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## A HISTORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

“The Patriarch Jacob’s Prophecy about Christ”<sup>1</sup>

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by

Roderick O. Ford, Litt.D., LL.D.

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<sup>1</sup> Roderick O. Ford, *The Apostolate Papers* (unpublished research papers, 2015 to 2022).  
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# **“The Patriarch Jacob’s Prophecy about Christ”<sup>2</sup>**

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Roderick O. Ford, D.Litt. (Law & Religion)



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## Introduction

Sir Isaac Newton (1643 - 1727) has said that the Book of Daniel is the foundation of the Christian religion, and that to reject the prophecies in that book is to reject Jesus Christ and the Christian faith.<sup>3</sup>

Moreover, in *The City of God*, Augustine of Hippo wrote that “Daniel even defined the time when Christ was to come and suffer by the exact date.”<sup>4</sup> But in the same work, Augustine also demonstrated that the Patriarch Jacob, in Genesis 49:10, had also prophesied that Christ would appear at a precise moment in the history of the Jews, so as to prevent the absence of a “scepter” or a “prince” from reigning in Jerusalem or ancient Judea.

According to Augustine, Jacob’s prophetic prediction is fully explained, or brought to fruition, “in the books of the Maccabees”<sup>5</sup> and in the history of the Jews leading up to the reign of King Herod the Great, “a king of foreign birth,”<sup>6</sup> during the period when ancient Judea had “began to be Roman tributaries.”

Thus, in order to fulfill Jacob’s prophecy in Genesis 49:10, Christ was born during the time of Herod’s reign and when the sovereignty of ancient Judea had fallen completely into the hands of the Roman empire.

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<sup>3</sup> Isaac Newton, *Observations Upon the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse of St. John* (United States of America: Renaissance Classics, 2012), p. 16.

<sup>4</sup> St. Augustine, *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950), p. 641.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., pp. 655-656.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

## Chapter One

### “The Patriarch Jacob’s Prophecy about Jesus Christ”

The Patriarch Jacob (1791 to 1644 BC) was the grandson of the Patriarch Abraham. He was born in ancient Palestine and died in Egypt in, circa, 1644 BC. Just before he died, he gathered all twelve of his sons before him and blessed each one of them. But his blessing to his son Judah was most interesting.

However, I think that it is important to digress a moment here and say a few words about Judah. There was nothing particularly noble about Judah’s character. Judah was not the eldest son. And he had participated in a conspiracy and cover-up to sell his brother Joseph into slavery.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, the Patriarch Jacob predicted, in Genesis 49:10, that through Judah shall the princes or kings of Israel reign forever, as follows:

Orthodox Jewish Bible: Genesis 49:10 (“The shevet (sceptre) shall not depart from Yehudah, nor a Mekhokek (Lawgiver) from between his raglayim, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall be the obedience of the amim (peoples, nations).”)

New King James Version: Genesis 49:10 (“The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor a lawgiver from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes; And to Him shall be the obedience of the people.”)

International Version: Genesis 49:10 (“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.”)

Augustine’s Version as quoted in *The City of God*: Genesis 49:10 (“A prince shall not fail out of Judah, nor a leader from his thighs, until those things come which are laid up for him; and He is the expectation of the nations.”)<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Genesis 37: 26.

<sup>8</sup> *The City of God*, supra, p. 614.

Of this very prophecy, Augustine of Hippo says, “Jacob died in Egypt a hundred and forty-seven years old, after he had, when dying, blessed his sons and his grandsons by Joseph, and prophesied most plainly of Christ, saying in the blessing of Judah, ‘A prince shall not fail out of Judah, nor a leader from his thighs, until those things come which are laid up for him; and He is the expectation of the nations.’”<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

## Chapter Two

### “An Augustinian Interpretation of Jacob’s Prophecy”

Now Jacob (i.e., “Israel”), from whom Christ descended, prefigured the Christian Church through whom the blessings of the nations would reach fruition.

Notably, when Jacob’s prophecy about Christ occurred in, circa, 1644 BC, three of the ancient kingdoms, through which this Messianic prophecy would most immediately impact, had not yet come into existence:

Kingdom of Babylon- Jerusalem captured in 597 – 587 BC

Kingdom of the Medes/ Persians- Jerusalem restored, circa, 550- 539 BC

Kingdom of the Hellenistic Greeks- Alexander the Great conquers/ captures Jerusalem, circa, 356- 323 BC

Kingdom of the Romans- Pompey conquers/ captures Jerusalem, circa, 63 BC; King Herod is enthroned as king of Judea in, circa, 37 BC.

The Prophet Daniel had foretold of the coming of a “Son of Man,”<sup>10</sup> a “Prince of princes,”<sup>11</sup> and a “Messiah the Prince,”<sup>12</sup> whom the Christian church interpreted to be Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ.<sup>13</sup>

Daniel’s prophecy involved four major kingdoms, which is retold in three different formats, as follows:

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<sup>10</sup> Daniel 7: 13.

<sup>11</sup> Daniel 8:25.

<sup>12</sup> Daniel 9:25-26.

<sup>13</sup> See, e.g., Isaac Newton, *Observations Upon the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse of St. John* (United States of America: Renaissance Classics, 2012).

## The Four Beasts”

Daniel 7:4 “the first beast”	Kingdom of Babylon
Daniel 7:5 “the second beast”	Kingdom of the Medes/Persians
Daniel 7:6 “the third beast”	Kingdom of the Hellenistic Greeks
<b>Daniel 7:7 “the fourth beast”</b>	<b>Kingdom of the Romans</b>

Thus, describing the history of the latter Roman period in *The City of God*, Augustine of Hippo succinctly sets forth the fruition of the Patriarch Jacob’s prophecy as follows:

Pompey then, a most illustrious prince of the Roman people, having entered Judea with an army, took the city, threw open the temple, not with the devotion of a suppliant, but with the authority of a conqueror, and went, not reverently, but profanely, into the holy of holies, where it was lawful for none but the pontiff to enter. Having established Hyrcanus in the pontificate, and set Antipater over the subjugated nation as guardian or procurator, as they were then called, he led Aristobulus with him bound. From that time the Jews also began to be Roman tributaries. Afterward Cassius plundered the very temple. Then after a few years it was their desert to have Herod, a king of foreign birth, in whose reign Christ was born. For the time had now come signified by the prophetic Spirit through the mouth of the patriarch Jacob, when he says, **‘There shall not be lacking a prince out of Judah, nor a teacher from his loins, until He shall come for whom it is reserved; and He is the expectation of the nations.’** There lacked not therefore a Jewish prince of the Jews until that Herod, who was the first king of a foreign race received by them. Therefore it was now the time when He should come for whom that was reserved which is promised in the New Testament, that He should be the expectation of the nations.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> *The City of God*, supra, p. 656.

According to the New Testament Early Church, the *eternal reign* of Jesus Christ over all nations was thus commenced at the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ in 33/34 AD.<sup>15</sup>

This was the eternal and everlasting kingdom as foretold in the Book of Daniel the Prophet, where he stated that “one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven.... And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an *everlasting dominion*, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.”<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Matthew 28:18-20 (And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.)

<sup>16</sup> Daniel 7: 13-14.



## Conclusion

When Pontius Pilate ordered that Jesus of Nazareth be crucified in ancient Judea during the year 33/34 AD, he ordered that a sign containing the words “Jesus, King of the Jews,” or words similar, be nailed to the cross above Jesus’s head.<sup>17</sup>

According to the New Testament Early Church, this crucifixion, followed by Christ’s resurrection, inaugurated an *everlasting* and *eternal kingdom* upon earth—a “new covenant” kingdom.

Of this new kingdom, the Patriarch Jacob had prophesied: “[t]here shall not be lacking a prince out of Judah, nor a teacher from his loins, until He shall come for whom it is reserved; and He is the expectation of the nations.”<sup>18</sup>

**THE END**

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<sup>17</sup> Matthew 27:37.

<sup>18</sup> *The City of God*, supra, p. 656 (quoting Genesis 49:10).