

Introduction: Most of you are well aware of the civil war going on in Syria. In roughly three years, over 100,000 people have been killed. The ruthless strikes have targeted women, children, and medical facilities caring for the sick and wounded. Perhaps some of you saw images from the bombing in Aleppo a little more than a week ago on February 14<sup>th</sup>. This four-year old boy **PIC** is weeping with tears flowing down his dust-filled face. The dust was from the debris of a barrel bomb dropped by the Syrian government on its own people. The tears were for his little brother who was almost killed.

What is happening in Syria under the Assad regime should not be overlooked or downplayed. Sadly, we know that history tells us ruler after ruler and kingdom after kingdom has been plagued by the schemes of evil men at the helm of power. The world has seen countless despicable men BUT thankfully, among the liars are honest and honorable men, among the unjust are the just, among the malevolent are the benevolent.

Here's the good news: All the kingdoms of men will soon crumble, and the kingdom of God will endure forever. Isaiah 40 says, "Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket, and are accounted as the dust on the scales" (Isaiah 40:15)

As we think about the kingdom of God this morning, I want to introduce you to . . .

### **"The True & Greater King"** **Genesis 49:8-12**

Context: Joseph narrative... Jacob made it to Egypt. He's about to die, and he speaks a final word to his sons. There are elements of prophecy, judgment, and blessing mark Jacob's address to his sons: Reuben, Simeon and Levi, Judah, Zebulun, Issachar, Dan, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Joseph, Benjamin  
Verse 1 and 28 provide bookends to these words of blessing that explain their intent.

- *Verse 1* . . . Here we have prophetic intent sprinkled with words of judgment based on their previous conduct. So these words are both retrospective, looking back, & prospective, looking to the future.
- In Verse 28 we see the intent of blessing suitable for each son. God's hand of favor will rest on them in these ways. *READ*.
  
- After hearing from the Joseph narrative last week, we would naturally expect the greatest blessing to fall on him. And to be sure, words of great fruitfulness and promise flow from the God who is described as the "Mighty One of Jacob, the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel, the God of your father, the Almighty, *El Shaddai*" BUT we discover that the blessing spoken to Judah carries the greatest force.
- We find it in vv. 8-12. Read along with me . . .

#### **Who is Judah?**

- Judah was the fourth born son of Jacob. He had a sketchy past of sexual immorality and disgrace as detailed in Genesis 38. But, we also saw how the Joseph narrative painted Judah in a more positive light as the one who was willing to substitute himself for the possible imprisonment of Benjamin.
- These narratives portray Judah as an unworthy recipient of the blessings that would flow him. This should greatly encourage us! God uses imperfect people. He used people like you and me, even to bring his Son into the world!
- Matthew 1 starts the genealogy of Jesus like this: "**The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar.**" (Matthew 1:1-3)
- Did you catch that? Jesus, the son of King David, was a descendent of Abraham, but through what line? Isaac, yes. Jacob, yes. But what son of Jacob? That's right, Judah.
- As we look at what will be true for the line of Judah, we must understand how these prophecies are ultimately and directly fulfilled through Jesus.

- One of the essential takeaways for us to see this morning is that Judah will one day live up to his name. The name Judah means “praise.” That’s how verse 8 begins. “Judah, your brothers shall praise you.” BUT Judah will live up to his name through the work of the true and greater Judah, who is the true and greater King, Jesus Christ.

T: I want to break these five verses down by asking the question: Why is this good and benevolent king worthy of praise?

### I. The King will be praised for his victorious reign over all his foes (Genesis 49:8-9).

- When we talk about the kingdom of God, the Bible uses the language of the kingdom to speak more about the reign of God, than the realm of the kingdom.
- Jesus exercises complete authority as he reigns over God’s kingdom. He can do so because he has defeated all of his foes.
- *These verses tell us that “the Lion of the Tribe of Judah” is a victorious Warrior!* Is this your view of Jesus? Is this picture strange to you? **Exodus 15:3 says, “The Lord is a warrior.”** Yes, Jesus is compassionate, caring, and more loving than we can imagine. But, at the same time, Jesus is not a wimp. He is a warrior.
- At the very end, John writes in the Book of Revelation: **“Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. And the armies of heaven [picture this], arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.” (Revelation 19:11-16)**
- This conquering Christ has eyes of fire, a robe dipped in blood. When he goes to battle the armies of heaven follow, all on white horses with white robes. There is a sword coming from his mouth. He exact his furious wrath on his foes. And I love this: He has his name stitched on his robe and tattooed on his thigh to let everyone know who he is: King of kings and Lord of lords!
- Boston is full of “tough guys.” None are as tough as Jesus. He has all power when he exercises justice on his foes.
- Verse 8 prophesies by saying his hand is on the neck of his enemies. The lion is pictured as having just devoured its prey.
- Our God is a conquering, triumphant, victorious God. Jesus triumphs over all of his foes. And who are his foes? Satan, sin, and death.

App

- Should that matter to us? All authority has been given to Christ. The gospel writers constantly show Jesus’ authority of demons, sin, sickness, suffering, and ultimately death!
- If this is true, that Christ defeats all of his foes, that he has an undefeated record, that every time the podiums are rolled out, he is on top with the gold, then this prophecy has significance for every nanosecond of our lives. Why?

His victory is our victory. Christ’s work has been imputed to us.

- His victory over sin is the basis and power for our daily battle against sin. We do not have to submit to the power of our sinful desires.
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- What about death? Do you think that Christ as the victorious, conquering Warrior-King means anything to our friends who just found out they lost their baby at 20 weeks?

- If you are aging or have aging parents, take heart. Christ has overcome the grave. We who are in Christ have the unshakable hope that we too will share in his resurrection!
- What Jacob says at the end of v. 9 is quite fitting of our Warrior Christ, “who dares rouse him?” This question speaks for itself.”
- Verse 9 sounds a warning to all who oppose and mock God to any degree.

But before we move on, we should ask: How did Christ conquer? Revelation 5 provides the answer.

**“And one of the elders said to me, ‘Weep no more; behold, *the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered*, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.’**

**And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders *I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain.*” (Revelation 5:5-6)**

Jesus conquered his foes through his death. He is the crucified and risen King.

T: Not only will the king be praised for his victorious reign, he will also . . .

## **II. The King will be praised through the obedience of all peoples (Genesis 49:10).**

- *Verse 10.* “The scepter shall not depart from depart, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.”
- Christ’s reign *universal and eternal*. That is why in Daniel’s night visions found in **Daniel 7:14** says, **“And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.”**
- Moreover, this King will have “the obedience of the peoples” or “the obedience of the nations” (NIV).
- Jacob’s prophetic words go beyond the bounds of the nation of Israel to that of the nations of the world. Once again, we find these verses in Genesis are loaded with heavy freight when it comes to God’s plan for redemptive history.
- App: Why are we going to India? Why are we going to Toronto? Why are planting churches all around Greater Boston? Because he is worthy for tribute to come from every person in the world.

Jesus deserves the “obedience” of all people.

- Obedience is about the allegiance of our hearts. We all obey something. There is something everyone gives ultimate allegiance and affection to.
- The idea of obedience sounds oppressive to some, but for those who understand the heart of God and his intentions for our good. The path of obedience is the path of freedom and blessing.
- When anything other than God ultimately rules our lives, we will one day discover we were living under tyranny and oppression, rather than the liberation that comes through the blessing of God. We all obey something. There is something everyone gives ultimate allegiance and affection to.
- How do we cultivate greater obedience? How do we live under his good reign?
- Be captivated by a vision of his greatness and glory. See how worthy, how valuable, how good, how gracious, how benevolent he is, and never turn back! In other words, we have to replace those things we once esteemed precious and valuable with that which is truly precious and valuable.
- This is what the Scottish preacher **Thomas Chalmers** referred to as the expulsive power of a new affection. When we talk about our affections we mean our desires, love, emotions, and things like that. He said, **“There is not one personal transformation in which the heart is left without an object of ultimate beauty and joy. The heart’s desire for one particular object can be conquered, but it’s desire to have some object is unconquerable. The only way to dispossess the heart of an old affection is by the expulsive power of a new one.”**

- When we live under his rule, we experience his blessing. It's as simple as that. Remember the kingdom is about God's people living in God's place under God's gracious rule experiencing his blessing.
- So what does your obedience look like? Does Jesus reign over your speech? Does Jesus reign over how you resolve conflict? Does Jesus reign over how you love and who you love? . . . .

Jesus is worthy of our greatest praise and obedience . . .

- No other king is worthy of this praise and obedience? Because they were all fallible. They all failed in many ways. Look at the kings of Israel, from Saul in First Samuel, all the way through the historical books, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles and all the prophets, major and minor that highlight these failures... none of them measured up. None of them were worthy of a forever throne receiving forever praise . . .
- But Jesus, as the True & Greater King is completely worthy. Finally....

### III. The King will be praised for bringing abundant abundance (Genesis 49:11-12)

- There will be no limit to the blessing he brings. *Read 11-12*
- What verse 11 is saying is that there will be so much of the choicest, finest wine (which was a symbol of prosperity and blessing) that everyday tasks like tying animals to the vines and washing clothes will be done with the choicest vines and the best wine..
- These are very earthy, very natural examples to explain an otherworldly, supernatural reality that is to come!
- Donkey tied to a vine. The common, everyday task of tying a donkey to a vine is now available for the choicest of vines.
- The washing of garments. . . . How do you wash your clothes? Better than most of the world... These garments are washed in wine. When you go to wash your clothes this week, be reminded of the abundant abundance that awaits! I'm not playing...
- This is how prosperous his people will be under his good rule.
- **John 10:10 "The thief (serpent – Genesis 3) comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."**
- Jesus is restoring the paradise lost in the Garden. The imagery of peace and prosperity points us to the time when the kingdom of God will be the only kingdom left standing and paradise will be regained for all who belong to Christ.
- I love what Lewis asks the Christian: **"What will it be to taste at the fountainhead that stream of which even these lower reaches prove so intoxicating?"- C. S. Lewis EXPOUND**
- And here's what I love. Verse 12 answers the question: "Can he get it done?"
  - YES! His eyes are darker than win and his teeth are whiter than milk.
  - This is a picture of power and strength.

**The Point: Confess Jesus as the true and greater King of your life and delight in him forever.**

*Conclusion:*

What was *the* confession of the early church? "Jesus is Lord." It is the same confession as every person we baptize in our church: Those three powerful, life-changing words: "Jesus is Lord." To say Jesus is Lord is to say Jesus is King. So here is the invitation for every person who needs it as much as the person sitting next to you.

Jesus said: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." The kingdom of heaven is very near! Turn to Christ, submit to him in everything, experience his victory, give him praise.

Let's Pray.