33). In a nutshell, the tribe of Judah later came to be the nub around which the whole nation revolves. The religion of Israel was later called Judaism, a term emanating from the name Judah. Although many tribes came back from captivity afterwards, the tribe of Judah became the center of everything about Israel as a nation. The eschatological aspect of Jacob's prophetic declaration will be dealt with in detail in the fifth chapter of this paper.

Manasseh and Ephraim: The Fruitful Bough by a Spring

As a prolific and productive *branch over a spring*, Joseph will inevitably live triumphantly. Two sons (Manasseh and Ephraim) were born to him. These were blessed by their grandfather in an extraordinary way–blessing the younger son (Ephraim) above the elder (Manasseh) with crossed hands (Genesis 37-48). The blessings of Ephraim and

[13] William Whiston, trans., *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged*, electronic ed. of the new updated ed. (Garland, TX: Galaxie Software, 1999), *Antiquities of the Jews*, (Antiq. Lib. X. c. 8.).

[14] KJV.

Manasseh by their grandfather allowed them to partake in the blessings of Abraham. The first part of Jacob's declaration (Gn 49:22-24) has a double meaning: the first looks back on Joseph's past life while the second looks into his future. The first describes his tests and messes, but the second looks into his glorious testimonies and messages which will be unfolded in the future. Verse 22 serves as a caption for the whole declaration about him. It describes in brevity his awesome nature and productive future. As a vine *shoot* or *bough* has the innate strength and ability to grow up higher to be like the vine tree, Joseph is made and designed to be blessed like his father or more than his father. As a *bough*, he is also connected to a spring where he gets his nourishment and strength.

Genesis 39 presents that the presence of the LORD was with Joseph. Consequently, he experienced prosperity in his life and in the house of Potiphar. The last part of Gn 49:22 states, "*Its* branches run over a wall." This is an expression of abundance and affluence. Verse 23 expresses the herculean *attacks* and *bitterness* he endured by the hands of "the archers–the masters of arrows" or "elder brothers," who *shot arrows* of persecution and affliction at him. Bush fittingly observes that,

> The prophecy here points to Joseph in person, from whose history its fulfillment appears evident. He was aimed and shot at, as it were, by the bitter and reviling words of his brethren, and still more deeply wounded by their cruel treatment. He was sold into Egypt through envy, and imprisoned by a lie. His virtue was violently assaulted by his mistress, his innocence wronged by his master, and his patience severely tried by the ingratitude of a fellow-prisoner. Yet 'his bow abode in strength.' The divine favor forsook him not.[15]

Instead of Joseph giving in to hatred and the binds of slavery in Egypt, he held unto his faith in the God of his father, Jacob, the Almighty, the Shepherd, and the Stone or Rock

[15] George Bush, *Notes, Critical and Practical, on the Book of Genesis: Designed as a General Help to Biblical Reading and Instruction*, vol. 2 (Andover, NY: Gould, Newman & Saxton, 1839), 412.

of Israel. By virtue of his trust in God, he was empowered to stand up and fight against his enemies with his bow staying constant and arms and hands becoming swifter. There is an eschatological sense in the names of God presented here. Chapter 5 of this paper will explain these names into detail. Verses 25-26 reveal Jacob's wish and prayer of deliverance for Joseph like his prayer for Dan in v. 18. These prayers are specifically directed to the future of Joseph, which involves Manasseh and Ephraim, since both tribes took the place of their father. Jacob showers an all-round blessing of greatness and preeminence on Joseph and his descendants. In Gn 48:20, Jacob plainly reveals to Joseph that the future glory and prosperity of Israel is dependent on his sons. He says to his grandsons that, "In thee shall Israel bless."[16] It is expedient to also focus on the life and future of Manasseh and Ephraim, which also have a great impact on the future of Israel.

Manasseh: The Lord Has Caused Me to Forget

Joseph named his eldest son Manasseh because the Lord has caused him to forget his troubles and his father's house (Gn 41:51). The number of the descendants of Manasseh after they came out of Egypt amounted to 32,200 fighting men (Nm 1:35). Their number increased in the wilderness to 52,700 (Nm 26:34). Their tents were pitched beside Ephraim and Benjamin, behind the tabernacle (Nm 2:20). The tribe of Manasseh was divided into two: First, one half of this tribe obtained an inheritance on the east side of the Jordan River between Mount Lebanon on the north and the tribe of Gad on the south. The Targum Pseudojon states, "The standard was the figure of a boy, with the inscription 'The cloud of Yahweh rested on them until they went forth out of the

[16] KJV.

camp.'"[17] They had an inheritance in Gilead and in Bashan, which was vast as that of Reuben and Gad and it involved two popular mountains called Bashan and Hermon (Nm 32:33-42). Second, the other half obtained an inheritance by lot on the west side of the Jordan River with Issachar on the north, Ephraim on the south, the Mediterranean Sea on the west, and the Jordan River on the east (Joshua 17).

In their growth as a tribe, they produced four prominent Judges for Israel: Gideon, Abimelech, Jair, and Jephtah. Another man from this tribe called Barzillai, who entertained the fugitive, David, when he fled to Gilead from his own son, Absalom (2 Sm 19:31-39). David's seven captains were also from the tribe of Manasseh. These captains espoused David against the Amalekites, who have discomfited Ziklag (1 Chr 12:19-22). During David's coronation, 18,000 military men from this tribe attended (1 Chr 12:31). As for a record of their failures, Isaiah prophesies about their enmity toward Judah. Both he and his brother Ephraim will stand against their older brother, Judah (Is 9:21). Their eastern half tribe is said to have followed other gods of other nations and this attracted the wrath of God upon them, hence their being deported by Pul and Tiglath-pileser, kings of Assyria (1 Chr 5:25ff).[18]

Ephraim: The Lord Has Caused Me to Be Fruitful

Joseph named him Ephraim because in a strange land (Egypt), the Lord caused him to become fruitful (Gn 41:52). As his name is, he was destined for fruitfulness. Even though his older brother, Manasseh was destined to be great as a firstborn, yet he like his

[17] The *TJon* on Numbers 2:18.

[18] Other references revealing their idolatrous acts can be found in 2 Chr 31:1; 34:6.

grandfather and father, obtains the double portion due their older brothers. He had three sons, who produced numerous descendants. His other sons were killed in the course of protecting their herds of cattle from some robbers belonging to Gath. Scriptures reveal that Ephraim had a daughter, who built Beth-horon the nether, the upper, and Uzzensherah (1 Chr 7:20-27). Their fighting men were numbered 40,500 when they came out of Egypt (Nm 1:33), but surprisingly, instead of increasing in the wilderness, they decreased in number to 32,500 (Nm 26:37). The Ephraimites with the tribe of Manasseh and Benjamin pitched their tents behind the Tabernacle and marched behind the ark (Nm 2:18-24). This depicts the presence of the Lord leading the tribe of Ephraim, like the Shepherd leading the flock (Ps 80:1, 2). Ephraim partakes of his father's blessings given by the Shepherd of Israel as prophesied by Jacob (Gn 49:24).

Their successes began with the strong leadership of Joshua, who came out of this tribe and possessed the promise land, Canaan. By lot, Joshua divided the land and his tribe received a portion located at the very heart of the land, where the portion of the ground was, which was bought by Jacob from Hamor, the father of Shechem (Jo 24:32). Ephraim's allotted inheritance and location were bounded on the north besides Manasseh's, on the south besides the tribes of Benjamin and Dan, on the west besides the Mediterranean Sea, and on the east besides the Jordan River (Jo 16:5-10). A part of the land has rocks and mountains, but a greater part abounds with trees, good pasture, and exceeding rich, fertile, fruitful, and luxurious land. Ephraim has the most popular cities in the Bible, like Shechem, which was the residence of Joshua; Shiloh and Samaria, which were the habitation of the kings of Israel from the time of Omri.

Deborah, the prophetess is from this tribe and she led the war against Jabin. During this time, a group of people from Ephraim were detained at home to fight against the Amalekites (Jgs 5:14). This Ephraimites' bad moments began when they declined the invitation of Jephthah to fight against the Ammonites. Jephthah overcame the Ammonites without their help, but afterwards they blamed him for not involving them in this fight. They then threatened to burn down his house. Jephthah came against them and put them to flight. He then seized the passages of Jordan so that he will apprehend and kill every Ephraimite who passes there. The Ephraimites' inability to sound the "sh" in their pronunciation of *Sibboleth* in *lieu* of *Shibboleth*, spelled their doom. This became the sign with which Jephthah identified them and during this time 42,000 Ephraimites were killed (Jgs 12:1-6). Abdon, of this tribe judged Israel for eight years (Jgs 12:13-15). The tabernacle of God was located in Shiloh on the land of the Ephraimites for 320 years (Jo 18:1). In the battle in which the ark was captured by the Philistines, the Ephraimites were seen as fearful and they cowered before the Philistines even though they were armed (1 Sm 4; Ps 78:9, 60, 67). The coronation of David was graced by 20,800 warriors from this tribe (1 Chr 7:30). No good king was found in Ephraim and all the kings who reigned in Israel walked in the ways of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. The tribe of Ephraim later rose high and this made the kingdom of Israel to later receive the name Ephraim during the prophetic ministration of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Hosea.

The Preeminence of Joseph

Jacob continues his prophetic declaration about Joseph with "blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lies beneath, blessings of the breasts and of the womb"

(Gn 49:25). All these blessings are summed up on the theme of "fruitfulness." Joseph is destined to be abundantly blessed in every facet of life. The dew of heaven and the rains will bring blessings to Joseph and this is accomplished in the richness of his land. Josephus writes,

> Parea (which in his time included Gilead and Bashan) hath a moist soil, and produces all kinds of fruits, and its plains are planted with trees of all sorts, whilst the olive tree, the vine, and the palm tree, are chiefly cultivated there. It is also sufficiently watered with torrents, which issue out of the mountains, and with springs that never cease to run even when the torrents fail them, as they do in the dog-days. The province of Samaria (including the portions of Ephraim and of the half-tribe of Manasseh, west of the Jordan) is entirely of the same stature with Judea; both countries are made up of hills and valleys, are moist enough for agriculture, and very fruitful. They have abundance of trees and are full of autumnal fruit, both that which grows wild, and that which is the effect of cultivation. They are naturally watered by many rivers, but derive their chief moisture from water, (compare with 1 Kings xvii. 1-7; xviii) of which they have no want. The water of the rivers is exceedingly sweet. By reason also of the excellent grass they have, their cattle yield more milk than do those in other places; and (which is the greatest sign of excellency and abundance) they each of them are full of people.[19]

Undoubtedly, the two tribes, Manasseh and Ephraim grew into becoming great and powerful tribes, even though Ephraim was more affluent and popular than Manasseh. The other tribes could not compare their honor to that of Manasseh. Josephus' historical findings about Manasseh and Ephraim fulfill Jacob's declaration about Joseph that all these blessings being on the "head of Joseph and on the crown of the head of the one consecrated of his brethren" (Gn 49:26c). Moses also confirms this by declaring that Joseph will be the "separated one of his brethren" (Dt 33:16). God set Joseph apart and chose him to receive the all-round blessings of greatness than all his brothers. Joseph was declared to be the best over his brothers and this was fulfilled in his sons' future as

[19] Whiston, *The Works of Josephus*, War of the Jews, Book 3 chaps. 2-4.

revealed by Josephus that they were the greatest among the tribes of Israel. Moses' blessing upon Joseph was that he shall be "a firstborn of a bullock and his horns shall push the people together to the ends of the earth" (Dt 33:17). Renney believes these blessings were accomplished when Joshua destroyed thirty-one kings and apportioned their kingdoms among the tribes of Israel. To him, the horns spoken of by Moses were the ten thousands of Ephraim and the thousands of Manasseh, which stand for the millions of Israel, which were under Joshua's command.[20] In retrospect, the preeminence of Joseph began in his dreams when he was a teenager (Gn 37:5, 9). At that time, he foresaw that his excellence far surpassed his brothers including his father.

In a nutshell, a big part of Jacob's prophetic declaration about these twelve tribes has already been fulfilled with the birth, growth, and national formation of biblical Israel. These prophetic sayings of Jacob and the blessings of Moses have a great impact in the life of Israel. Chapter 5 will focus on a part of Judah and Joseph's declaration that have great significance on the last days. The coming of the one to whom the scepter belongs and the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel, impinges on Israel's future and that of the Church.

[20] Renney, *Prophetic Blessings*, 99.

Chapter 5

The Eschatological Elements of Jacob's Prophetic Declaration about Judah and Joseph

The prophetic declaration of Jacob to Judah and Joseph concerns their past and even their near and distant future. The near future element of their declaration has been fulfilled and was discussed in chapter four. This chapter will briefly deal with the aspects of Jacob's prophetic declaration that concern the events that are reserved for the last days. Genesis 49:1 underlines the eschatological (last days) element concerning Jacob's words to his sons. Out of the twelve sons of Jacob, only two received a testament that has an eschatological focus. The declaration about Judah and Joseph has a messianic element, which this chapter will briefly explicate on. In relation to the ministry of the Messiah, this section will see eschatology as dealing with the nature and ministry of Jesus Christ concerning both His first and second advents. The first advent of Jesus Christ partially fulfilled the declaration of Judah and Joseph. However, a great part will unfold in the last events prior to or during the second advent of Jesus Christ. That being the case, there is the need to address the Messiah's ministry in the last days that relates to the declaration both of Judah and Joseph.

The twentieth century marked the decline of messianic prophecies from biblical scholarship. Many scholars during those times relegated messianic prophecies to a thing of the past. Surburg explains that some scholars believe that prophetic messages about the coming of the Messiah are limited to the books of the major and minor Prophets, thus rejecting any prophetic element in the other books of the Bible. He adds that other

scholars presume messianic prophecy to be just an element of erratic and ecstatic utterance.[1] In light of this, Briggs underlines the essence of coming to grips with OT prophecies so that the revelation about the Messiah in the OT can be unraveled. He states, "Messianic Prophecy is the most important of all themes, for it is the ideal of redemption given by the Creator to our race at the beginning of its history, and it ever abides as the goal of humanity until the Divine plan has been accomplished."[2] This assertion provides the impetus to make sense of the eschatological element encased in Gn 49:8-12. Even though unclear, there are eschatological elements in Gn 49:11-12 that could be highlighted. This chapter will not widely deal with the entire prophetic declaration to Judah; it will address the aspects that in essential respects fulfill the Messiah's last days ministry as the "one to whom the scepter belongs," the Shepherd, and the Stone of Israel.

The Future Ministry of שִׁילֹה

The mention of "Shiloh" in the declaration of Jacob concerning Judah (Gn 49:10) has attracted many controversial interpretations. Taking the whole verse in context, Jacob prophesies about the kingly authority (symbolized by a scepter), which will never depart from the line of Judah. This will usher in the ministry of "the one to whom the scepter belongs." While it is true that "Shiloh" is also a reference to a place in Palestine that existed even during the time of Samuel (Joshua 18-22; Jgs 18:31; 1 Sm 1:9; 1:24; 3:3; 1 Kgs 14:2, 4; Ps 78:60; Jer 7:12; 26:6; 41:5), the context of Gn 49:10 seems to indicate that this implies a person, not a location. In v. 10, the phrase וְלוֹ "and to him" is

[1] Raymond F. Surburg, "Messianic Prophecy and Messianism," *Springfielder* 37, no.1 (1973): 19.

[2] Charles Augustus Briggs, *Messianic Prophecy* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1891), 7.

connected to the phrase שִׁילֹה and it connotes *a person* not a location or place.[3] Jacob's prophecy about the coming of the "one to whom the scepter belongs" as a person has no near fulfillment in the OT, except a future fulfillment in the NT, which is in the person of Jesus Christ. His first advent fulfills a part of the ministry of this Messiah and that of His second advent will inevitably establish every prophecy given to Judah by Jacob.

Irrespective of the many views offered about the declaration to Judah, this passage concerns the advent of a personality whose coming will attract peace for all peoples in the world. This verse debars the interpretation that takes "Shiloh" to mean a place. White and Gilbert explain that many of the ancient Jewish writers and critics admit that the word "Shiloh" shall be another name for the King to come, the Messiah.[4] Many sources, including the Targum, see "Shiloh" as a title of the Messiah.[5]

In the book of Numbers, a statement is made about the Messiah that is a direct reference to Jacob's prophecy. It says, "A star will come out of Jacob and a scepter out of Israel" (24:17). Moses alludes to the words of Jacob about the advent of a star (a glorious one) and a scepter (a person of power and authority), who will proceed out of Israel. The near fulfillment of this prophecy is identified in the life of David who "crushed the skulls of Moab and the heads of all the sons of Seth" (2 Chr 8:2). The distant fulfillment is identified with the second advent of Jesus Christ who will come to crush the enemies of the LORD and to establish forever the kingdom of David. The Bible clearly reveals that

[3] Ellen Gould Harmon White and Fred Carnes Gilbert, *Messiah in His Sanctuary*, in the series of Bible Studies on the Sanctuary and its Services (Takoma Park, WA: Review and Herald, 1937), 100.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Allan P. Ross, *Genesis* in *BKC*: An Exposition of the Scriptures, eds. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Scripture, 1985), 98. The Targum is the Aramaic paraphrase of the Old Testament.

the covenant God made with David is an everlasting kingdom (2 Sm 7:8-16; 23:3-5). "The one to whom the scepter belongs," the Messiah, fulfills every detail of Jacob's prophecy, which speaks about this particular seed of Judah. He will continue the everlasting reign of the Davidic Kingdom and the same is he whom the psalmist ascribes blessings to as the One who comes in the name of the LORD (Ps 118:26).

As the scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff or prince from Judah's lineage, the Messiah will proceed out of the feet (family line) of Judah with the power to attract respect and worship from all nations. The tribe of Judah fulfills the physical blessings pronounced by Jacob and the Messiah on the other hand accomplishes the spiritual blessings encased in Judah's declaration.

In Isaiah 11, the prophet Isaiah prophesies about the uncompromising ministry of the Messiah. He alludes to the prophecy of Jacob about the scepter remaining in Judah, a staff or rod coming out of a descent of Judah, Jesse, and a shoot or branch coming out of Jesse's roots. The prophet continues to narrate the nature and ministry of this Messiah (vv. 2-4) and the kind of milieu that will grace the last days of His ministry (vv. 5-9). Verse 10 of this chapter clearly alludes to the background of the Messiah and defines the scope of His ministry as outlined in Gn 49:10. Isaiah's eschatological message about the Messiah's ministry indicates that He shall be an ensign of hope for the nations or peoples. Isaiah specifies that the Gentiles will benefit from the Messiah's ministry. In Isaiah 11:10b, the LXX presents a different rendition from what the MT offers. It embraces "He that shall arise to rule over the Gentiles" at the expense of "He shall be an ensign for the nations or peoples." In Jesus' second advent, He will not only be an ensign to the nations, but will rule the nations and they will obey him (Gn 49:10c). In Isaiah 42:1-4, the prophet

alludes to the prophecy of Jacob about the eschatological ministry of the Messiah to the Gentiles–"He shall bring judgment to the Gentiles."

There are many more texts that allude to and affirm the ministry of the Messiah spoken of by Jacob.[6] MacDonald and Farstad discuss the rule and ministry of the Messiah in the last days saying, "His people would give Him willing obedience in the day of His power.[7] In the Messiah's first advent, a particular segment of people showed Him willing obedience, but in His second advent, all nations will worship Him. To Ross, the future ministry of Jesus Christ will be bedecked with splendor.[8] Kidner thinks that every line in Gn 49:11-12 "speaks of … abundance: it is the golden age of the coming One, whose universal rule was glimpsed in v. 10c."[9] Ross stresses the awesomeness of Judah's future (Gn 49:8-12). He states, "Such opulence will be evident in the Millennium (Is 61:6-7; 65:21-25; Zec 3:10)."[10] In Genesis 49:8-12, Wiersbe identifies the nature of the first and second advents of the Messiah in the images of the vine and the lion.[11]

Wallace expresses his view about the word שִׁילֹה and connects it to the views of the Jewish authorities, stating, "The signification of the word שִׁילֹה shows that it refers to

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[6] Ps 108 8; also in Ps 2 7-9 indirectly; Mi 5 8-9, the subsequence development of the message is akin to that of Zec 9 10; Ez 21 32 applied in a different sense, however. For a recent interpretation of the latter, see W. L. Moran, "Gen 49 10 and its Use in Ezek. 21, 32," in *Biblica* 39 (1958), 405-25.

[7] William MacDonald and Arthur Farstad, "Gen 49:10," *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997), n.p.

[8] Ross, *Genesis*, 98.

[9] Derek Kidner, *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary*, 1st ed. (Chicago: Inter-varsity, 1967), 219.

[10] Ross, *Genesis*, Gen 49:8-12.

[11] Warren W. Wiersbe, *Gen 49:8-12*, The Wiersbe Bible Commentary: Old Testament: The Complete Old Testament in One Volume (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2007), 1308.

the Messiah. Jewish writers of the highest authority abound in acknowledgment that Shiloh is the Messiah."[12] The metaphors used by Jacob in his prophecy about Judah connect the vine and the lion symbols to the future ministry of the Messiah. The lion metaphor alludes to Jesus Christ, who is spoken of in Rv 5:5 as "the Lion of the tribe of Judah." As a dreaded lion, He comes bringing judgment upon the nations (Gn 49:9).

Ezekiel prophesies about the coming of someone whose right it is to receive the kingdom reserved for Israel (Ez 21:27). This verse is another direct allusion to Jacob's prophecy about one who has the right to hold the scepter (Gn 49:10). Barnes sees Ez 21:27 as the oldest existing reference that parallels Gn 49:10c.[13] This passage does not only allude to Jacob's prophecy to Judah, but more importantly, it confirms the messianic element of Jacob's prophetic declaration. It reveals that Jacob's declaration about Judah is alluded to in the OT.[14] Rydelnik sees a double interpretation with Ezekiel's prophecy. He opts for this double notion because of the word מִשְׁפָּט, which to him controls the understanding of the verse. The first interpretation translates the word as "judgment" and refers to the mighty ruler from Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, who will bring judgment against Israel. The second renders the word as "justice/just," which is a reference to the eschatological reign of the Messiah who will fulfill the promise of restoring Israel and the

[12] Benjamin John Wallace, ed., "The Sceptre of Judah" *The Presbyterian Quarterly Review*, art. v, vol 9 (April 1861): 600.

[13] *HALOT* 4:1365.

[14] The variant reading of Num 24:7-9 bespeaks of the advent of an eschatological glorious king possessing an overwhelming glorious kingdom who will annihilate Gog (chapter 3), who is the eschatological enemy of Israel. This messianic prophecy narrated by Moses climaxes by contrasting this glorious eschatological king to a lion who "crouches, lies down like a lion or a lioness–who dares to rouse him?" This is somewhat a clear-cut evidence that these passages agree with the Messianic notion. Moses and Ezekiel view these passages as messianic.

entire world to the predestined purpose and plan of God.[15] These explanations stress on the near future aspect of Ezekiel's prophecy as well as the distant aspect. The same is true with Jacob's declaration about Judah.

Oropeza *et al* believe that Gn 49:10 remains to be "the fountainhead of all the subsequent texts that anticipate a warrior king who will exercise might on behalf of Israel, take her enemies captive, maintain hegemony over the Gentiles, and establish peace.[16] This soon coming king will rule over the world and the prophet Micah affirms this by underscoring the Messiah's lineage (Judah), His work and ministry (a ruler), and the scope of His ministry–eternal (5:2). Zec 9:9 alludes to Ps 118:26 while Mk 11:9 confirms that Jesus Christ fulfills these prophecies. The Gospel of Luke and John also establish Jesus Christ as "The King of Israel" (Lk 19:38; Jn 12:13). Blenkinsopp believes that the phrase "The King of Israel" has a close nexus with the prophetic title "Shiloh" in the Targum as already explained.[17]

White and Gilbert contrast the views of early Jewish scholars with recent Jewish and OT scholars regarding the Messiah's eschatological ministry as highlighted in Gn 49:10. They state,

> The majority of the older Jewish commentators acknowledge that Shiloh is Messiah. Among such men are Kimchi, Onkelos, Ben Ganach. Modern commentators are endeavoring to sidetrack the rising generation from that ancient view for fear some may desire to investigate the meaning of this prophecy of Jacob. Many of the seed of Abraham are today reading and studying Christian

[15] Michael Rydelnik, *The Messianic Hope: Is the Hebrew Bible Really Messianic?* In series NAC Studies in the Bible and Theology, ed. E. Ray Clendenen (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2010), 50.

[16] B. J. Oropeza, C. K. Robertson, and Douglas C. Mohrmann eds., *Jesus and Paul: Global Perspectives in Honor of James D. G. Dunn for His 70th Birthday*, in The Library of New Testament Series (Maiden Lane, NY: T&T Clark, 2009), 182.

[17] Joseph Blenkinsopp, "Oracle of Judah and the Messianic Entry," *JBL* 80, no. 1 (1961): 59.

> literature. The Jewish people are not as estranged from the New Testament as they were formerly. The accepted translation of Genesis 49:10 is being sidestepped.[18]

Numerous critical scholars today do not interpret Gn 49:10 messianically. Yet there are ample evidences substantiating a futuristic messianic person in the passage. Regardless of the fact that the Rabbis rejected Jesus Christ as the Messiah, the premise is certain that they generally considered Gn 49:10 as a Messianic verse. The Rabbis explicitly embraced Gn 49:10 as a Messianic prophecy even though they do not accept that He has already come in the person of Jesus Christ.[19] The interpretations of the Rabbis about Judah in Gn 49:10 that emphasize on the Messiah's life and ministry in the last days are diverse and this paper will highlight a few. One of these is the Jewish Targumim, Midrashim, and Talmuds, which says, "Kings and rulers shall not cease from the house of Judah, nor scribes who teach the Torah from his seed, until the time when the King Messiah shall come, the youngest of his sons, and because of him nations shall melt away / and on account of him shall the peoples flow together. How beauteous is the King, the Messiah who will arise from the house of Judah."[20] They affirm the eschatological element of the Messianic ministry that will unite all nations and command their trust and obedience. Moreover, Blenkinsopp identifies a Messianic feature with Gn 49:10 and reflects on the LXX's view on this verse. He states,

> The specifically messianic addition in Gn 49:10 refers to one who must *come,* who will obtain universal rule. The designation ὁ ερχόμενος (he who is to come), occurs several times in Mark and generally qualifies the eschatological figure of the Son of man, and that in the mouth of Jesus himself. Emphasis on the future

[18] Ellen Gould Harmon White and Fred Carnes Gilbert, *Messiah in His Sanctuary,* in the series of Bible Studies on the Sanctuary and its Services (Takoma Park, WA: Review and Herald, 1937), 100.

[19] The Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 98b.

[20] Targum, *Pseudo-Jonathan* on Genesis 49:10.

> coming of the Son of man is especially strong in the eschatological discourse (Mk 13:26, 36) and in the final affirmation before his accusers (Mk 14:62). This is, of course, the coming in the clouds of the vision of Daniel and the book of Enoch. The only case where ὁ ερχόμενος is referred to outside this context is precisely in the passage we are discussing, in the acclamations of the crowd, in the words of Ps 118:26.[21]

The restoration of the royal lineage of Judah is contingent upon the reign and leadership of the Messiah, who is the son of David. In the New Testament, the angel who visited Mary foretold of the endless Davidic kingdom reserved for Jesus Christ, the Messiah (Lk 1:32, 33). "The one to whom the scepter belongs" proceeds out of Judah's lineage to reign as king and hear, the angel announced that Jesus will reign over the house of Jacob forever. The house of Jacob encompasses that of Judah and David. In Jesus' earthly ministry, He reigned as a spiritual King (his kingship was not physical). At his crucifixion, the inscription posted on top of his cross read "Jesus, the King of the Jews" (Jo 19:19). In the last days, He will reign forever as King over all nations. The first advent of Jesus began this journey of restoring the kingdom of David, yet His second advent will climax this restoration.

The image of a lion used in Jacob's prophecy, which is confirmed in Rv 5:5 inaugurates the beginning of a glorious heavenly reign (Rv 5:9). The coming of the Messiah in the last days will consummate history (Rv 19:11-15). This reference alludes to "the one to whom the scepter belongs" bathing his garments in blood and his robe in the blood of grapes (Gn 49:11; Rv 19:13). The Messiah is dramatically pictured as sitting upon a horse, judging in righteousness, dressed with clothing dipped in blood, with an army with Him, and a sharp sword coming out of His mouth (an expression of judgment),

[21] Blenkinsopp, "Oracle of Judah and the Messianic Entry," 58.

with which He will smite (judge) the nations. The presence of the Messiah will attract joy and peace for the righteous, but wrath and judgment will come upon the wicked. In a nutshell, an obvious application of Gn 49:11, 12 to the eschatological mission of Jesus Christ may be identified by contrasting the passage with Is 63:1-3. It reads,

> Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? This that is glorious in His apparel, traveling in the greatness of His strength? Wherefore art Thou red in Thine apparel, and Thy garments like Him that treadeth in the wine vat. He washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes'–I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with Me: for I will tread them in Mine anger, and trample them in My fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments.[22]

In summary, during the first advent of Jesus Christ, He came as the Messiah to deliver His people from their sins (Mt 1:21). He dwelt among His people (Israel) as a human being (Mt 1:23). He reigned as a King and this is certified by the announcement of the angel to Mary (Lk 1:32, 33). He came to restore the righteousness of God by taking away sin and the one who wields its power (Jn 1:29). The Old as well as the New Testaments testify to the eschatological characteristic of "the one to whom the scepter belongs" that is embedded in Gn 49:8-12. The first coming of Christ fulfills a greater portion of this prophecy. The second advent of Jesus Christ as judge and king will accomplish every prophecy given by Jacob concerning Judah. The ruler of Gn 49:10, Messiah, will continue reigning on the throne of Judah and establish his throne as King over all kings. Pink states, "This part of Jacob's prophecy concerning Judah finds its ultimate fulfillment in Christ. With it should be coupled 1 Chr 5:2: 'Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him is the Chief Ruler,' a, 'Prince'; the Hebrew word here is

[22] KJV.

'*Nagid*' and is the same term which is translated 'Messiah the Prince' in Dn 9:24. It was from this tribe our Lord came."[23] The second coming of the Messiah will establish His peaceful reign, which will be colored with splendor and wonder and it will usher in the New Jerusalem (Rv 21:2).

Finally, the prophecy of Jacob about "the one to whom it belongs" emphasizes on the final ministry of the Messiah is cemented with the phrase, "unto him will be the acceptance of the peoples" (Gn 49:10c). Jesus' first coming attracted many people, but it was mainly targeting the "lost sheep of Israel" (Mt 15:24). On His second coming, He will be coming for the whole world and the book of Revelation describes the uncountable number of people who will stand before the Lamb and worship Him (Rv 7:9).

The eschatological ministry of the Messiah found in the prophetic declaration about Judah has a bearing on that of Joseph, who was blessed with a double portion of awesome posterity (Manasseh and Ephraim). As already noted in chap. 3, the growth and development of these two tribes had a great impact on the future of Israel as a nation. The prophetic declaration about Joseph was to bless him and his descendants and more especially to bless the whole Israel. The eschatological element identified in the prophecy about Joseph has two sides. The first talks about the Messiah as the Shepherd and the second sees the Messiah as the Stone of Israel. In Gn 49:24, these names are in apposition with each other and hence making reference to the same person, the Messiah. This section will deal with both eschatological elements separately beginning with the Shepherd.

[23] A. W. Pink, *Gleanings in Genesis* (Escondido, CA: The Ephesians Four Group, 2000), 323.

The Ministry of the Messiah as a Shepherd

Genesis 49:22-24 alludes to the power of God in protecting and shielding Joseph from the threats and machinations of his brothers. The presence of God as described by the Old Testament is the physical manifestation of the divine and spiritual God with His people. In its context, it is seen in the provision and protection of God (Gn 37, 39-48). The LORD's presence was with Joseph in Egypt, and it empowered him to remain strong in the LORD. The patriarch Jacob reveals the power that brought Joseph thus far and informs all the sons that the self-same power will bring the tribe and the whole Israel to their destination. The destiny of Joseph has a great deal to do with the future ministry of the Messiah as the Shepherd, who emanates from the Strong one of Jacob (Gn 49:24c).

The word "shepherd" metaphorically represents the relationship that exists between a leader and his people. Jacob's use of the Shepherd metaphor is crucial since ANE cultures used the title as an image describing a great ruler or king. This culture preceded the formation of Israel as a nation. Clutton-Brock and others confirm the prevalence of shepherds in many ANE nations. They underline the work of a shepherd as the earliest of occupations and as such it became the economic foundation for early eastern cultures.[24] Hammurapi, an Old Babylonian king was known as a shepherd over his people.[25] The shepherd and flock are among one of the initial imageries in Ancient documentations. Garber explains that the Bible opts for the "shepherd" imagery to describe the nexus between God and His people and the relationship that exists between

[24] Juliet Clutton-Brock, *The Walking Larder: patterns of domestication, pastoralism, and predation* (Boston, MA: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 1-3, 115-118; and, Jack W. Vancil, "Sheep, Shepherd," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1187.

[25] Jackson J. Spielvogel, *Western Civilization: To 1715*, 7th ed., vol. 1 (Belmont, CA: Thomas Learning, 2009), 9-12.

the leaders and their people. [26] The ancient Babylonians, Egyptians, and Greeks were all used to using the title "shepherd" as a metaphor for their powerful rulers.[27] Therefore, the Shepherd title is not new to the culture of the Jews since most of the Hebrew people were nomads. They recognized shepherding as a profession.[28]

Literally, the foremost responsibility of a shepherd is to direct the affairs of the sheep; provide food and water for them; protect and deliver them from dangerous beasts and any form of harm; gather back the lost and bring them back to the fold; groom and offer security to the sheep under his care; clean their bruises and give medical assistance for speedy recovery.[29]

Metaphorically, ANE documents reveal a shepherd king having the responsibility to provide justice, peace, and welfare for his people.[30] The nature and function of a shepherd as noted in ancient times are not different from the eschatological ministry of the Messiah except that the Messiah functions as both a physical and a spiritual ruler. Jacob prophesies that a shepherd will come out of the Strong one of Jacob and will fulfill all His duties in the last days. On His first advent, Jesus Christ categorically called Himself the Good Shepherd, who gives his life for the sheep (Jn 10:11). He fulfilled this by His death on the cross. In the last days (second advent), He will lead all nations and

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[26] P.L. Garber, "Sheep, Shepherd," in *ISBE*, Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Gerald H. Wilson eds. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988).

[27] Timothy S. Laniak, *Shepherds after My Own Heart: Pastoral Traditions and Leadership in the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006), 61, 69, 72.

[28] Oded Borowski, *Daily Life in Biblical Times*, Archaeology and Biblical Studies (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 48.

[29] Thomas A. Golding, "The Imagery of Shepherding in the Bible, Part 1," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 163 (January-March 2006), 22.

[30] Golding, "The Imagery of Shepherding in the Bible, Part 1," 22.

present them to His father. Psalm 80:1 alludes to the prophetic declaration of Jacob and confirms Joseph as a flock being led by God Himself. The psalmist prays to God, "O Shepherd of Israel, give ear, you who leads Joseph like a flock." Joseph and his descendants are compared to a flock, who shall be led by God, the Shepherd of Israel. The nation of Israel are here referred to as Joseph. It is a reasonable conjecture to underline the truth that the ministry of Jesus Christ as the Good Shepherd to His people is not different from God leading Israel as stated by the Psalmist. Chae explains that if God leads His people, Israel, like a Shepherd, then the Messiah will lead Joseph and his descendants to their destined future in the last days as a Shepherd.[31]

The OT pictures God as the Shepherd of Israel who guides and leads. In the Psalms, God is revealed as a Shepherd who cares for, saves, and guides His people. In Psalm 23, David refers to the LORD as his Shepherd who provides him with all he wants (1, 2), guides and leads in the right path (3), protects with His presence (4), comforts with His rod and staff (4), delivers from the presence of enemies (5), and provides with long life full of goodness and loving-kindness (6). Psalm 28:9 identifies the LORD as "caring for His people like a shepherd." In Psalm 77:20, the LORD is seen as directing the hands of Moses and Aaron in leading His people. He also gathers, scatters, and even heals them from their sicknesses (Pss 147:2-3; 44:11, 22). In His nature as a Shepherd, God produces and provides shepherds to continue His spiritual work physically among His people. He

[31] Young S. Chae, *Jesus as the Eschatological Davidic Shepherd,* Studies in the Old Testament, Mohr Siebeck ed. (Tubingen, Germany: Gulde-Druck, 2006), 27. Jeremias explains about the nature and complexities of the OT title of shepherd and how it was understood in light of God's plan and purpose. He states, "It is to be noted that the references are spread evenly over the whole of the O.T. It is true that in Exodus-Deuteronomy shepherd terms are used in the exodus stories ('to lead,' 'to guide,' 'to go before,'), but in general it is hard to determine whether there is any conscious feeling for the shepherd metaphor. More commonly, and with details which show how vital the concept is, the figure of speech is found in the Psalter and in the consoling prophecy of the Exile" (Jeremías, *TDNT* 6: 487).

provided David as a shepherd-king over Israel. Psalms 78:70-71 reveals David as set apart by God from the sheepfold to lead and feed the house of Jacob (Israel).

Chae explains that the book of Jeremiah the prophet brings to view the hope of restoration that accompanies the Shepherd's responsibility and call. He states, "Davidic expectation is undeniably linked to the hope for the future time of the promised restoration."[32] Jeremiah says, "And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them; and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed. Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth" (23:4-5; 33:12-18). The LORD, the Shepherd of Israel promises to set up many shepherds who will come out of His presence to feed the people of God with His words. Jeremiah continues that a righteous branch will be raised out of David to fulfill the eschatological ministry of the Messiah. Jeremiah 30-31 highlights the healing power of this Shepherd to His people in His plan to restore them (30:13-17; cf. 31:10). Jeremiah describes the Shepherd's healing and forgiving nature (30:15). In the last days, this Shepherd will put the law of God in the hearts of God's people (31:31-34). Huntzinger thinks God always provides a Shepherd-ruler to forestall upheavals and chaos.[33] Chae asserts that the focus of these verses is on the eschatological ministry of the Messianic Shepherd "who gathers and heals the scattered flock, thus forgives their sins."[34] Chae believes that during the time of the

[32] Chae, *Jesus as the Eschatological Davidic Shepherd*, 29.

[33] John David Huntzinger, *The End of Exile: A Short Commentary on the Shepherd/ Sheep Metaphor in Exilic and Post Exilic Prophetic and Synoptic Gospel Literature* (PhD diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 1999), 81.

[34] Chae, *Jesus as the Eschatological Davidic Shepherd*, 29.

exodus, YHWH was the Shepherd who delivered His people, but during the time of the exile, YHWH and His Davidic appointee ruled as co-shepherds.[35] He continues that Ezekiel and Zachariah improve on the Shepherd as an appointee to establish the eschatological ministry of the Messiah in relation to the redemptive plan of God.[36]

The eschatological ministry of the Messianic Shepherd regarding battling against the enemies of the flock is predicted by the prophet Micah (4:6-5:4). He describes the events prior and during the ministry of the Messiah in the last days with emphasis on the Mountain of the House of the LORD being exalted above every mountain. Micah foresees the establishment of the great temple of the LORD, which will attract people from different walks of life to come and experience God's awesome presence. The eschatological ministry of the Shepherd will magnify the name of the LORD so that all nations will walk in the name of the LORD (4:5). Micah continues that the Great Shepherd will gather all people (both the healthy and the lame) and He shall reign over them forever. A shepherd is promised to come out of the presence of the Mighty One of Jacob to provide spiritual instructions and command His people with the rod of His authority and power (Mi 7:14).

As the shoot and branch from the lineage of David, the Messiah will lead His people as the Good Shepherd. In the New Testament, the Mighty One of Jacob sends another Shepherd King in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ to lead His people from the captivity of sin into His righteousness. In John 10, Jesus calls Himself the Good Shepherd

[35] Ibid., 26.

[36] Ibid., 38-94. Chae states "One of the key outcomes of YHWH's eschatological shepherding will be the renewed obedience of the flock to YHWH's laws and decrees to secure this, YHWH will set up one shepherd like David over the restored people. This is the consequence of the restorative act of YHWH, the true shepherd of Israel" (Chae, *Jesus as the Eschatological Davidic Shepherd*, 92).

(v. 11). He does not only protect and guide His sheep, but more importantly, He dies for the sheep (vv. 11, 15). He knows His sheep and the sheep know Him (v. 14). He not only strives to fend for His sheep, but also to seek for other wayward sheep to bring into His sheepfold (v. 16). Jesus identified Himself as a Good Shepherd, who fulfills all the OT functions of a shepherd. In calling Himself as the Good Shepherd, He alludes to Jacob prophesying about a Shepherd who will help Joseph (Gn 49:24c).

In Rv 7:17, John, as he is accustomed to, describes the Messiah as the lamb who is a Shepherd.[37] Kennison underscores the Messianic Shepherd's rule over all nations and states, "This 'Lamb' has 'shepherded' a flock from every people ("εκ παντός έθνους"; Rv. 7:9) to his throne fulfilling the missional work of bringing 'others' into his flock (cf. Jn 10:16)."[38] The Messiah will not only be complacent with the flock from Israel, but He has other flock outside Israel that He will bring into His sheepfold. As a Shepherd, His second advent will not only be judgment, but He shall love and care for His suffering servants as well (Rv 6:9-11; 7:14-16; cf. 1 Pt 2:19-25; 5:10-11). Mounce explains that as a Lamb, the Messiah will rule over all nations as a Judge and as a King against the preying enemy (Rv 2:27; cf. Ps 2:9; Rv 12:5; 19:15).[39] The image revealed in these verses is "an iron rod" in the hands of the Shepherd. This is an OT symbol of absolute power and authority and this is the power the Messiah will wield in the last days. Equally, the Messiah will walk in the spirit and power as a Chief Shepherd to bless His people

[37] Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, reprint *NICNT* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1980), 175-6.

[38] Quentin P. Kinnison, "Shepherd or One of the Sheep: Revisiting the Biblical Metaphor of the Pastorate," *Journal of Religious Leadership* 9.1 (2010): 83.

[39] Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 176, n. 32.

with an unfading crown of glory (1 Pt 5:4). As Peter categorically calls Jesus "the Chief Shepherd" who will appear in the last days to give unfading crowns to His people (1 Pt 5:4). This title "Chief Shepherd" undoubtedly alludes to the "shepherd" who will guide Joseph and his descendants (Gn 49:24c; Ps 80:1). The title "the Chief Shepherd" is a perfect replica of the psalmist's title for God, who is "the Shepherd of Israel."

In conclusion, God is the Chief Shepherd who led, controlled, guarded, and protected His people in the OT. As the Shepherd proceeds from the Mighty One of Jacob, the LORD gives shepherd-kings and leaders like David to lead and provide for His people. The prophets prophesied about the coming of a Branch out of David who will lead God's people like a Shepherd and judge them with a rod of iron. In the NT, Jesus Christ appropriated the title of Good Shepherd who sacrificed Himself for His people. In the last days, the Messiah will bring restoration and transformation to His people (Israel) as well as the whole humanity. Like the Good Shepherd in John 10, the Messiah will gather His righteous and obedient flock to His barn, but those who will live treacherously will be gathered and thrown outside His barn.

The Messiah will not only minister to His people as a Shepherd, but He will also minister as a Rock or a Stone. The next element that needs explication regarding the eschatological mission of the Messiah is "The Stone of Israel" (Gen 49:24c).

The Ministry of the Messiah as a Stone of Israel

Jacob opted for a "stone" metaphor to make reference to someone coming from the Strong One of Jacob (Gn 49:24b). The Old as well as the New Testament have many references to stones as metaphors to explain spiritual virtues. The phrase "stone of Israel"

(Gn 49:24c) is akin to "rock of Israel" (2 Sm 23:3), thus this section will use both to mean the same thing even though the Hebrew word for "stone" is different from that of a "rock." The Hebrew word אֶבֶן means "a stone."[40] Metaphorically, it is used as a title for God and the Messiah.[41] This is substantiated by Jacob's words to Joseph and Isaiah's prophetic words about the "Stone" laid in Zion (28:16). The Hebrew word צוּר means "a rock" and it is used metaphorically for God as support and defense of His people.[42] Literally, both words have different meaning, but figuratively, both testaments employ them interchangeably. Irrefutably, both words are employed in the Bible as metaphors to refer to God and His Christ, the Messiah.

Biblically, stones and rocks are used as metaphors to express strength, stability, formidability, trustworthiness, and faithfulness.[43] In Psalm 31, the "rock" metaphor is used to mean "refuge and strong fortress." The psalmist sees the LORD as the only One he can trust and depend on. In His first and second advents, the Messiah functions as a refuge for those who believe in Him. Paul draws readers' attention to their ancestors who drank from the spiritual rock that followed them in the wilderness and Paul categorically states that, "that rock was Christ" (1 Cor 10:1-4).[44] A "stone" is used as symbol of Christ being the chief corner stone upon which a building (spiritual temple–universal church) is being built (Eph 2:22).

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[40] *BDB*, 9.

[41] *TWOT*, 9.

[42] *BDB*, 8104.

[43] Pierre van Hecke, ed., *Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible* in Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium: 187 (Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University, 2005), 270.

[44] Pierre van Hecke, ed., *Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible*, 272.

In Daniel 2, the Messiah is the "Stone" that smites the image and reduces the nations to powder (Dn 2:34). This "stone" will then grow into a mountain filling the whole earth. Daniel interprets this stone as a kingdom which will never be destroyed, but that it will destroy every other kingdom (Dn 2:44). Undeniably, the OT predicts the endless kingdom of David, which shall be possessed by the Messiah in His second advent. Daniel's prophecy alludes to the Messiah's eschatological reign.

He is the stone seen by Zechariah, which is used as an epithet for Joshua, the high priest. Zechariah saw in vision Joshua the high priest (LXX–Jesus) and Zerubbabel the governor (both types of Christ in His different capacity). These were seen presiding over the building of the temple and working hard in the face of trouble and opposition to establish a better and divine place of worship. In the spirit, Zechariah referred to the Lord not only as the foundation stone, but as the headstone as well (Zec 3:9 with 4:7).

On the first advent of Jesus Christ, He was set to be the foundation Stone; but He was rejected and crucified. He accepts and refers to Himself as the stone rejected by the builders (Mt 21:42). He points to Himself as this stone talked about by David in the Psalms. He was rejected by His own people (Jn 1:11). Ephesians 2:20 also states categorically that Jesus is the Chief cornerstone, which consolidates every other stone in the building of the Church. Equally, Peter saw him as "a chief cornerstone, elect, precious" and "'he that believeth in him shall not be confounded" (I Pt. 2:6). Peter saw the Church as united stones, built up together as a "spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."

Jacob prophesied that this "stone" will come out of El, the Strong One of Jacob (Gn 49:24). On His first coming, He was a "Stone" laid as a foundation for the birth of

the Church; but on His second coming, He will be a "Rock" that will grind and destroy His enemies into pieces. As a Stone, He will be used to build up the patches destroyed by sin and as a Rock, He will be used to bring judgment to the world. The Messiah is set to be a stone of Israel and a rock of offence and these phrases imply that He will judge both Israel and the whole world (Is 8:14).

In conclusion, a part of Jacob's declaration about Judah and Joseph serves as an eschatological piece that describes the nature, source, ministry, and responsibility of the Messiah. As a Successor of the throne of Judah, His kingdom shall be without end and in His reign in the last days, nations shall obey Him and be gathered unto Him. As a product or part of the Strong one of Jacob who provides for and protects Joseph and all Israel, He will lead His people like a Shepherd. He will hold up the building of His Church like a stone and as a rock, He will serve as a Refuge and a Fortress for His people in times of danger. Lastly, concerning sin, He will be an offence destroying the depravity of sin and wickedness in the world like a rock.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

Genesis 49 in Light of the Whole Book of Genesis

Genesis 12-50 presents the life of the Patriarchs and the beginnings of the nation Israel. It started with the call of Abram where God promised to show him a land; make Abram into a great nation; bless him; and make his name great (12:1-3). Several times God confirmed these promises with Abram (15:7-18; 17:1-13; 22:15-18). When Abraham died, he left everything he owned to Isaac. God also blessed Isaac (25:11, cf. 26:6, 12) so that he had everything but a son. Then Isaac prayed to the LORD so that Rebekah became pregnant and gave birth to twins: Esau and Jacob (25:21-26). It was with Jacob, that the Lord revealed about the covenant that He made with Abram (28:12-15, cf. 32:12). God blessed Jacob as well (35:9); changed his name to Israel (35:10); affirmed the promise of descendants and kings (35:11); and gave to him and his descendants the land (35:12). On the eve of Jacob's departure to Egypt to be with Joseph, the Lord appeared to him to remind him of the covenant. God commanded Jacob not to be afraid; but to go down to Egypt for the Lord will make him a great nation there (46:1-4).

Jacob had a grand reunion with Joseph–the son who he thought was dead. When the time came and Jacob was weakening, Joseph brought his two sons to Jacob. It was then that Jacob shared about how God called him; promised to make him into a great nation; and gave him the land (48:3-4). Jacob then took Ephraim and Manasseh as his own sons (48:5). He blessed them to become great nations but the youngest, Manasseh, will become many nations (48:17-20). As for Joseph, Jacob designated ahead of time, his

land inheritance–the mountain slopes that he captured from the Amorites (48:21-22). When Jacob was about to die, he called for all his sons for his last will and testament. This is where he uttered his blessings on his sons in Genesis 49. Scholars embrace Gn 49:1-28 as phenomenal because it is designed with words from a sage (Jacob the patriarch); enriched with plenty paronomasia; touching alliterations; and ravishing metaphors. Hartley believes that the difficulty identified in understanding some of the verses is due to what he calls "antiquity of the language, unusual grammar, and elliptical phrases."[1] The uniqueness of this prophetic declaration given in the form of a testament is dependent on the role it plays in the life of Israel as a nation.

Genesis 49 gives a preview of what will become of the tribes of Israel as entities and a nation. Jacob's declarations prefigure birth, growth, culmination, and future events of the nation of Israel. Moses gives much space in outlining these elements so that his readers and hearers will have a bird's-eye-view of who they are and the reason they exist. They form a greater part of the past and future of Israel as a nation. As they remember their awful past as slaves in Egypt, they must understand that their future is bright as long as they stay in tune with the Strong One of Jacob, the Shepherd, and the Stone of Israel.

Israel's uniqueness as a nation is dependent on their strong relationship with the One who called their ancestors: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God caused a nation to spring out from them, of which they are the nucleus. He is the central focus of this prophetic declaration given by Jacob. Through God, they will live to see what the future has in store for them. Although the mistakes of the past attracted dire consequences, yet,

[1] John E. Hartley, *Genesis* in Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2000), n.p. "Introduction to the passage."

a change of heart and mind to walk with the LORD similar to what happened to the tribe of Levi, will repeal the curses destined for them and attract blessings.

The censures and curses given to the older sons Reuben, Simeon, and Levi were strategically orchestrated to redeem the future of Israel from premature destruction. Jacob established from the beginning of his testament that his words are directed at their future and hence every word (encouragement or rebuke) was designed to help the nation of Israel live according to the divine mandate of God.

The prophecies given to each son by Jacob somewhat underlined the presumption of a near fulfillment, yet their fulfillment outlived the existence of each son. Even though the phrase בְּאַחֲרִית הַיָּמִים (49:1c) suggests a near future or immediate fulfillment, the reality of its use in relation to other prophetic sayings substantiate a distant future and thus Jacob's declaration was mainly targeting the distant future of these sons. For example, Judah was declared to be bowed down to and worshipped by his brothers (49:8), yet, his brothers including him bowed down to Joseph in their lifetime (50:18).

The Life of Judah and Joseph Contrasted

Since the focus of this study is Jacob's declarations to Judah (49:8-12) and Joseph (49:22-26), it is fitting to compare how they lived in the past before the declaration. Met with similar challenges, they responded and led their lives differently. For instance, both were lured by a lady for purposes of their own. Judah gave in to the temptation; while Joseph ran away from it. Both left items (Joseph, a cloak; Judah a seal, cord, and staff) that became the proof of their condemnation. Judah paid for his sin by confessing this in public; while Joseph was imprisoned for a crime that he did not commit.

The Sin of Judah in Genesis 38

Judah's depravity in the past was no different from the past sins of Reuben, Simeon, and Levi that attracted curses from their father (Gn 49:3-7). Surprisingly, Judah was exempted from the rebuke he deserves and was greatly praised. Briefly, Judah took Tamar to be the wife of Er, his first son; but Er was wicked hence God killed him (Gn 38:7). Judah's second son, Onan, who married Tamar, knew God's will that if a brother marries his deceased brother's widow, every child that would come out of this union will be for his deceased brother. This was to preserve the name of his deceased brother who died without a child. Onan disregarded this practice by refusing to have a child for the deceased. When having sexual intercourse with Tamar, he spilled his semen on the ground so that the Lord killed him instantly (38:9-10). Disobedience and transgression seem to color the family of Judah.

Fearing for the life of his youngest son who was also young at that time, Judah set aside the law, which gives every wife who loses her husband the right to claim the younger brother of the deceased husband from the father (Gn 38:6-11; Dt 25:5; Mt 22:25). In this passage, Judah was recalcitrant toward this law. He willfully decided not to offer his last son, Shelah, to his daughter-in-law, Tamar–a violation which paved the way for his downfall (Gn 38:11).

Shuah, the wife of Judah died. Tamar disguised herself as a prostitute and sat at an open space knowing Judah would pass by that path (38:12-15). Judah was tempted by her and he succumbed to her seduction although he had thought that this lady is a prostitute, he slept with her. Tamar, knowing what she was doing, lured Judah to offer her his signet, cord, and staff in place of his pledge to send her a kid from his flock

(38:16-18). Later, he looked for this prostitute to fulfill his pledge and retrieve the symbols of his authority and power as a father. Sadly, he could not find the prostitute (38:19-23); but after three months, he heard the report that Tamar became pregnant. According to the law, an unmarried pregnant woman should be stoned or burned (38:24). When Tamar showed Judah's possessions, she was freed from the consequences of her actions (38:25). This action of Judah was inevitably a public knowledge; but he was not censured by his father.

Judah lost his symbols of power and authority as the ring, cord, and staff to Tamar by reason of his irresponsibility. Even though the narrator chose to discontinue Judah's story by inserting that of Joseph's from chap. 39-48, it will be a correct conjecture that Judah might have had a change of heart and pursued a righteous lifestyle that pacified the heart of God–so much so that Jacob lavished on him blessings instead of curses (49:8-12). Judah publicly showed responsibility of the tokens presented by Tamar. He could have lied (38:26) and let Tamar die; but his actions showed remorse and his words implied repentance. He said, "She is more upright than I am, because I would not give her to Shelah my son." This public confession substantiates the veracity of his repentance. The LORD showed him favor and blessed him by restoring the praise of his name and causing the "one to whom the scepter belongs" (Messiah) to come from his descendants (49:10). Moreover, the prophecy about his being praised by his brothers and to be raised as a king means that from his descendants, a king will live to rule, lead, protect, guard, and provide shelter for the whole of Israel. One of these will be a precursor to the Messiah, the King of kings, to whom shall be the obedience of all nations.

The Faithfulness of Joseph in Genesis 39

Judah serves as a foil to Joseph in that he was seduced every day and in every way since Potiphar's wife saw him; but he did not sin. He remained faithful to God in an area where Judah failed. As the most blessed one, Joseph received unprecedented blessings from his father (Gn 49:24). He was Jacob's favorite. One day, Jacob made him a special coat (Gn 37:3-4). This act of love from his father along with his dreams of being exalted above his brothers "embittered" them. They therefore sought to kill him (37:18-20); but by the advice of Reuben, he was thrown into a pit and sold out as a slave to the Ishmaelites (37:27-28) who then sold him to Potiphar in Egypt (37:36).

In Egypt, the beloved of Jacob became the beloved of the LORD, for the presence of the LORD was with Joseph so that everything he did prospered. For instance, he experienced favor and honor before his master (39:1-6). Later, he was accused and imprisoned for a crime he did not commit: the rape attempt on Potiphar's wife (39:7-23). By the sovereign power and grace of God, he was released, favored, and elevated to the position of a prime minister in Egypt after he correctly interpreted the dreams of Pharaoh (40-41). The famine that the Pharaoh dreamed about came to pass so that his brothers went to Egypt in the search of sustenance. Joseph's childhood dreams about his exaltation over his father and brothers were fulfilled.

To summarize, Judah received a blessing from his father, despite his past mistakes. Jacob did not give the blessing of the eldest son to Reuben. He gave this instead to Joseph, his eldest son with Rebekah. Jacob also adopted Ephraim and Manasseh as his sons so that their names are included in the twelve tribes of Israel.

Reflections on Genesis 49 in Light of the African Culture

Nearing death, Jacob called on his sons to declare his will and testament for them. He reviewed the oddities of the past with regards to the life of his older sons Reuben, Simon, and Levi; rebuked them for their atrocious actions; then predicted about the dire consequences of their actions. He then uttered blessings on the younger sons and for Judah and Joseph in particular. They received the greatest blessings, which included kings among their descendants (Judah) and many nations (Joseph-Manasseh).

The Blessings and Curses of a Father in the African Culture

Most African countries have cultures that are akin to that of the ancient Jewish culture. Most dying parents call for the presence of their children. It is a belief that a dying father receives a peaceful death when most of his children, if not all, are present at his death. Their presence gives him a smooth and peaceful passage to the other side. It is a sign that he lived well to groom a loving family; but in the absence of his children, he endures the pain of not living a good life on earth.

The purpose for the summons is for the father to bless his children and entire household before dying. As well, it is to prepare them for what the future has in store. At his deathbed, the father is expected to bless his children for as the father and head of the family, he can alter the lives of his children by blessing or cursing them. He has power to take the life of his son and no one can question him about it. As the protector and giver of life, when he blesses a son, he will really be blessed; but, when he curses a son, the curse will remain on him.

It is also a belief that every African family possesses rich minerals that are usually protected and stewarded by the head of the family, who is the father. At the point of death, every person in the family will stop at nothing to be at his bed hoping to have the opportunity to know and obtain what is bequeathed to him or her by his dying father.

In Africa, the blessings reserved for the first born are second to none. He reigns as a king and a leader in the absence of his father. Firstborn children are considered the lifeblood of the family–catalysts for procreation and hence their early deaths are seen as curses. The family-names of most Africans persist because of the birth of a firstborn, especially if the child is a boy. His birth establishes the continuance of one generation to the other. Undoubtedly, their existence is an epithet of glory and strength for the family. They live to protect their siblings physically, financially, spiritually, and emotionally. In their absence, the rest of the family members are in disarray.

Whether the first born is a male or female, he or she receives a double honor and respect from the family as well as the community. His siblings look up to him for care, direction, sustenance, protection, and counseling. From birth, he or she is groomed and trained to control and direct the affairs of the family and fend for the family in the father's absence.

A Reversal of Curses: Is this Possible?

When a father curses a child by reason of a child's misdemeanor against the family, he or she is bound to fail and to endure the horrors of the curse in his or her lifetime. Most African countries believe that a son or daughter cannot alter the curses of the father. The father's death seals up the curse and to revoke this curse, the son must do

his best to live a life different from his past life that attracted the curse. Then the culture demands him to seek the help of a traditional chief priest who is believed to have the power to communicate with the spirits of the dead. He will then stand as a mediator between the spirit of the dead father and the cursed child. He will ask for a special set of things to buy as a sacrifice to appease the spirit of the dead father. This sacrifice can either be accepted by the spirit of the dead father or rejected. If the spirit of the dead father is a good spirit, the curse can be reversed; but, if the spirit of the dead father is evil and cannot be appeased, this child will die without a blessing and his death will be a painful one.

Levi participated in the murder of the Shechemites; but instead of attracting the curses pronounced on them by Jacob, they were consecrated as priests unto the LORD. Jacob's curse was overturned because of the mercy and grace of God and on account of their changed lifestyle. After Aaron has allowed the people to sin by making an idol in the absence of Moses, the tribe of Levi became punitive instruments used by the LORD to cleanse and purge the people of their abomination. They killed their own brothers for choosing to stand against the LORD. Their action attracted the LORD's favor and mercy and their cursed destiny was altered. Instead of being *anathema* to the LORD, they became vessels of holiness unto the LORD. By the LORD's mercies, the tribe of Levi survived the exile while the tribe of Simeon perished. Indeed, curses can be reversed by a transformed lifestyle and attitude.

The death of an angry parent who cursed his son does not render the curse eternal regardless of the delinquent heart of the son while the father was alive. It is undoubtedly true that the mother gave birth to that son and this empowers the parent to have the right

to bless or curse him. Nevertheless, God is the giver of life and He is the self-same person who has the singular right to a son's future and not the father or mother who pronounced the curse.

The power of God transcends every power, be it cultural or national. The blessings of God are stronger than the curses of man. Like the Hebrew culture, conditions predating the birth of a child are believed to be carrying the power to either bring blessings or curses on the child. Benjamin's destiny was turned by his father when he was cursed on account of the name that his mother gave him. Jacob turned this curse into blessings when he changed his name (35:18).[2] The former president of Ghana, who happens to be the first cousin of my family, was born during a strange circumstance. As the firstborn of his father (who is my first uncle), the parents wished to have a son who will be groomed as a king in the future. His mother had four consecutive births; but, they all died. As the fifth child, he survived death so he was named "Kofi Diewuo." Every person from Ghana knows the day he was born because every day has a special name that goes with it. "Kofi" means a man who was born on Friday. The name that provokes questions is "Diewuo." It means "an overcomer of death." Death crushed all the former babies before him; but, his birth crushed the curse of death. His name suggests a blessing, but it implies a curse. It means he will live to battle with death the rest of his life.

[2] Jabez in 1 Chr 4:10, was blessed to have his awful destiny changed by the power of God when he prayed to God. In 2 Chr 7:14, the LORD promised His people that the only way He will arise from heaven and come down to forgive their sins and heal their land is for them to repent and pray to Him for forgiveness. That is when He will bring healing to their cursed lands and homes. Returning to the LORD was the only act that revokes curses in the Old Testament. In the New Testament, Paul taught that the death and blood of Jesus Christ redeem us from every curses and change our awful destinies to become a part of His blessings through Abraham (Gal 3:13-14). Paul categorically states that, "Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor 5:17). The moment a cursed child turns from his evil ways and receives Jesus Christ as his Lord and personal Savior, he becomes disentangled from the curse that binds him. A new life in Christ attracts a new future, which is accompanied by new blessings.

In most African cultures, the mother will be branded as cursed by the spirits for giving birth to dead children. At the birth of a son who survives death, it is believed that the curse has been overturned by the gods, but death will keep having its hand in his life until the curse is broken by a higher power or spirit. People like him usually live long miserable lives. As he grew, his family sent him to Church where more prayers were offered on his behalf. Even though he went through many sicknesses, he lived through them. He was destined to have a hard life, however his faith in God and his industrious lifestyle earned him a law degree in Harvard. He came back home as a lawyer well-versed in politics, as well. He ended up becoming the president of Ghana for two terms (2000-2008). He is still alive supporting the nation with his rich experiences and wisdom. At the age of 75, he is still strong and has outlived my father who lived up to 72 years of age. The power of the curse that followed the former president could not negate the will and purpose of God concerning his future. Amidst the darkness of life, the light of God brought hope. The hopelessness surrounding his birth could not predict failure in his future. By the power of God, a child who was destined to die and fail in life lived and survived the curses reserved for him.

A Culture Bearer's Reflections on Joseph's Story

Several themes undergird the book of Genesis. For instance, the book thrives on the essence of piety that must exist between God and His people. Moses held righteousness and faithfulness in high esteem–themes that seem to be emphasized in Jacob's declaration to Judah and Joseph. For instance, the LORD blessed Abel by virtue of his faithfulness to God when he offered a reasonable and the correct sacrifice. This

attracted the LORD's favor (Genesis 4). Enoch was taken to heaven because the Bible testifies that "he walked with the LORD" (Gn 5:22). The LORD blessed Noah by protecting him from the deluge that destroyed the whole human race because the Bible says, "he was just and perfect and he walked with the LORD" (Gn 6:9). Abraham was rewarded for his trust and faithfulness in the LORD. He experienced the LORD's protection when he traveled to Egypt in the time of famine (Gn 12:10-20). In his faithfulness, the LORD protected and strengthened Abram to overcome his enemies during war (Genesis 14). Later in his life, the LORD's promise to Abraham about multitudes of descendants was partly fulfilled in the birth of Isaac (Genesis 21). Isaac grew as a boy with an extraordinary future by virtue of the LORD's blessings and promises to his father. His wife Rebekah gave birth to two sons, Jacob and Esau (Gn 25:19-26). Isaac and Rebecca also experienced God's great blessings and protection in Egypt (Genesis 26). Equally, in the spirit of godliness and faithfulness, the LORD blessed Jacob with possessions and thirteen children; and of all his children, He loved Joseph dearly (Gn 28:36).

Personal Experience in Light of Joseph's Story

Joseph remained faithful to God throughout his life. He received the right and blessings that Jacob had intended for him from the start. This popular proverb aptly describes the life of Joseph in the African context: "The one who is blessed by the gods, no one can curse."

In Ghana, it is a belief that "No one questions the choice and will of *Otwerediampon*." *Otwerediampon* is the greatest and highest name given to the Creator

of the Universe. This name suggests the one who is faithful, loyal, reliable, and trustworthy. The name *Otwerediampon* has served as an apotheosis of a worthy lifestyle that is expected from every citizen in Ghana. It is a belief in most African countries that even when a person acknowledged as faithful by his community is cursed, he will live to enjoy blessings; the curse will be rendered ineffective. Like Joseph, an African can have a difficult and painful beginning, but, when he lives a life of faithfulness and piety, greatness and blessings will be inevitable in his life.

One's insignificant beginning does not necessarily attract an unproductive end. Even though Joseph's beginning was colored with pains, his end was a thing of joy and greatness. As a boy born in a polygamous society, the quest to be greatly loved and attended to with regards to all my need was just a figment of the imagination. Being the thirteenth child born of my father, I was never treated as special; instead, I was seen as a boy destined to suffer and never be able to make it because I was born with a deformity. As a toddler, I grew up not being able to speak well so that I was branded a stammerer. I experienced difficulty in speaking from age four until college. Since every African sees deformity as a curse and never a normal event in life, I once heard my father saying, "Among all my children, this boy (referring to me) is the most minor." Meaning, I was considered insignificant compared to my other siblings.

By reason of this deformity, I grew up in seclusion. I preferred staying alone to being in groups. I loved the company of myself compared to that of friends. I felt inferior and despised, and as a result of this, I grew up hating myself. I became a Christian at the age of fourteen by the help of my mother, who left my father because she was his second legitimate wife and, as a Christian, felt it was wrong to remain in a polygamous amity.

As a young Christian, my mother related to me stories about a God who changes lives and has the ability to make impossible things possible. As I read these stories again from the Bible, I fell in love with this God and trusted Him for a miracle. At the age of sixteen, I joined a group of believers who were going to a designated place to wait upon the LORD in prayers and fasting. All along, my prayers were "O LORD, touch me and make my life as a testimony for many." Several years passed, yet, I never gave up believing and trusting in the LORD for His promises. In addition to my hard beginning, my call into the ministry attracted persecutions and afflictions from my family and friends who told me, "It is a shame to quit great ambitions for nothing." They called the work and call of God as nothing. My family saw me as a "good for nothing boy" who wants nothing from life but foolishness. In addition, I was mocked and laughed at because they asked, "How can a stammerer become a preacher?"

The day came when I was invited by my church to be an emcee during a church meeting. That night was the night of my miracle. I went up to the podium full of anxiety and nervousness; but, as I opened my mouth, the impossible became possible. My words came out fast and I spoke without stuttering. The church remained silent as they surprisingly witnessed this miracle. My family and friends saw this wonderful change. From that time, they never doubted God's call upon my life. Those from different locations in Ghana traveled to witness this miracle. The boy who was branded "a minor" by his father and despised by his friends and siblings became a boy through whom many of friends and family members believed in Jesus Christ. Like Joseph, I was treated with contempt in the beginning; but, the blessings of the LORD that can transform a person came upon me and turned me into another man.

It was argued in this paper that Judah and Joseph served as strong pillars upon whom the future of Israel stands. The manifold blessings that they received from Jacob bespeak of the premise that the storms and tests encountered by all the sons of Jacob were not able to thwart God's purposes for the great nation of Israel. Judah learned from his past mistakes. He became a better person worthy of being a channel out of whom the One to whom the kingship authority belongs–the Messiah. Joseph grew stronger from the manifold afflictions that he experienced. The LORD's faithfulness upon Judah was established in forgiving him of his atrocities and restoring his scepter and staff. The LORD's faithfulness upon Joseph was established in being His close companion. Out of Judah, the kingdom of Israel experienced peace and prosperity and, hence, became formidable, especially during the reigns of David and Solomon. The LORD led the tribes of Israel as a Shepherd leads his flock (Ps 80:1).

Appendix 1

The Nature of the Sons of Jacob, Their Blessings and Curses, and Corresponding Fulfillment

Son's Name & Meaning	Mother	Birth Order & Gn Ref	Blessing & Curse Order, & Gn Ref	Blessing & Curse Metaphor	Blessings or Curses (& Reason)	Future Fulfillment
Reuben (See, a son)	Leah	1 (29:32)	1 (49:3-4)	Uncontrolled like Water	**Curse:** Will not excel because he slept with his father's wife	The Tribe never regained their leadership. Almost extinct in Israel.
Simeon (Heard)	Leah	2 (29:33)	2 (49:5-7)	Instrument of Violence	**Curse:** Divided in Jacob and in Israel because he killed a man	They were lost in captivity and never returned as a tribe
Levi (Joined)	Leah	3 (29:34)	3 (49:5-7)	Instrument of Violence	**Curse:** Divided in Jacob and in Israel because he killed a man	A changed Heart – Restoration – Separated from others but JOINED to the LORD
Judah (Praise)	Leah	4 (29:35)	4 (49:8-12)	Lion	**Blessing:** He will be praised and honored by his brothers as a king and the Messiah will come out of his lineage	Kings came out of Judah and the Messiah was born from the tribe of Judah
Dan (Judge)	Bilhah (Rachel's maid)	5 (30:6)	7 (49:16-18)	Horned Viper	**Blessing:** He will judge Israel as one of the tribes. As a viper, he will brutally overcome his enemies	The tribe succumbed to the idolatry of Jeroboam, but later they rose again into righteousness. Also they grew as great warriors. Samson, the great judge and warrior was from this tribe

Son's Name & Meaning	Mother	Birth Order & Gn Ref	Blessing & Curse Order, & Gn Ref	Blessing & Curse Metaphor	Blessings or Curses (& Reason)	Future Fulfillment
Naphtali (Wrestling)	Bilhah (Rachel's Maid)	6 (30:8)	10 (49:21)	Doe/Hind	**Blessing:** He will give/bring great tidings	Jesus called most of His disciples from the region belonging to Naphtali - so they became heralds of the Good News
Gad (Troop)	Zilpah (Leah's Maid)	7 (30:11)	8 (49:19)	Troop	**Blessing:** Will be defeated by enemy troops, but they shall overcome at the end	Though they were warriors described as having face like that of lions, yet being close to enemy territory, made them vulnerable to wars. They were defeated by enemy troops and by the help of Jephthah, they over-came their enemies
Asher (Happy)	Zilpah (Leah's Maid)	8 (30:13)	9 (49:20)	Richness of oil	**Blessing:** His food will be richness.	The land of Asher was full of olive oil that enriched their territory.
Issachar (Hire)	Leah	9 (30:18)	6 (49:14-15)	Strong-Boned Donkey	**Blessing:** As a strong Donkey, he will be a burden-bearer for all his brothers in service and humility.	In being of service, they became leaders and others were at their command (1 Chr 12:32)
Zebulun (Dwelling)	Leah	10 (30:20)	5 (49:13)	Haven/Coast	**Blessing:** Like a coast, he will serve as a temporary haven for ships.	As a dweller at the sea, they served their purpose of being a blessing to foreign traders.

Son's Name & Meaning	Mother	Birth Order & Gn Ref	Blessing & Curse Order, & Gn Ref	Blessing & Curse Metaphor	Blessings or Curses (& Reason)	Future Fulfillment
Benjamin (Son of my right hand)	Rachel	12 (35:18)	12 (49:27)	Ravenous Wolf	**Blessing:** As a ravenous wolf, he will continuously tear up his enemies	Like wolves, they were brutal in war and overcame their enemies and protected their brethren

Appendix 2

A Complete Outline of Genesis 49:1-28

The Narrator introduces Jacob's prophetic declaration to his sons, which includes curses to his older sons, blessings to his younger sons, and the summary of the prophetic declaration given to his sons.

I. Introduction to Jacob's prophetic declaration to his sons (1-2)
   A. Jacob calls his sons and prepares them for what will happen in their future (1)
   B. Jacob commands his sons to gather together and listen to him (2)

II. The prophetic declaration of curses to his older sons (49:3-7)
   A. Declarations about Reuben (3-4)
      1. Reuben is Jacob's strength and dignity as a first born (3)
      2. Reuben will not excel because he slept with his father's wife (4)

   B. Declarations about Simeon and Levi (5-7)
      1. Simeon and Levi are full of violence (5)
      2. Simeon and Levi's evil council are dreadful to Jacob (6)
      3. Jacob curses Simeon and Levi's brutal fury and promises to scatter them among Israel (7)

III. The prophetic declaration of blessings to the younger sons (49:8-27)
   A. Declarations about Judah (8-12)
      1. Judah will be honored by his brothers and he will overcome his enemies (8)
      2. Judah will rest as a wild lion and no one dares disturb him (9)
      3. Judah will produce kings and to the Messiah will be the obedience of nations (10)
      4. Judah will be surrounded by the richness of vines, wine, and milk (11-12)

   B. Declarations about Zebulun (13)
      1. Zebulun's habitation will be toward the seashores, becoming a haven for ships (13a)
      2. Zebulon will share borders with Sidon (13b)

   C. Declarations about Issachar (14-15)
      1. Issachar is a strong donkey lying down between burdens (14)
      2. Issachar found rest and became industrious (15)

   D. Declarations about Dan and his prayer unto the LORD (16-18)
      1. Dan will be a judge over his people (16)
      2. As a dangerous serpent he will attack horses in order to kill their riders (17)

3. Jacob pauses with a prayer about waiting for the salvation of the LORD (18)

E. Declarations about Gad (19)
   1. Gad will be defeated by warring soldiers (troop) (19a)
   2. Gad shall overcome in the end (19b)

F. Declarations about Asher (20)
   1. Asher will enjoy himself in fatness (richness) (20a)
   2. Asher will produce delicacies for kings (20b)

G. Declarations about Naphtali (21)
   1. Naphtali is a doe set free (21a)
   2. Naphtali will be a herald of good news (21b)

H. Declarations about Joseph (22-26)
   1. Joseph is a fruitful bough by a spring whose branches grow up higher (22)
   2. Joseph's lords were bitter against him and they hurt him badly (23)
   3. Joseph is empowered God, the Shepherd and the rock of Israel (24)
   4. Joseph will be helped by the LORD in every facet of his life (25)
   5. Joseph will be greater than his ancestors and brothers (26)

I. Declarations about Benjamin (27)
   1. Benjamin is a ravenous wolf (27a)
   2. Benjamin shall utterly destroy his enemies (27b)

IV. The Summary of the Prophetic Declaration (49:28)
   A. The Narrator Identifies all the Sons as Twelve Tribes of Israel (28a)
   B. The Narrator Identifies the words of Jacob as blessings and declares that the sons received blessings they deserve (28)

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