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The Tribe of Judah

26: 19-22

The tribe of Judah DIG: What does the Second Census tell us about Judah's historical roots? Why did the tribe of increase decline from the First Census? Why would the wilderness generation want to know they had common historical roots from their parents, but a completely separate identity from them?

REFLECT: What meaningful group (tribe) are you a member of? How does being a part of that group help to support you and make you grow spiritually? How does being a part of it enable you to help others? What can you do to make sure that the positive parts of your past are accentuated in your relationship with God?

The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed.



1. The First Census in the past found **the tribe of Judah** being **numbered at 74,600** (to see link click [Ak](#) - **Numbering the Tribes**). **Jacob** had little good to say about his first three **sons**, but **his** fourth **son Judah** was the first to receive a true **blessing**. **Jacob** prophesied with a play on words when **he** said: **Judah, your brothers will praise you**, literally, it means *praise you will your brothers praise* (**Genesis 49:8a**), because **Judah** means *praise*. **He will be a praise himself**, but more importantly, **he will be a praise to**

ADONAI because this is **the tribe** that **the Messiah** will come from. Because of this, **Judah will be praised** by all **his other brothers**. Then **Ya'akov** said: **Your hand will be on the neck of your enemies, pointing to superiority and triumph in war. Judah is a lion's cub; my son, you stand over the prey, who dares to provoke him.** **Jacob** predicted a fierce **lion-like** dominance of **Judah**, saying: **Your hand will be on the neck of your enemies, pointing to superiority and triumph in war.** It is obvious from the rest of the Bible that **he** became the leading **tribe**. **Judah** was to **be praised indeed**.



2. The Second Census in the present: The descendants of Judah by their clans were: First 'Er and Onan were sons of Judah, but they died in the land of Canaan (see the commentary on **Genesis 38** - **Judah said to Tamar: Live as a Widow Until My Son Grows Up**). Like **Dathan and Abiram** (see **Exodus 16** - **The Rebellion of Dathan and Abiram**), 'Er and Onan would serve as reminders of **God's** judgment upon disobedience in **the Exodus generation**, providing a meaningful link of **the Second Census** to the sins of **their forefathers**. The purpose of the historical allusions was to challenge **the wilderness**

generation to renounce the past and to pay attention to **the Word of ADONAI** by faith as they advanced into **the Promised Land**. **The descendants of Judah by their three clans were: through Shelah, the Shelanite clan; through Perez, the Perezite clan; and through Zerah, the Zerahite clan** (see the commentary on **Genesis Jf - Tamar Gave Birth to Twin Boys, She Named them Perez and Zerah**). Through **Perez** would come the greatest heirs of the line of **Judah**, and indeed all of **Isra'el**. **Their descendants** would be chosen as **kings of Isra'el**, starting with **David** and culminating with **the greater Son of David, Yeshua Messiah** (see the commentary on **Ruth Bd - Coda: The Genealogy of David**). **The two subclans of Perez were: through Hezron, the Hezronite clan; and through Hamul, the Hamulite clan**. **These were the clans of Judah, those numbered were 76,500 (26:19-22), an increase of 1,900 from the First Census** (see **Ai - The First Census: The Old Generation of Rebellion**), or nearly three percent. **Judah, then, was the largest tribe of the twelve.**

In **the near historical future**, **Jacob** prophesied about the coming of **Yeshua**, when he said: **The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet (Genesis 49:10a)**. The **scepter** was the symbol of royalty, and emphasized **Judah's** right to **rule**. So **God** declares that the only **tribe** that would have **the scepter**, or the right to **rule**, would be **Judah**. All the kosher **kings** would come from **Judah**; any **king** that **ADONAI** has designated to **rule the Jews** must come from **the tribe of Judah**.

This passage points to the Second Coming when **Yeshua Ha'Meshiach** comes to set up **His Kingdom** for a thousand years. At that time, **He** will have the right to **rule**, and **the obedience of the Gentile nations** will be **His** (see the commentary on **Genesis Lg - The Scepter Will Not Depart from Judah Until He Comes to Whom It Belongs**). The one who has the right to the throne would be **King Messiah - the Kosher King from Judah** to whom the throne **rightfully belongs**. There were other godly **kings** from **Judah**, like **David, Solomon, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Joash, Uzziah, Hezekiah** and **Josiah**. But the sad prophecy of **Ezeki'el 21** says **remove the crown**, it's done. **The kosher kings** ended in 586 BC with the destruction of the Temple (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Mt - The Destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple Remembered on Tisha B'Av in 70 AD**). There will be no more kings of **Judah** until **He comes to whom it rightfully belongs**, and to this very day not one king of **Judah** has been crowned. The Maccabees were Levites. In fact, the Hasmonean Empire ran into trouble precisely because they were priests who tried to become kings later on. What about King Herod? His family was converted to Judaism. He was really a Roman king. In 1948 David Ben-Gurion didn't call himself a king. As a result, for about 2,500 years - there has been no king of **Judah**. **This is why Rashi, and many other rabbis believe, that the last King of Judah has to be**

King Messiah.

Historically, this prophecy has already been fulfilled. Once the tribe of **Judah**, under King David, attained leadership over the nation, **the scepter** (or the symbol of the king) never departed from **Judah** until after **Messiah** was born.⁵⁸¹ About that time the Romans, who had the right to **rule**, took away the right of capital punishment from **the Jews**. This changed the death penalty from stoning, to the Roman method of the cross for **the Israelites (John 18:31-32)**. **The sages recount that when this happened, the high priest went throughout the city of Yerushalayim wearing sackcloth and ashes saying, "Woe to us for the scepter has been taken from Judah and He to whom it belongs has not come."** They thought **the Word of the LORD** had been broken, but **they** didn't know that up in a Nazareth carpenter's shop, a young **Yeshua, the One to whom the scepter** belonged, the One **to whom obedience** belonged, had come . . . and **Genesis 49:10** was fulfilled.

The promise of a personal **Messiah** began in the garden of Eden. **And ADONAI said to the serpent, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; He will crush your head, and you will strike His heel (Genesis 3:15)**. Through all the ages, men have looked for the coming **Savior**, and this was certainly true of **Jacob**. The old patriarch would surely be expected to express that hope in **his** prophecy. This promise to **Judah** must indeed be **Jacob's** specific reference to that hope. Centuries later, **Isaiah** seemed to have these prophecies in mind when **he** first spoke of the coming **child of the virgin (Isaiah 7:20)**, and then went on to say that **His** name would be the **Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6-7)**. **The obedience of the Gentile nations**, which **Ya'akov** prophesied, corresponds clearly to **God's** messianic promise to **Abraham, Isaac and Jacob**, that **through their coming Seed, all the peoples on earth will be blessed (12:3b)**.⁵⁸²

3. The Messianic Kingdom in the future: The lists of names and numbers are the material and tangible signs of **God's blessing, God's** faithfulness to past promises, and the surety of **God's** future promise keeping (see **Ae - Stars of Heaven, Grains of Sand, and the Promises of God**). In **the far eschatological future**, **Jacob's** prophecy about **Yeshua's scepter not departing from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet (49:10a)**, will become a reality. This passage points to the Second Coming (see the commentary on **Isaiah Kg - The Second Coming of Jesus Christ to Bozrah**) when **Yeshua Ha'Meshiach** comes to set up **His Kingdom** for a **thousand years**. At that time, **He** will have the right to **rule**, and **the obedience of the Gentile nations** will be **His** (see **Revelation Ce - The Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the Root of David Has Triumphed**).

And when **Messiah** returns, we will return with **Him**. **The armies of heaven were following Him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean.** During **His** thousand-year reign, **He will rule the nations with an iron scepter (Psalm 2:8-9).** **He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of ADONAI, God of heaven's armies (Revelation 19:14-15 CJB).** At that time **Messiah** will be **the Koshier King** who will hold the **iron scepter**. **He will swiftly judge all sin and instantly put down any rebellion.** Using the same imagery of ruling **with an iron scepter**, **Yeshua** promised that believers would **rule** under **Him** in the same way: **To him who overcomes and does My will to the end, I will give authority over the Gentile nations. He shall rule them with an iron scepter and he will dash them to pieces like pottery, just as I have received authority from My Father (Revelation 2:26-27).** Therefore, because we are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, and a holy nation belonging to God (**First Peter 2:9**), we will be the priests of God and of the Messiah, and we will reign with Him for a thousand years (**Revelation 20:6**). Believers now serve as **priests** by worshipping **ADONAI** and leading others to the knowledge of **Him**, and we will also serve in that same way during **the Messianic Kingdom**.⁵⁸³ We are **blessed** to be royalty, and we will **rule** under **Messiah with an iron scepter**, because we are children of **the King**.

*Dear Heavenly **Father**, Praise **You** for **Your** Almighty power and the total security of knowing that **You** will for sure reign over the whole earth for one thousand years. **You** will have bound **Satan** and thrown **him** into the **bottomless pit**. **Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the abyss and a great chain. He seized the dragon - the ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan - and bound him for a thousand years. He also threw him into the abyss and locked and sealed it over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed (Revelation 20:1-3b).***

*The martyred believers who remain faithful to **You** during the Tribulation, will then be raised to reign with **You**. What a difference that will be, to go from being persecuted for **their** faith in **You** to reigning with **You**! **And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Yeshua and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his image, nor had they received his mark on their forehead or on their hand. And they came to life and reigned with the Messiah for a thousand years. (Revelation 20:4b-c).** Please help us to remember that the trials and problems of this life will soon be over and **You** are for sure coming back as conquering **King of Kings (Revelation 19:11-21)**. **For I consider the sufferings of this present time not worthy to be compared with the coming glory to be revealed to us (Romans 8:18).** In **Your** holy **Name** and power of **His** resurrection. Amen*