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THE LIFE OF JOSEPH – LESSON 21

JACOB'S PROPHECIES OF HIS 12 SONS

Genesis chapter 49: Jacob, being old, weak, and ill, now calls together all of his sons. Although this typically would be a time to decree blessings, it actually served as a prophetic annunciation. Starting with the eldest (Reuben), he spoke to each one in turn in verse 1, **"...tell you that which shall befall you in the last days,"** the future of their tribe. The "blessing" of the three oldest (Reuben, Simeon, and Levi) carried some negatives due to sins they had committed. The blessing of Judah, Zebulon, Asher, Joseph, Naphtali, and Benjamin were positive. The blessings of Issachar, Dan, and Gad were less than good.

The most remarkable one was the "blessing" of Judah which we can see was clearly a messianic prophecy. It came true as Jesus descended from Judah and is called the Lion of Judah. The following is noteworthy of Jacob's prophetic blessing of Judah:

1. verse 8, **"thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise."** We, the brethren, praise Jesus.
2. verse 8, **"Thy Father's (God's) children shall bow down before thee."** We bow down in worship to Jesus as our Father's children.
3. verse 9, Judah is compared to a couched lion that no one dares to arouse. Jesus is that **"Lion of Judah."**
4. verse 10, **"The scepter shall not depart from Judah...until Shiloh come."** The scepter shows rulership of the King of Kings. "Shiloh" speaks of Messiah's first advent (coming), the birth and ministry of the Messiah.
5. verse 10, **"Unto him shall the gathering of the people be."** Christ shall gather His people at His second advent.
6. verse 11, **"Bind his foal unto the vine, and his asses' colt unto the choice vine."** Jesus is the true (choice) vine and a foal, a young ass (donkey) was bound to Him for His triumphal entry to Jerusalem in His final "passion" week. This was truly a remarkable prophecy about 1700-1800 years prior to its fulfillment.
7. verse 11, **"He washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes."** The wine represents his blood, as the "blood of grapes" soaked Jesus' garments as he was beaten beyond recognition.
8. verse 12, **"His eyes shall be red with wine..."** The red in His eyes represents Christ's final battle over Satan on earth as He rides on His white horse with "fire in His eyes, and a scepter in his hand."

Verses 8-12 of Genesis 49 of Jacob's prophecy of Judah give the first truly detailed account of Messiah from His birth all the way through His victory as King of Kings in the end times.

God's plan was fully revealed nearly 4,000 years ago. Such a prophecy was given, and often repeated by the Old Prophets, so that as Jesus fulfills all of it, there should be no question as to His true identity.

God's plan for mankind and for entire nations is always revealed first by His prophets. We need "ears to hear what the Spirit says" so that we can give heed to it. We attain the "ears" by studying the word of God and prayer. Occasional fasting also helps some people to hear more clearly.

It is vitally important to stay close to God in the "secret place" with Him (Psalm 91:1) so that Holy Spirit can "speak" into our own spirit "ears."