

PRAISE FOR JESUS

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A SERMON

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“Judah, you are he whom your brothers shall praise.”

Genesis 49:8.

THESE words were spoken by the patriarch Jacob when he blessed his sons as he lay a-dying. But before he finished Judah's blessing, the good old man seemed to forget his son and to turn his thoughts to Jesus, our Lord, of whom Judah was a very significant type. Jacob compared Judah to a lion and a lion's whelp—and in the Revelation we read that one of the elders said to John, “The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the book, and to loosen the seven seals thereof.” In the 10th verse of this chapter we have Jacob's notable prophecy concerning the coming of Christ, “The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh comes and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be.”

I intend only to speak about Judah so far as he is a type of Christ, and I trust that I shall, by the Holy Spirit's gracious guidance, move all the brethren of the Lord Jesus Christ to praise Him, so that I shall be able to reverently say to Him, “Jesus, You are He whom Your brothers shall praise.” So I shall speak, first, concerning *the praise of Judah and the praise of Jesus*. And then, secondly, concerning *the glories of Judah as setting forth the glories of Jesus*.

I. First, then, let us think about THE PRAISE OF JUDAH AND THE PRAISE OF JESUS.

Jacob said to Judah, “You are he whom your brothers shall praise.” Judah was preeminent above his brethren in several things for which he deserved to be praised. The first was the *eloquence and prevalence of his intercession*. Judah seems to have been the gifted one out of the 12 sons of Jacob, and his pleading prevailed with his father when all others were powerless. When “the lord of the land” of Egypt, whom his brothers failed to recognize although he knew them, said to them, “You shall not see my face, except your brother be with you,” they went back home with heavy hearts and their father stoutly refused to allow Benjamin to go down into Egypt. But when all their corn was eaten up, and they were obliged to go again to buy more, it was Judah who persuaded Jacob to let Benjamin go with them. Reuben and Levi were obliged to be silent in that critical period, for they had lost their rightful position in the family by their transgressions, and Simeon was a hostage in the hands of Joseph—but Judah was able to step into the breach and his intercession prevailed.

We, brothers and sisters, are by nature like those sinful sons of Jacob. We have offended our Father who is in heaven, and it is in vain for us to attempt to approach Him as sinners without an intercessor. But our Judah-Jesus, if I may so call Him, stands before His Father's face—and whatever our desire or our request may be, provided it is a right one—it is sure to be granted when Jesus pleads for us before the throne of God! “If any man sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the Righteous.” Turn your eyes upward, beloved, and see our great high priest appearing there in the presence of God for us! And as He points to the print of the nails in His hands and feet, and to the scar of the soldier's spear in His side, and pleads our cause, be certain that His plea must prevail with His Father! Remember the argument of the apostle when writing concerning the Melchisedec priesthood of Christ, “this man, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. Therefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He always lives to make intercession for them.” If Judah was praised because his intercession prevailed with Jacob, much more shall Jesus be praised because His intercession prevails with Jehovah! Clap your hands, O you saints, at the remembrance of His prevalence on your behalf when you sought Him out of the depths of your despair! And praise Him that He still lives to carry

on His people's cause above! Have you any burden on your mind at this moment? Is there anything that distresses you? Have you been much in prayer without getting answers to your supplications? Then put your case into the hands of Christ—He has never lost a suit yet—and that is more than the best of earthly advocates can say about the cases entrusted to them! Therefore praise Him, you who have committed yourselves into His hands! And as for you who are going to do so now, begin to praise Him, for your most sanguine anticipations of blessing shall not be disappointed!

That was a wonderful scene when Joseph said that Benjamin should not go back with his brothers, but should remain in Egypt as his servant because the silver cup had been found in his sack, and Judah pleaded with Joseph, not knowing that “the lord of the land” was his own brother! You remember how he pictured their old father at home, who would certainly die of a broken heart if Benjamin did not return to him in safety and how, at last, he offered to be a bondman to Joseph if he would but let Benjamin go free. You see, he pleaded for *substitution*, and he also told Joseph how he became surety for the lad unto his father—and his plea was so effectual that Joseph could refrain himself no longer, but bursting into tears declared that he was their long-lost brother! So, dear friends, if the great Lord of heaven and earth seems angry with you because of your sins—“and He is angry with the wicked every day”—put your case into the hands of the sinners' advocate, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and when He stands up to plead with His Father for you, He will soon bring a smile of forgiveness upon the righteously severe countenance of His Father and you shall gladly say, “Jesus, You are He whom Your brethren shall praise because of Your almighty power in pleading for them.”

We find that at a later period, the tribe of Judah was *foremost in wisdom and skill*. If you turn to Exodus 35:30, you will see that when the tabernacle was to be erected in the wilderness, “Moses said unto the children of Israel, See, the Lord has called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. And He has filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship; and to devise curious works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in the cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of wood, to make any manner of cunning work.” And, surely, I may metaphorically apply this description to our Judah-Jesus! What wisdom there is in Him and what skill! What is there that He cannot do? Bezaleel could cut, polish, and set precious stones—but Jesus can take the worthless pebbles of the brook and transmute them into diamonds! Jesus takes “base things of the world, and things which are despised,” and works such marvelous changes in them that the Lord of hosts says concerning them, “They shall be Mine in that day when I make up My jewels.” He is a wonderful lapidary! Some of us have been upon the wheel under His hand for a long time—and we are apt to think that He has cut us most cruelly—but the cutting is intended to bring out our brilliance and to make us fit to shine in the diadem of the King in due time! Bezaleel was also a worker in wood—and our great Judah-Jesus came to us when we were growing wild in the forest of sin. It was His axe of conviction that cut us down and it has been His hand of skill that has been fashioning and carving us to make us worthy to be pillars in His temple!

What is there that Jesus cannot do? Has He not worked out for us a work which required far more skill than the erecting of the tabernacle in the wilderness and the making of the Ark of the Covenant, the veil which hung before the most holy place, the high priest's garments of glory and beauty and all the cunning work devised by Bezaleel and his helpers? Did He not spend His whole life in working out for us a matchless robe of righteousness in which we may even dare to stand before the all-seeing eyes of God? Angels will keep on wondering throughout eternity at the wisdom of their Lord and ours! The wisdom of His teaching is divine. “Never man spoke like this man.” The wisdom with which He deals with each individual case that is brought to Him is matchless! He is the great physician and there is no earthly doctor who has such skill as He has. Let Bezaleel, of the tribe of Judah, have all due praise, but let Jesus, the Son of God, have far more! All wisdom is to be found in Him! His very name is “wisdom.” Solomon calls Him by that name. The wisest of men was not at all wise in comparison with incarnate wisdom, the wisdom of God as manifested in Jesus Christ. Jesus, we bless You, You who have worked out a perfect righteousness for us, You who make us into living stones and then build us, stone by stone, into the marvelous edifice of Your church! Jesus, You are He whom Your brethren shall praise for Your wondrous wisdom and skill!

Further, the tribe of Judah had precedence *in presenting offerings unto the Lord*. In Numbers 7:12, we read, “He that offered his offering the first day was Nahshon the son of Amminadab, of the tribe of Judah.” The Lord had said to Moses, “They shall offer their offering, each prince on his day, for the dedicating of the altar,” and the prince of the tribe of Judah, therefore, led the way by bringing his offering on the first day. We know that our Lord sprang out of Judah, so he was first with his offering. “No,” says someone, “Abel was first with his offering.” Yes, apparently He was in the order of time, but Christ’s offering was much more ancient than his, for He was “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” In the divine purpose, His sacrifice was offered long before the great tragedy on Calvary! And the merit of His atonement was reckoned to His people’s account long before man was created—but certainly in order of precedence Christ’s offering comes first. Christ brought for His offering His own most precious body and blood and we, by faith, present the same offering when we come to God in the name of Jesus. What sacrifice could we bring if Judah’s prince had not first brought His one offering by which He has perfected forever them that are sanctified? Did I say just now that Christ’s offering had precedence? I must correct myself, for it is first, it is last, it is midst, it is the *only* sacrifice that can put away sin and make us acceptable unto God! And there is no sacrifice either of prayer or of praise that we can present to God unless we bring it by virtue of Christ’s one great sacrifice. Let us, therefore, praise our Judah-Jesus! Let us give Him our loudest hallelujahs, for He comes first to the altar, and we afterwards approach it through Him. Jesus, You are He whom Your brethren shall praise for Your wondrous atoning sacrifice!

Yet again, Judah had the singular precedence of *always leading the van when the tribes were on the march*. In Numbers 10:14 we read that, when the fiery-cloudy pillar moved, “in the first place went the standard of the camp of the children of Judah according to their armies.” First in the encampment, first on the march, first everywhere was Judah’s lion! The tribe of Dan brought up the rear, but the tribe of Judah always went in front. And here again let Jesus Christ be praised, for He always leads the way! If I descend into the Valley of Humiliation, I shall see His footprints all down the slippery steeps. If I pass through the Enchanted Ground where so many fall asleep, I shall see the track of the wakeful one all along that dangerous way. If up the Hill Difficulty I have to scramble on my hands and knees, I shall see the marks of the blood drops where His hands were torn by the thorns and His feet were cut by the flints as He, too, climbed there! And when I go down to the river, I shall still see His footprints—and up the other side I shall see the track of my risen Lord! All up the eternal hills I shall but follow where He leads the way! Yes, and up to the very throne of God He has gone before us, clearing a way for His people and leading them along it.

Yet once more, *Judah afterwards attained to the sovereignty*, for David, of the tribe of Judah, was in due time proclaimed king over all Israel. We also have a King of the line of Judah, one who is mightier than David, and wiser than Solomon—and happy are we in having such a King to reign over us! Who among us that loves Christ would not set Him up upon a high throne? Oh, that we could continually exalt Him yet more and more! Let your sweetest songs be all in His praise! Let your most daring deeds be done for Him. Give Him, you gracious women, your alabaster boxes full of precious ointment! Prepare your feasts, you wealthy men, and invite Him to preside at the table! Come, you children, and strew branches in the way while He rides along triumphantly! Let, “Hosanna! Hosanna! Hosanna!” be the joyful strain which comes from every lip and heart because Jesus reigns over us, the King of kings and Lord of lords! Do praise Him, do extol Him this very moment, lift up your hearts and your voices while we sing this familiar strain—

*“Jesus is worthy to receive
Honor and power divine.
And blessings more than we can give
Be, Lord, forever Thine.”*

(The congregation joined in singing, and then the preacher continued his sermon).

II. The second part of our subject was to be THE GLORIES OF JUDAH AS SETTING FORTH THE GLORIES OF JESUS. They are illustrated in the sentence concerning Judah that follow our text.

The first of them mentions *the victories of Judah*—“Your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies.” You know what it means when a man seizes his enemy by the throat, or when a lion gets its prey by the

neck and shakes the very life out of it. Thus has Jesus Christ done with all the enemies of His people. Shall I tell you again the grand old story? 'Twas one dark night when the great shepherd was watching His flock that He heard the roaring which told Him that the old lion of the pit was about to leap into the fold to tear the sheep in pieces. Then the shepherd whispered to Himself, "This is the dreadful hour and the power of darkness." Taking His place in the midst of His blood-bought flock, He waited for the next terrific roar. And as the lion sprang into the fold, He received him upon His bare bosom, and began at once to grapple with Him. He was wounded in His hands, in His feet, and in His side—and in the desperate struggle "His sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground." It was a dreadful fight which had been foreseen before the world was made, and which shall be the theme of grateful song when the world has ceased to be! But in the end the shepherd tore the lion as though it had been a kid and, crying, "It is finished," He Himself fell prostrate over His foe, slain, but dying only to rise again and live in everlasting triumph! In that dread combat, His hand was, indeed, on the neck of His enemy—and now He has gone to glory, leading captivity captive! You who have been delivered by Him from the old lion of the pit may well exclaim, "Jesus, You are He whom Your brethren shall praise."

The next thing for which Judah was to be praised was Jacob's prophecy, "*Your father's children shall bow down before you.*" Now, who in this house is a child of God? You will not be long in answering that question when I put to you another, "Do you bow down before the Lord Jesus Christ?" Here we are, a vast multitude assembled in this Tabernacle, but we are not all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. We cannot all truly say, "Our Father, who are in heaven." Our text gives us the means of knowing who are the children of God, for the great Father says to His Son, "Your Father's children shall bow down before You." Do you bow down before the Lord Jesus Christ? Is He your only trust? Do you rest your whole weight upon Him? Do you depend for time and eternity upon Judah-Jesus whom God has anointed and appointed to be the only Savior of sinners? If so, you have proved your sonship by bowing down before your great elder brother!

The third glory of Judah was *his lion-like power*. Jacob said, "Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, you are gone up. He stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?" This seems to be a picture, first of Judah, and then of the Lord Jesus Christ. As a young lion, He has gone up and tore His prey in pieces. Sin, death and hell He has torn asunder! And now that He is like a mighty, full-grown lion, woe be unto those who provoke Him to anger—but blessed are they who have Him on their side! Many of you have seen that beautiful engraving of Una, the type of innocence, riding upon a lion's back; that lion, according to Spenser, protecting her from all ill. That is how every penitent soul rides, by the grace of God! The Lion of the tribe of Judah is the guardian of every believing heart. You have but to trust yourself to Jesus and He will see to it that you are never destroyed. He will preserve and deliver you from all evil of every kind and, at last, shall safely bring you where you shall see His face and rejoice in Him forever and ever! But woe to any of you who reject Him! Woe to you who deny His deity! Woe to you who break His Sabbaths, abhor His word and despise His cross! In that last tremendous day, His anger against the wicked shall be so terrible that they shall say to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him that sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" Oh, bow before Him, accept His grace, trust in His atoning sacrifice and then the very power which should make you now tremble will be exerted on your behalf and cause you to rejoice forever!

Further, Jesus is to be extolled for *His perpetual sovereignty*. "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between His feet until Shiloh comes." Judah's sovereignty came to an end, but Jesus always reigns. His kingdom here on earth has often seemed as if it was in jeopardy, but it has never been overthrown and it never will be. In the martyr days, they sewed the Christians up in the skins of wild beasts and cast them to the dogs. They dragged them at the heels of horses. They burned them at the stake. They stripped off their clothes and tortured them with hot irons on every part of their body. I dare not mention all the cruelties that were practiced on the followers of Jesus, but nothing availed to shake their allegiance to their King! In all these trials they were more than conquerors through Him who loved them and who gave them the grace to endure all these things for His sake! Neither tribulation, nor distress, nor persecution nor famine, nor nakedness, nor peril, nor sword could separate them from the love of Christ! And thus His kingdom was perpetuated during even the darkest ages of its history—which in another

sense were also the brightest because of the glory that the faithfulness of His followers brought to their King! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom—“of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever.”

Now we get clear of Judah and come to Shiloh, of whom Jacob says, “*Unto Him shall the gathering of the people be.*” Ah, beloved, there are no gatherings of the people anywhere else like those who come to Christ! It is no small thing that, all these years, the multitudes have gathered in this house, Sabbath by Sabbath, and why do they come? I confidently affirm that the only reason why such crowds gather here is because the preacher’s theme is Christ! Feebly as he sometime preaches, his unvarying theme is the cross, the precious blood, the all-sufficient sacrifice of Christ offered once for all on Calvary! This is a theme which never palls upon the ear! This is a subject which never grows stale. “We preach Christ crucified,” for this is the magnet that draws the people to Him. Jesus Himself said, “I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me. This He said, signifying what death He should die.” The crowds that come here are nothing in comparison with the multitudes that have been and are still being drawn to Christ by the magnet of His death! I see His cross standing on yonder hill and I see the people gathering to it from every quarter. There was a little stream at first, but it grew, and none of us can tell how many have already been drawn to Christ—and still they come! While I have been speaking to you, they have kept on coming to Him, and so they shall until “He shall have dominion also from sea to sea and from the river unto the ends of the earth.” “Yes all kings shall fall down before Him: all nations shall serve Him.” “To Him shall the gathering of the people be.” They may seem to us to be long in coming, but they must come. The vision may tarry, but it is sure—and at the appointed time there shall be heard a great shout from the dwellers in the land, and from those far off upon the sea and from the glorified in heaven, saying, “The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ: and He shall reign forever and ever.”

At the last, good old Jacob seems to have had his eyes opened, and to have seen *a very singular vision of Judah’s King*—“Binding His foal unto the vine, and His ass’s colt unto the choice vine.” Yes, ‘tis He, the very same of whom the prophet wrote, “Behold, your King comes unto you, meek and sitting upon an ass, and a colt, the foal of an ass.” This is Judah-Jesus! He is a King, but He goes not down to Egypt for horses. He is meek and lowly, so He is content to ride upon the humble ass in His triumphal entry into Jerusalem! The mention of “the vine” and “the choice vine” naturally turns our thoughts to His most instructive parable of the vine and the branches. And as the ass’s colt was bound to the vine, so is the church of God bound to Him who said, “I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman.”

Jacob’s next words are also very suggestive—“He washed His garments in wine, and His clothes in the blood of grapes.” You know the meaning of the allegory. Jesus went to Gethsemane and there “the blood of grapes” upon the true vine—I mean, the bloody sweat that exuded from every pore of His sacred body—was so copious as to make His garments appear as though they had been washed in wine! They took Him to Gabbatha and there they scourged Him so cruelly that again His clothes looked as if they had been washed in the blood of grapes. And so He passed on through the streets of Jerusalem until He came to Golgotha. Can you bear to see Him taking His last bloodbath on Calvary?—

***“His dying crimson, like a robe,
Spreads o’er His body on the tree.”***

After that terrible bloodbath, how does He look? What aspect does He bear? Jacob said, “His eyes shall be red with wine, and His teeth white with milk.” His eyes were red with wine, but again it was the red wine of His own most precious blood flowing down from His thorn-crowned brow! And the white teeth seem to suggest the spotless purity of the Son of God even when He who knew no sin, was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. Oh, we must praise our blessed Judah-Jesus, for He was still fairest of the fair even when His face was marred more than the face of any man! Let us humbly bow before Him. Let us gratefully adore Him as we remember that, “being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” But that was not the end of Him, for He was buried—but the third day He rose again and, after tarrying a while with

His disciples, He ascended to His Father and our Father, to His God and ours! And He is coming back again, one of these days, “to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe” in Him!

Long ago, Isaiah asked, “Who is this that comes from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? This that is glorious in His apparel, traveling in the greatness of His strength?” And the answer came at once, “I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.” Then the prophet asked, “Why are You red in Your apparel, and Your garments like he that treads in the wine vat?” And He answered, “I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with Me: for I will tread them in My anger, and trample them in My fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon My garments, and I will stain all My raiment. For the day of vengeance is in My heart, and the year of My redeemed is come.” To all who trust Him, our great Judah-Jesus is still “mighty to save.” All blood-bedewed from Calvary, He cries, “Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.” To every sincere penitent, He still speaks in righteousness and says, “I washed My garments in wine, and My clothes in the blood of grapes when I trod the winepress of Jehovah’s wrath for Your sake; when there was none to help, My own arm brought salvation unto Me, but it was for you that I suffered.” Oh, believe Him, sinner! Trust Him and so become a child of God by faith in Christ Jesus, and then go forth to serve Him and to praise Him all your days—and to glorify Him forever. Let us all go our way still singing the praises of our blessed Lord and Master—

*“Let Him be crowned with majesty
Who bowed His head to death;
And be His honors sounded high
By all things that have breath!
Jesus, our Lord, how wondrous great
Is your exalted name!
The glories of Your heavenly state
Let the whole earth proclaim!”*

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:

GENESIS 49:1-28.

Verses 1, 2. *And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days. Gather yourselves together, and hear, you sons of Jacob; and hearken unto Israel your father.* It must have been a great comfort to the old man to have all his 12 sons with him. What a quiet answer this was to his former unbelief! They were all there, yet he could remember the time when he had said, “Me have you bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and you will take Benjamin away.” Ah, we also shall have in our later days to chide ourselves for our foolish unbelief! “Jacob called unto his sons.” So he was not bereaved after all! They are all here, Jacob! It falls to the lot of few fathers to have 12 sons—but still fewer to have all 12 of them gathered about his dying bed! “Gather yourselves together.” They were to keep together as a family—and shall not the people of God keep together? Come away from the world, beloved, but come close to one another! Be one household. Be it your delight to assemble around your elder brother, the Lord Jesus Christ! “Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days.” We are not told, nowadays, everything about the future, but much of the future is unfolded to us in the great principles of the law and the gospel. And we may learn very much of holy foresight by coming to the oracles of God.

3. *Reuben, you are my first-born, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellence of dignity, and the excellence of power.* The patriarch fixes his eyes on his first-born. He must say something sharp that would dishonor him, but he does not deny him the rights of birthright. He clothes him with the robes and the jewels of primogeniture, and then he strips him—

4. *Unstable as water, you shall not excel; because you went up to your father’s bed; then defiled you it: he went up to my couch.* So a man may have great opportunities and yet lose them. Uncontrolled passions may make him very little who otherwise might have been great. Reuben was “the excellence of dignity, and the excellence of power,” yet his father had to say to him, “You shall not excel.”

5. *Simeon and Levi*—they stood next according to the order of birth. “Simeon and Levi”—

6. *Are brothers.* They are very much like each other.

6-7. *Instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. O my soul, come not you into their secret; unto their assembly, my honor, be not you united: for in their anger they slew a man, and in their self-will they dug down a wall. Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.* Hence we do not read of the tribe of Simeon in the blessing of Moses at the end of Deuteronomy. But the Levites had this curse turned into a blessing, for, though they were scattered, yet they were scattered as priests and instructors to the other tribes. Happy is that man who, though he begins with a dark shadow resting upon him, so lives as to turn even that shadow into bright sunlight! Levi gained a blessing at the hands of Moses—one of the richest blessings of any of the tribes. This holy man, Jacob, in dying, did not express himself according to the rules of natural affection but he yielded himself up to the Spirit of God—therefore he had to say very much what must have been very bitter for a father to say, and he said it in all faithfulness being taught of the Spirit concerning things to come.

8. *Judah*—Now the Patriarch changes his tone, for he has come to that tribe which would take the birthright, out of which the Christ would come—“Judah”—

8. *You are he whom your brothers shall praise.* They praised God for him, they praised God by him, and they praised God in him! He is the type of Jesus, of whom we can say all this with great emphasis.

8. *Your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; your father’s children shall bow down before you.* In the person of David, in the long line of kings of the tribe of Judah, all this came true. And in the person of the great son of David, the Lord Jesus Christ, all this has come true to a very high degree!

9. *Judah is a lion’s whelp: from the prey, my son, you are gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?* The coat of arms of Judah was a lion *couchant*, in the fullness of his strength, keeping still, and waiting to spring upon his adversary. Our Lord Christ is such a Lion today—“the Lion of the tribe of Judah”—*couchant*, lying down. “Who shall rouse Him up?” Ah, if He is once fully aroused, what power will He put forth when He shall spring upon His adversaries?

10. *The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet until Shiloh comes; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.* Jacob’s eyes were dim, but he could see a very long way! He could see to the coming of Christ, the Shiloh, the Pacificator, the Peace-Maker—he could see that day when the Jews would cry, “We have no king but Caesar,” for the Shiloh would have come and the scepter would have departed from Judah’s tribe. “Unto Him shall the gathering of the people be.” Oh, that it might be so today! May many be gathered to Christ! He is the true center and we gather unto Him. May the divisions of the church be soon healed by a general gathering unto Christ who alone is the center of the Church. “Unto Him shall the gathering of the people be.”

11-12. *Binding his foal unto the vine, and his donkey’s colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes: his eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk.* They were to have a land in which would be milk for babes and wine for strong men! Surely this land is “Your land, O Emmanuel!” What nourishing milk there is in the gospel, and what exhilarating wine for those who know the love of Christ!

13. *Zebulun shall dwell at the haven of the sea; and he shall be for an haven of ships; and his brother shall be unto Zidon.* When the land was divided by lot, the lot was disposed by God to the complete fulfillment of Jacob’s prophecy. Many things may seem to be left to chance, but they are not—the hand of God still guides and controls. This blessing is very suggestive. “Zebulun shall dwell at the haven of the sea; and he shall be for a haven of ships.” If God puts you by the sea, mind that you are a haven for ships. The Lord, in His providence, fixes your position—see that you turn it to account for the good of others.

14-15. *Issachar is a strong donkey couching down between two burdens: and he saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant; and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute.* Issachar’s was a poor case. He was so idle, so fond of rest, that he was willing to become a servant unto tribute. This seems hardly a blessing yet it was true of Issachar. He was strong, but then he was a donkey as well as strong, so he liked couching down between two burdens much better than bearing either one of them—yet he had to bow his shoulder to bear and became a servant unto tribute.

16-17. *Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel. Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path that bites the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward.* This tribe would show

more cunning than courage. It would excel rather in the strategy of war than in the force of arms. Here the old man paused and refreshed himself by saying—

18. *I have waited for Your salvation, O LORD.* What a happy breathing space is this! When you and I, also, are near our journey's end, may we be able to say, as Jacob did, "I have waited for Your salvation, O LORD." He could not have said that once. This is the very Jacob who had, in his earlier days, been full of crafty policy and tricks and schemes! But he has done with all that now, and he is able to truthfully say, "I have waited for Your salvation, O LORD."

19. *Gad, a troop shall overcome him: but he shall overcome at the last.* This has been the blessing of many a child of God—to fight and apparently to lose the battle, yet to win it at the end. O you who are striving against sin, or seeking to win souls for Christ, after many disappointments may you be able to clutch this sweet assurance, "He shall overcome at the last."

20. *Out of Asher his bread shall be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties.* Asher was a tribe that was placed in a very fertile region where everything was crowned with delight. Oh, to have our inheritance where we feed upon the bread of heaven, and where the deep truths of God become to us royal dainties!

21. *Naphtali is a hind let loose: he gives goodly words.* Naphtali was a tribe notable for those that could speak freely, helped of God with a holy freedom in bearing testimony to His truth.

22. *Joseph*—ah, now the patriarch comes to his beloved Joseph, and here the old man lingers long, longer than upon any other of his sons. "Joseph"—

22. *Is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall.* The Hebrew puts it, "Joseph is a son of fruits, even a son of fruits by a well; whose daughters run over the wall."

23, 24. *The archers have surely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him: but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hand were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from there is the shepherd, the stone of Israel).* [See Sermon #17, Volume 1—JOSEPH ATTACKED BY THE ARCHERS—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] Joseph is a type of Him who is both the Shepherd and the stone to us—the Shepherd who defends us, provides for us, and dies for us. And the foundation on which we build for time and eternity.

25-28. *Even by the God of your father, who shall help you; and by the Almighty, who shall bless you with blessings of Heaven above, blessings of the deep that lies under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb: the blessings of your father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren. Benjamin shall prey as a wolf: in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil. All these are the twelve tribes of Israel: and this is it that their father spoke unto them, and blessed them; every one according to his blessing he blessed them.*

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