

Session 2:
The King Messiah
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I. The Lion from the Tribe of Judah (Genesis 49)

“Then Jacob summoned his sons and said, ‘Assemble yourselves that I may tell you what will befall you in the days to come. Gather together and hear, O sons of Jacob; and listen to Israel your father’” (Genesis 49:1-2).

1. Just before his death, Jacob (Israel) prophesied over each of his twelve sons.

“Judah, your brothers shall praise you; your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; your father’s sons shall bow down to you” (Gen 49:8).

2. This one verse contains three distinct prophetic statements.
3. First, Judah, which means “praise” would actually receive praise from his brothers.
 - a) Throughout the Scriptures, “praise” is most often reserved for God.
 - b) Not only will Judah give praise to God however, but he will receive praise from his brothers.
4. Second, this descendant of Judah will subdue his enemies. This clearly harkens back to the promise of the One who will “crush” the seed of the serpent.
5. Third, the initial allusion to the one who will receive praise is expanded to include Judah’s brothers actually bowing down, not to Judah, but to the One who will come from him.
 - a) It is as if Jacob had been eagerly seeking to know which one of his sons would produce the Promised One. Now, he was able to essentially declare, “Judah, thou art the one.”
 - b) This points not merely to Judah individually, but to the Promised One who will come from him (and will rightly receive praise).

- c) There is a very powerful hint here concerning the divine nature of the Promised One because praise belongs to God alone.

“Judah is a lion’s whelp; from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He couches, he lies down as a lion, and as a lion, who dares rouse him up?” (v. 9).

- 6. The picture painted is of a roaring lion, which having eaten its prey, retreats to its lair in the mountains and lies down.
 - a) It is from this prophecy that the Book of Revelation would later refer to Jesus as, “the lion of the tribe of Judah” (Rev. 5:5).
 - b) The New Testament application of this text to Jesus the Messiah validates our messianic interpretation.
 - c) It also points to an ultimate end time context. Rather than ascribing the oracle to King David, it is understood to be referring to Jesus, the ultimate deliverer who would come back as king.
 - d) As we will see, further Old Testament prophecy also validates the messianic interpretation.

“The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until Shiloh comes, and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples” (v. 10).

- 7. Most scholars understand “between his feet” to be a euphemism for the reproductive organs, and thus Judah’s descendants. The kingship will never leave the tribe of Judah.
- 8. Alternative translation: *“The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until he to whom it belongs shall come and the obedience of the nations shall be his.”*
- 9. Regardless as to which translation one accepts, the primary emphasis of the prophecy is clear: The Promised One is also a king who will come from the line of Judah. Once this king comes, His rule will extend to the whole earth and will never come to an end.

*He ties his foal to the vine,
And his donkey’s colt to the choice vine; (v. 11)*

10. This is best interpreted as pertaining to Judah inheriting the best land within the tribal allotments.

*He washes his garments in wine,
And his robes in the blood of grapes.
His eyes are dull from wine,
And his teeth white from milk. (v. 12)*

11. On one hand, this also speaks of Judah inheriting the best land for growing vineyards. But it is also later appropriated by Isaiah as speaking of the Messiah.

*Who is this who comes from Edom,
With garments of glowing colors from Bozrah,
This One who is majestic in His apparel,
Marching in the greatness of His strength?
"It is I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save."
Why is Your apparel red,
And Your garments like the one who treads in the wine press?
"I have trodden the wine trough alone.
*And from the peoples there was no man with Me.
I also trod them in My anger
And trampled them in My wrath;
And their lifeblood is sprinkled on My garments,
And I stained all My raiment.
"For the day of vengeance was in My heart,
And My year of redemption has come.
"I looked, and there was no one to help,
And I was astonished and there was no one to uphold;
So My own arm brought salvation to Me,
And My wrath upheld Me.
"I trod down the peoples in My anger
And made them drunk in My wrath,
And I poured out their lifeblood on the earth." (Is 63:1-6)**

12. Finally, the prophecy ends in the most poetic manner:

"When Jacob finished charging his sons, he drew his feet into the bed and breathed his last, and was gathered to his people" (Ge 49:33).

II. Balaam's Oracle (Numbers 24)

1. Balaam could both speak forth demonic “prophecy,” or speak for the Spirit of God:

When Balaam saw that it pleased the Lord to bless Israel, he did not go as at other times to seek omens but he set his face toward the wilderness. And Balaam lifted up his eyes and saw Israel camping tribe by tribe; and the Spirit of God came upon him. (Nu 24:1–2)

2. His first oracle begins with a near perfect reiteration of the prophecy given to Judah and the blessing given to Abraham combined:

*He couches, he lies down as a lion,
And as a lion, who dares rouse him?
Blessed is everyone who blesses you,
And cursed is everyone who curses you. (v. 9)*

3. In the last-days, this ruler would arise from Israel and crush their enemies in defeat:

*I see him, but not now;
I behold him, but not near;
A star shall come forth from Jacob,
A scepter shall rise from Israel,
And shall crush through the forehead of Moab,
And tear down all the sons of Sheth.
Edom shall be a possession,
Seir, its enemies, also will be a possession,
While Israel performs valiantly.
One from Jacob shall have dominion,
And will destroy the remnant from the city. (Nu 24:17–20).*

- a) This king from Israel would defeat Moab, Edom, and the Amalekites.
- b) As Old Testament scholar Jacob Milgrom comments, this is a “fitting and ironic conclusion to the Balaam story: Balak of Moab wished to curse Israel; instead, his hired seer, Balaam, curses Moab.”
- c) Because all of these peoples throughout history displayed strong hostility toward God’s people, they are marked for judgment when the King arrives.

- d) Later, King David would have been familiar with this prophecy, and thus he sought to defeat these peoples. While he did attain some success however, they were never completely defeated; this task would be reserved for the King to which the prophecy ultimately points.
4. Balaam's prophecy combines the previous prophecies to Abraham and Judah concerning a king from Israel with the prophecy to Eve concerning the skull-crushing warrior. The identity of the mysterious and promised serpent-crusher.
5. From this point forward, every messianic promise would be understood to be inseparably intertwined with the King and Kingdom of Israel.
6. Though many theologians throughout the centuries have tried, one simply cannot separate the King from His kingdom.

III. The Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 7)

I will also appoint a place for My people Israel and will plant them, that they may live in their own place and not be disturbed again, nor will the wicked afflict them any more as formerly ... and I will give you rest from all your enemies. (2 Samuel 7:10-11)

1. The covenant begins with a clear reiteration of the land promises given in both the Abrahamic and the Mosaic Covenants (cf., Ex 12:25; 13:5; 23:23, 31; 32:13).

The LORD also declares to you that the LORD will make a house for you. When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever ... Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever. (2 Samuel 7:12-16)

2. The term "seed" appears yet again.
 - a) First, we learned of the "seed" who would come from Eve (Gen 3:15).
 - b) Then Abraham was told that his "seed" would inherit the promised land (Gen 15).

- c) Now, it was narrowed down to a “seed” from the “house” of David.
- d) This descendant would inherit David’s throne and his kingdom, and would rule “forever.”
- e) In order to rule forever, one must live forever.
- f) As Edersheim expressed it, the hope of faithful believers after David’s day was, “A never-ending kingdom, a never-passing king; a sanctuary never to be abolished.”
- g) While the seed of Eve, Abraham, and David would be a human, he is revealed here to be more than any mere man—He also has a divine or heavenly nature.

IV. Psalm 2: “The Psalm of Messiah the Prince” (Charles Spurgeon)

“Why are the nations in an uproar and the peoples devising a vain thing?” (v. 1).

- 1. It begins abruptly, describing the heathen nations enraged, plotting and conspiring together.
- 2. Their resistance is directed against the authority of two individuals. Specifically, they are protesting:

“against Yahweh and His Anointed... Come, they say, ‘Let us tear their fetters apart and cast away their cords from us!’” (vv. 2-3).

- 3. The word for “Anointed” is the Hebrew *moshiach*, from which we get the English word Messiah—the chosen one who has been set apart to rule.
- 4. In all of the messianic prophecies that we’ve looked at thus far, this is the first time the term Messiah has been applied to the Promised One.

*He who sits in the heavens laughs,
The Lord scoffs at them.
Then He will speak to them in His anger
And terrify them in His fury, saying,
“But as for Me, I have installed My King
Upon Zion, My holy mountain. (vv. 4-6)*

5. Hostility is futile; the King will be enthroned on Mount Zion.
6. Because this is where David built his palace and placed his throne, it is also the place where it will be reestablished.
7. The Messiah Himself steps forward and speaks. His words give us a prophetic peak-behind-the-scenes to a moment in heaven's history when Yahweh spoke a divine decree over His Son:

*I will surely tell of the decree of the Lord:
He said to Me, 'You are My Son,
Today I have begotten You.
'Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance,
And the very ends of the earth as Your possession.
'You shall break them with a rod of iron,
You shall shatter them like earthenware.'* (vv. 7-9).

8. In the Davidic Covenant, we learned that the Promised One would live and rule forever. Here we learn that He also is preexistent.
9. Unlike other humans who come into existence at the moment of conception, the Messiah is shown to have been in heaven with God even before David was born.
10. He is part of the heavenly council possessing a divine or heavenly nature. To drive this point home, God actually calls the King "My Son."
11. The author of the Book of Hebrews would later cite this passage as proof of the Messiah's divinity:

"For to which of the angels did [God] ever say, 'You are My Son, today I have begotten You'?" (Heb 1:5).

12. The fact that the King will rule over much more than just Israel, and will in fact, "possess" the whole world is reiterated. He will have absolute dominion to the very "ends of the earth."
13. All who resist will be crushed like pieces of pottery. Again, the son of David is revealed to be the crushing one of Genesis 3:15.
14. Then the psalm shifts again. Now it is David who is speaking. In light of the terrifying reality concerning the King's judgment of the nations,

they are warned not only to abandon their hostility toward “the Son,” but also to submit and bow down before Him:

*Now therefore, O kings, show discernment;
Take warning, O judges of the earth.
Worship the Lord with reverence
And rejoice with trembling.
Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and you perish
in the way,
For His wrath may soon be kindled.
How blessed are all who take refuge in Him! (vv. 10–12).*

15. The NASB warns, “Do homage to the Son,” while several other translations render it: “kiss the Son.”
16. The psalm thus begins with the nations in a state of rage, determined to cast off the authority of Yahweh and His Messiah and ends with a solemn warning to worship Yahweh with fearful trembling and to bow before His Anointed Son—lest they be destroyed.
17. Conversely, all who take refuge in the Messiah will be greatly blessed. We are not surprised that this psalm is one of the most widely cited psalms in the New Testament.

V. Other Important Kingly Messianic Prophecies

A. Psalm 45

*Your arrows are in the heart of the King’s enemies.
Your throne, O God, is forever and ever;
A scepter of uprightness is the scepter of Your kingdom.
You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness;
Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You
With the oil of joy above Your fellows. (Psalm 45:5–7).*

1. Hebrews 1:8 cites this psalm as a proof text concerning the divinity of the Messiah.

B. Psalm 72

“Give the king Your judgments, O God, and Your righteousness to the king’s son. May he judge Your people with righteousness and Your afflicted with justice” (vv. 1-2)...

*May he also rule from sea to sea
And from the River to the ends of the earth.
Let the nomads of the desert bow before him,
And his enemies lick the dust.
Let the kings of Tarshish and of the islands bring presents;
The kings of Sheba and Seba offer gifts.
And let all kings bow down before him,
All nations serve him (vv. 8-11)...*

*May his name endure forever;
May his name increase as long as the sun shines;
And let men bless themselves by him;
Let all nations call him blessed.
Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel,
Who alone works wonders.
And blessed be His glorious name forever;
And may the whole earth be filled with His glory.
Amen, and Amen.
The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended., 17-20)*

C. Psalm 102

*You will arise and have compassion on Zion;
For it is time to be gracious to her,
For the appointed time has come.
Surely Your servants find pleasure in her stones
And feel pity for her dust.
So the nations will fear the name of the Lord
And all the kings of the earth Your glory.
For the LORD has built up Zion;
He has appeared in His glory. (Ps 102:13–16).*

1. Whereas most passages link the appearance of the Messiah with the redemption of Israel, here the psalmist has Yahweh Himself appearing in His glory.
2. Thus yet one more passage actually equates the Messiah with Yahweh.

D. Psalm 110

*“Sit at My right hand
Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.”
The Lord will stretch forth Your strong scepter from Zion, saying,
“Rule in the midst of Your enemies.”
Your people will volunteer freely in the day of Your power;
In holy array, from the womb of the dawn,
Your youth are to You as the dew.
The Lord has sworn and will not change His mind,
“You are a priest forever
According to the order of Melchizedek.”
He will shatter kings in the day of His wrath.
He will judge among the nations,
He will fill them with corpses,
He will shatter the chief men over a broad country.
Therefore He will lift up His head (Ps 110:1-7)*

1. In His defeat of the serpent’s seed, He will slaughter unjust, self-serving kings and fill the earth with dead bodies.
2. Then, as the quintessential warrior, after waging war and executing multitudes, the Messiah remains focused; He refreshes Himself from a stream, and then marches on