

Day 20 :: Feb. 26

“Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.” – John 21:25

Apparently a LOT goes on with bible people that is not in the bible. Today’s recitation of Jacob’s blessings on each of his sons hints at a number of stories we don’t have recorded. Whether it is Reuben’s foray into the bed of one of Jacob’s wives or Simeon and Levi’s murderous rage, we have to do a lot of guessing as to the further adventures of these 12 men, men who would become the founding fathers of the 12 tribes of Israel.

But Jacob’s blessing on Judah is interesting not for the stories it doesn’t tell, but for the story it foretells.

We know that the book of Genesis is not written as it happens but is written later from the oral traditions passed down from generation to generation. So the writer of Genesis (presumably Moses himself) is writing about his past but predicting his future when he writes of Judah.

Judah is the ancient ancestor of Jesus Himself, and we see this clearly in Jacob’s blessing. It begins with the inception of one of Jesus’ titles, Lion of Judah. While lions were well known for their strength and power during Jacob’s time, we know from hindsight that this is more than a nice metaphor – it is a foreshadowing of the Lion of Judah to come.

But then comes the kicker...

“The scepter will not depart from Judah,  
nor the ruler’s staff from his descendants,  
until the coming of the one to whom it belongs,  
the one whom all nations will honor.”

While some argue that this was actually foretelling King David, another descendant of the line of Judah, it fits Jesus much better. The scepter, a symbol of the authority of a King (and interestingly the basis of the shepherd’s staff), will come to one of Judah’s line. But if this were about David, the “until” wouldn’t make sense, since the Kingship continues after David. But Jesus is the last and greatest (by far) of the Kings of Israel, and of Judah’s line. In fact, Jesus is the King of Kings.

So are we still waiting for the final line of this blessing/prophecy, “the one whom all nations will honor?” I think so. That’s our task as bearers of the Gospel – to get it to every nation on earth so they can honor the King of Kings as well.