



Adult Bible Study Lesson Summary for September 25, 2022

Released on Monday, September 19, 2022

"The Scepter Given to Judah"

Lesson Text: Genesis 35:22b-26; 38:24-26; 49:10-12

Background Scripture: Genesis 35:22b-26; 38:12-19, 24-26; 49:8-12

Devotional Reading: Numbers 24:2-9, 15-17

Genesis 35:22b-26 (KJV)

22b Now the sons of Jacob were twelve:

23 The sons of Leah; Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, and Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Zebulun:

24 The sons of Rachel; Joseph, and Benjamin:

25 And the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid; Dan, and Naphtali.

26 And the sons of Zilpah, Leah's handmaid; Gad, and Asher: these are the sons of Jacob, which were born to him in Padanaram.

Genesis 38:24-26

24 And it came to pass about three months after, that it was told Judah, saying, Tamar thy daughter in law hath played the harlot; and also, behold, she is with child by whoredom. And Judah said, Bring her forth, and let her be burnt.

25 When she was brought forth, she sent to her father in law, saying, By the man, whose these are, am I with child: and she said, Discern, I pray thee, whose are these, the signet, and bracelets, and staff.

26 And Judah acknowledged them, and said, She hath been more righteous than I; because that I gave her not to Shelah my son. And he knew her again no more.

Genesis 49:10-12

10 The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.

11 Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes:

12 His eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk.

TODAY'S LESSON AIMS

Learning Facts: To learn that God has a plan for all of our lives.

Biblical Principle: To know that our faith in God is a necessity.

Daily Application: To live your life focused on the promises of God.

INTRODUCTION

The Royal House

Eight European monarchs trace their lineage back to one man: George II (1683–1760), king of Great Britain and Ireland. Over the course of 300 years, his descendants intermarried with other European royals, and a complicated web of family relations resulted. Now the monarchs of eight European countries—the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Monaco, and Luxembourg—claim a common ancestor.

In the modern era, a monarch's power is largely ceremonial. However, this week's lesson introduces a common ancestor to a royal genealogy, who still reigns in power and has forever changed the course of history.

LESSON CONTEXT

At the beginning of the patriarchal narratives in Genesis, God promised to make Abraham "a father of many nations" (Genesis 17:5). From these descendants God declared that "kings shall come" (17:6; see 17:16, 20).

However, situations regarding offspring (see Genesis 16:1; 18:13; 30:1) and family conflict (see 16:4–5; 25:19–34; 27:1–41) arose. These situations might have led Abraham's family to doubt God's promises. Yet God remained faithful, even repeating His promises (see 35:11).

Abraham's grandson Jacob fathered 12 sons; the descendants of these sons became the tribes of Israel. Scripture provides two primary methods of counting the tribes. The first method lists tribes with an inheritance of land (see Numbers 1:5–15; 2:3–32; Joshua 16:4). Under this method, Joseph's sons (Manasseh and Ephraim) were counted as tribes. The descendants of Levi were not included in this numbering of the 12 tribes since they were not to receive an inheritance of land (13:33).

The second method lists tribes by the name of each tribe's patriarch (Genesis 46:8–25; 49:3–27; Deuteronomy 27:12–14; 1 Chronicles 2:2). Under this method, the descendants of Manasseh and Ephraim were instead listed as the tribe of Joseph.

Through Jacob's family, God's promise of royalty would come. He would choose neither Jacob's oldest son (Reuben) nor his favorite son (Joseph) to be the ancestor of the royal line. Rather, out of Judah would come an eternal kingdom.

HOW TO SAY IT

Bilhah Bill-ha.

Ephraim Ee-fray-im.

Issachar	Izz-uh-kar.
Manasseh	Muh-nass-uh.
Naphtali	Naf-tuh-lye.
Shiloh	Shy-low.
Tamar	Tay-mer.
Zebulun	Zeb-you-lun.
Zilpah	Zil-pa.

Jacob's Family: Genesis 35:22b-26

1. How did God fulfill His promise to Jacob? (Genesis 22b-26)

God had promised Jacob (also known as Israel) that his descendants would be like "the dust of the earth" (Genesis 28:14) and "the sand of the sea" (32:12). The existence of Jacob's twelve sons (and their offspring) displayed God's faithfulness to fulfill these promises.

The listing of Jacob's 12 sons here is not in overall birth order. Instead, the sons are listed from oldest to youngest according to their respective mothers.

Although Leah was Jacob's first wife, he had not intended to marry her (Genesis 29:23–26). Despite her numerous sons, Leah never experienced the love from Jacob that her sister received (29:30).

The scandalous behavior of Reuben (Genesis 35:22) caused him to lose the firstborn privilege (49:3–4). His descendants would never rise to the same level of importance as would the descendants of his brothers.

Simeon and Levi fell out of their father's favor because of their violence (Genesis 49:5). Upon hearing of profane treatment toward their sister, the brothers had responded with violence (34:25). There's nothing wrong with defending your sister, but it wasn't necessary for them to wipe out innocent people just to gratify their own desire for revenge. Jacob was concerned that their actions would cause him to experience poor treatment by the surrounding nations (34:30).

Judah would rise to a position of leadership among his brothers (Genesis 37:25–28; 44:14–18; 46:28). While Judah acted unrighteously at times (see Genesis 38), he was uniquely blessed (49:8–12).

Issachar was conceived during a unique situation involving the use of mandrakes (see Genesis 30:15–18), a plant with seemingly aphrodisiac properties.

Warriors of the tribe of Zebulun fought valiantly in the days of the judges (see Judges 4:6; 6:35).

Jacob's love for Rachel was unparalleled (Genesis 29:30). God miraculously worked to allow her to conceive Joseph (30:22–24).

The favor that Joseph experienced from his father led his brothers to hate him (Genesis 37:3–4). They would sell him for 20 pieces of silver (37:28). Due to the wisdom God granted him, Joseph rose to a position of leadership in Egypt (41:39–41). In this situation,

he was prepared to deal with a famine—for the good of the whole known world, including his family (42:1–2).

Jacob blessed Joseph’s sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, as his own (Genesis 48:5). The descendants of these sons would later be counted as tribes of Israel (Numbers 1:32–35, see Lesson Context).

As the youngest son of Rachel, Benjamin received extra concern from his father (see Genesis 42:4). Though Benjamin’s descendants were relatively few in number (see Numbers 1:36), Israel’s first king came from them (1 Samuel 9:21).

When Rachel was unable to conceive, she gave Bilhah to Jacob to bear him children (Genesis 30:4). Rachel named Bilhah’s first child Dan (30:6). His descendants, though many in number (see Numbers 1:39; 2:26), were not powerful militarily (see Joshua 19:47; Judges 1:34–35).

Descendants of Naphtali were lauded for their valor (Judges 5:18). They joined with descendants of Asher and Manasseh to drive the Midianites from the land (7:23–25).

When Leah was unable to conceive, she allowed Jacob to continue fathering children, through Zilpah (Genesis 30:9).

The descendants of Gad settled east of the Jordan River (Numbers 32:1–33; Joshua 13:8). This land was well suited for raising livestock.

Jacob proclaimed the richness of the food produced by Asher (Genesis 49:20). Perhaps this declaration foreshadowed the tribe’s settlement of the fertile regions of Canaan (Joshua 19:24–31).

What Do You Think?

How have previous generations of believers informed and influenced your spiritual growth?

Digging Deeper

What steps will you take to influence future generations of believers so that they might spiritually grow and mature?

Judah’s Humbling: Genesis 38:24–26

Backdrop of story: The death of Judah’s two older sons, soon after marrying Tamar made him hesitant to give his third son to her. But he promised Tamar that when the boy was old enough, he would give him to her (Genesis 38:11). However, time went on and Judah failed to make good on his promise; So, Tamar took matters into her own hands and played the harlot. When Judah first saw Tamar, he took her to be a common harlot and did not recognize her. Tamar asked for and received as pledge of later payment for her services, Judah’s signet (seal), which was probably a cylinder seal carried on a chain around his neck, bracelets which were cords, and a staff which probably had his identification marks engraved into it. Tamar became pregnant but kept this a secret and went back home.

Judah had sent a friend to take back his pledge (see Genesis 38:1–23), but the woman could not be found (Genesis 38:22).

2. How did Judah react to the news of Tamar’s pregnancy? (Genesis 38:24)

Judah upon hearing of Tamar’s pregnancy, still not knowing who the father was, passed judgment on her. She was now three months pregnant.

Though Tamar lived in her father's household, Judah still claimed her as a part of his family. As long as his third son was alive, Judah would take an interest in her well-being, even if from a distance. Since she was widowed and lived in her father's house, there was no other way she could be with child except through immorality (v. 24).

Judah's judgment was striking and harsh. The Law of Moses did not exist during the time of Judah. It would later prescribe being burnt as a form of punishment (see Leviticus 20:14; 21:9).

Judah's declaration highlighted the horrific irony of the situation. He demanded capital punishment for his daughter-in-law because of her presumed prostitution. However, he was the one who had impregnated Tamar. Further, Judah might have considered Tamar's act to be one of unfaithfulness to his son Shelah, who was still next in line to be given as her husband (Genesis 38:11).

What Do You Think?

How can people respond fairly and in good time to an unjust situation?

Digging Deeper

How would your response differ if you or someone you loved was experiencing the unjust situation?

3. What action did Tamar take to prove the paternity of the child? (Genesis 38:25)

Tamar did not have to state publicly the extent of Judah's involvement. Instead, she forced her father-in-law to confront his hypocrisy and consider how he had failed to provide for her (see Genesis 38:14b). Tamar had no need to state the obvious. The personal items left behind would reveal the man who caused her to be with child (38:18).

A signet was an engraved stone that would leave a unique imprint when pressed on a surface (see Exodus 28:11). Signets were worn as rings (see Jeremiah 22:24; Daniel 6:17) or on a chain around the neck. A staff was a necessary tool when working with herds. A staff's owner would sometimes be identified by an inscription on it (Numbers 17:2). Tamar's shrewdness revealed her intentions. She had requested and retained these items not because of their financial value, but because of their identifying capabilities.

4. What was Judah's response when he realized he was the father of Tamar's child? (Genesis 38:26)

The revealing of the personal items would have brought great shame on Judah. To his credit, he *acknowledged* the items and their implications regarding his own failures. Whether because of his own shame or to hide his immoral act, Judah turned the discussion to Tamar.

Judah's statement that *she hath been more righteous than I* did not fully justify her. Rather, the statement indicated that his behavior was relatively worse. He had acted unfaithfully and unjustly toward Tamar by preventing his son *Shelah* from marrying her (Genesis 38:1-14). He failed to care for his widowed daughter-in-law. Tamar was in the

right to want Judah to honor his obligations. She desired just treatment and forced Judah's hand so that she would receive it. But that doesn't mean that the end justified the means.

That Judah *knew Tamar again no more* indicates that he had no further sexual relations with her. Tamar gave birth to sons (Genesis 38:29–30) who would continue the line of Judah (Ruth 4:12). Both Judah and Tamar were counted in a later genealogy of Jesus (Matthew 1:3).

What Do You Think?

How should a person respond when confronted with their unrighteous or sinful decisions?

Digging Deeper

How might confrontation differ when with believers (see Matthew 18:15–20)?

Judah's Ruler: Genesis 49:10-12

Jacob had paraded the sins of Reuben, Simeon, and Levi (Gen. 49:3-7, also see answer to Question # 1 above), but he said nothing about Judah's. Jacob realized now that what Judah did at least saved Joseph's life and got him to Egypt (Gen. 37:26-27), where God had a work for him to do.

Jacob's estimation of Judah had gradually risen higher, especially since Judah had offered himself as surety for Benjamin (43:8-9), and surely Joseph had told Jacob about Judah's compassionate plea on behalf of his youngest brother. When Jacob and the family moved to Egypt, it was Judah whom Jacob sent ahead to make things ready (46:28). Judah had made some mistakes, but he had also made some things right with his father and his family; and that was the difference between him and his three elder brothers.

5. What was Jacob's dying proclamation concerning Judah? (Genesis 49:10)

Jacob's dying proclamation and prophecy demonstrated his trust in the Lord's promise that kings would come from his descendants. A *sceptre* (staff) symbolized the presence of royalty and authority—a lawgiver for the people (see Esther 4:11; 5:2; Isaiah 14:5; Zechariah 10:11; Hebrews 1:8). Judah would be the lawgiver because God himself is the ultimate "lawgiver" (Isaiah 33:22; James 4:12).

When the dignitary was seated, the sceptre would rest between his feet. Jacob was not saying Judah's rule would end when *Shiloh* came (a mysterious name for Messiah; meaning him to whom the scepter/kingdom belongs); but on the contrary, this term denotes the turning point to which the superiority of Judah will continue, not then to cease, but at that time to be enlarged so as to embrace all the nations!

6. How did Jacob describe the future King's wealth? (Genesis 49:11-12)

Verses 11 and 12 certainly goes beyond Judah's time and speaks of the blessings of the Kingdom Age when the Messiah shall reign over Israel (see Isaiah 11:1-9; Ezekiel 34:23-31; Amos 9:11-15).

The king's abundance is on display through the imagery of grape vine and livestock (compare Deuteronomy 8:7–8). One can imagine that the king's abundance was so much that he would allow his *foal* (donkey) and *colt* to be tied to the vine. Even if the animals ate

some of the fruit of the vine, the loss would not have been an issue because of the king's bountiful and fertile crops.

The king's wealth would be on display because wine would be as common as laundry water for his garments. This is the language of hyperbole. It describes a land so wealthy and a people so prosperous that they can do these outrageous things and not have to worry about the consequences.

During the Kingdom Age, when the Messiah reigns, people will enjoy health and beauty (v. 12), because the devastating enemies of human life will have been removed.

How has God's abundance been demonstrated in your life?

Digging Deeper

What spiritual blessings have you experienced?

POINTS TO PONDER

1. God keeps His promises. (Genesis 35:22b-26)
2. Never rush to judgment. (Genesis 38:24-25)
3. Remember your obligations and do them. (Genesis 38:26)
4. Never lose faith in God's promises. (Genesis 49:10)
5. God promises will be fulfilled. (Genesis 49:11-12)

CONCLUSION

Wrecks into Royals

Promises regarding the royal descendant of Judah were fulfilled in two ways. First, they were fulfilled through the Davidic monarchy. David, a descendant of Judah, ruled Israel in power given by God (see 2 Samuel 7:5-15).

David partially fulfilled the prophecy; his rule was a shadow of the royalty to come. The second way Judah's promises were fulfilled was through the promised eternal king (2 Samuel 7:13, 16; Jeremiah 33:17; see Psalm 45:6). The Old Testament prophets looked for "a rod out of the stem of Jesse" (Isaiah 11:1) who would gather all people (11:10-16). His rule would be one of peace and righteousness from the throne of David (9:7) and the tribe of Judah (Jeremiah 23:5-6; Micah 5:2).

The New Testament writers interpreted these promises to apply to Jesus (see Matthew 2:1-6; Luke 1:32; Hebrews 7:14). As king, Jesus would bring salvation to the world (Luke 2:29-32). His kingdom, inaugurated at His first coming, would be fulfilled in His second coming to earth (see Revelation 2:26-27; 5:5; 19:15).

Judah and his family were by no means ideal ancestors for royalty—they were marked by rivalry, strife, and dysfunction. Judah's life, in particular, was filled with unrighteous acts. He was a wreck and an unlikely choice to be the ancestor of royalty.

However, God's plan of redemption is transformative. He led a dysfunctional family to become the nation of Israel. From this family would emerge the Savior of the world. He turns wrecks into royals!

PRAYER

God of Jacob and Judah, we praise You for Your kingdom in Christ Jesus. Thank You for inviting us to partake in Your kingdom, despite our failures. Show us how we might live as citizens of Your kingdom. In the name of King Jesus we pray. Amen.

THOUGHT TO REMEMBER

God transforms wrecks into royals!

ANTICIPATING THE NEXT LESSON

Next week's lesson is "The Birth of Moses" where we learn that God provides justice where there is injustice. We as Christians must be ready to boldly step up where there is injustice. Study Exodus 1:15–2:10.

LESSON SUMMARIZED BY

Senior Editor Horace A. Hayes

Jesus Is All Ministries

<https://www.jesusisall.com>

WORKS CITED

Bennetch, The Prophecy of Jacob (p. 424).

Life Application Bible—New Revised Standard Version. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

Scotfield, C.I., ed. The New Scofield Study Bible—King James Version. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Summary and commentary derived from Standard Lesson Commentary Copyright 2022 by permission of Standard Publishing.

The KJV Parallel Bible Commentary, by Nelson Books.

The Pulpit Commentary, Spence-Jones, H. D. M. (Hrsg.), Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

Wiersbe, The Bible Exposition Commentary, Cook.