

Star and Scepter

Number 24:17

Rock Hill Baptist Church
605 Rock Hill Road
Lexington, Tennessee 38351

Pastor David Buffaloe
731-845-6104
online at bibleteacher.org



FOCAL Read Responsively Numbers 24:17 I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: **there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Scepter shall rise out of Israel**, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth¹.

Here we see a prophecy of a Person Who would come, a **Star out of Jacob** and a **Scepter out of Israel** who would overthrow the children of **Moab**² and **destroy all the children of tumult or confusion**. This would be a King, but not just any King. This King would be a **Star out of Jacob**.

A **Star** – in God's eyes - is not something that is man made. These sad creatures that Hollywood produces may be called “stars”, but most of them are the farthest thing from a true star. There are a few exceptions – a few good Christian actors and actresses – but for the most part the man-made “stars” fall far short of a God made star.

A true **star** is something that only God can make. A star gives off light, brightening the area where it is. Our earth is lit because the star we call “the sun” lights it with the equivalent of 4 trillion trillion one-hundred-watt light bulbs (and no, that's not mistyped). The sun is so luminous that its light reflects off of our moon, giving us light by night.

¹ Easton's Bible Dictionary states “ “**The children of Sheth**” (Numbers 24:17); R.V., “**the sons of tumult**,” which is probably the correct rendering, as there is no evidence that this is a proper name here.”

² International Standard Bible Encyclopedia states “**The Moabites were of Semitic stock and of kin to the Hebrews, as is indicated by their descent from Lot, the nephew of Abraham (Genesis 19:30-37), and by their language which is practically the same as the Hebrew.** ”

As much light as our sun brings, our Lord Jesus Christ brings much more light. He is the prophesied **star out of Jacob** and the **scepter out of Israel**. Our sun lights the entire earth, and like a chariot of fire continually pushes away the darkness. Our Lord Jesus Christ gave Himself as The Light of the world. He is the **true Light Who gives light to every person that believes in Him (John 1:9, 12)**. Where our sun is not, darkness reigns. Where the Son of God is not, spiritual darkness rules. When you're standing in line at your local store look at the covers of the magazines before you. Look at the darkness of the Hollywood stars, the terrible things they do to one another, the children abandoned, the evil upheld. They wander in darkness without Christ and without hope. Their foolish hearts are darkened – and they make entertainment to spread their darkness to all who will heed them. What they need – what we all need – is the glorious Light of **Jesus, the Bright and Morning Star (Revelation 22:16)**. He is the precious **“Dayspring from on High” (Luke 1:78)** – Who came to

Luke 1:79 ... give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

The Old Testament Prophets looked forward in time to the Coming of Christ. They saw that the **“Star and Scepter” was not now – but He was surely coming**. We who live now look back seeing Jesus, and knowing that **“in the fullness of time God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons” (Galatians 4:4-5)**.

Dear friends, we do not need another “self help program”. We need to believe on Jesus, to trust in Him, to give our hearts to Him. We are all quite naturally sinners who fall short of God's glory. If we will be changed for the better we must surrender our lives to God in Christ. We – like the sun – need God to light our heart with His love in Christ. He must make us sons so that we – through Him – can be the Light of the world **(Matthew 5:14)**.

Jesus Christ died for the lost, died for those who were without hope. He died for those who are tired of working for the king of darkness **Satan**, and for those who are sick of the pitiful wages that his slumlord **Sin** offers. Jesus Christ gave Himself for you and I. **He died for the ungodly (Romans 5:6)**, and rose again from the grave to show us that He and He alone is the Ruler of the living and the dead. He is the **Light of the world (John 8:12)**. Will you not come from a life of darkness and unto Him Who is **the Way unto God (John 14:6)**.

May God touch your hearts with His Word.

1. The Star Out of Jacob

FOCAL Numbers 24:17 **I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob ...**

What is the significance of the **Star out of Jacob**?
What does the name “Jacob” mean? Why was he

named this by his mother?

Balaam prophesied “**there shall come a Star out of Jacob**”. As we said in our introduction, this is a prophecy of the Coming Christ. But notice that The **Star** was to come **out of Jacob**. These are very telling words. Why? Because **Jacob** was not a nice – nor particularly an honest – person. The name “**Jacob**”³ literally means “**the heel catcher, the one who undermines, the supplanter, someone who strives to take another's place**”. Jacob was a chiseler and a thief, and he was born with that nature. When he and his twin brother **Esau** was born we read:

Genesis 25:26 And after that came his brother out, and {Jacob's} hand took hold on Esau's heel...

Jacob betrayed his brother and his daddy **Isaac** in order to get Esau's birthright inheritance. He led his mother **Rebekah (Genesis 27:11ff)** into lying to her husband of many years so that he could get that inheritance. Though I can honestly say I feel that greedy Esau got what was coming to him, I can also say that I feel a little sorry for him when he goes to his father and says “**but daddy, don't you have a blessing for me?**” Jacob was just not a nice person!

And yet “**there shall come a Star out of Jacob**”.

3 H3290, יַעֲקֹב, ya'āqōb, yah-ak-obe', From H6117; heel catcher (that is, supplanter); Jaakob, the Israelitish patriarch: - Jacob.

Cleaning up your act before coming to Jesus is a lot like getting over a heart attack before you call the ambulance. It makes no sense!

I have heard people say “I'll wait until I get better, until I'm a little more moral, until I stop this habit or that habit before I give my life to Jesus. I need to 'clean up my act' before I come to Church and bend my knee at the holy altar of prayer. Dear friends, that makes absolutely no sense! As one of our brotherhood said the other day, that's like having a heart attack and deciding to sit down and “get over it” before you call the ambulance. Foolish, foolish people! Jesus said:

Mark 2:17 ... They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

We have to understand that Jacob cannot turn himself into Israel. God must do the work of turning Jacob's heart to the Kingdom.

Jacob can recognize himself to be a sinner in need of the Savior, but

Darkness will never bring forth light, death will never bring forth life, hell will never bring forth heaven, and no mortal can ever make other mortals immortal.

ILLUSTRATE I have a **little white dog** that I dearly love. I can give him a bath, get him as clean and white as possible, dry him off, comb his fur, and make him look like a show dog. But when I take him on a walk the first thing he does when gets outside is to roll in the grass and in the dirt. If he sees a **dead thing lying on the side of the road, or a piece of trash, he'll head toward it so he can smell it and roll on it.** No matter how clean I try to make him he's always – *always* – going to be this way. Why? Because *he's a dog*. You can clean up a dog or a pig all you want. You can put frilly bows around their necks (which I would never do), put shirts on them, dress them up any way you want to. They are still dogs and pigs, and unless changed from that state they will never get any better.

Did Jacob just *get better and better* until he became Israel? How did he move from one state to the other? The Scepter could not come out of Israel until God made Jacob into Israel.

Jacob stayed Jacob until one day he met the Lord. Jacob wrestled with the Lord Jesus until the daybreak. Holding on to Jesus Jacob asked the Lord for a blessing – and the Lord gave it. (**Genesis 32:28-30**). On that day the Lord changed **Jacob's name to Israel⁴** meaning “**one who rules with God**”.

4 H3478, יִשְׂרָאֵל, *yisrá'el, yis-raw-ale'*, From H8280 and H410; *he will rule or prevail with God; Jisrael*, a symbolical name of Jacob; also (typically) of his posterity: - Israel.

A Christian is a person who was *once a Jacob, but now is an Israel.* A Christian is a person who has been radically changed because he called on the Name of the Lord.

What does the Bible say? What work saved you, dear Christian? The Holy Spirit of God called you to salvation. He opened your eyes to the fact that you were lost and undone. The “**Spirit came and convicted you of the sin of failing to believe in Jesus. The Spirit convicted you that Judgment was certain, and that, if you died without Christ, you would be eternally damned (John 16:8-11).** You heard the preaching of the Gospel from a pulpit or a friend and you did the Will of God – you believed on Jesus. “**This is the will of God, that every one who sees the Son and believes on Him may have everlasting life**” (**John 6:40**). What work did you do? You say, “But I was Baptized – this is the work that saved me”. Did it? Didn't Jesus say:

Mark 16:16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

What causes the damnation, the condemnation to hell? “**He that believeth NOT shall be damned**”. You must believe that God sent Jesus to be the Remedy for your lost estate. You must believe that He gave Himself for you.

ILLUSTRATE When we as missionaries went to Belize in Central America I was a little nervous when I entered

the River of Life Northern Compound. You see, you enter the compound by way of a long swinging bridge that hangs a hundred feet or so above a river. Now I don't like heights, and I certainly don't like walking on a swinging bridge. What I did was stand back and watch several others move out on the bridge. Fifteen or twenty people in groups walked down that bridge, and one young man ran from side to side purposely trying to swing the bridge. It never fell – so I knew that it would support me.

If the Bridge has been tested and passed the test under the greatest of stress – will not that same Bridge hold you? It held me. Will it not hold you, too?

The Bible tells me that the Bridge to God – Jesus Christ – has been crossed by much greater sinners than you or I will ever be. The Apostle Paul called himself “**the least of all the saints**” (Ephesians 3:8). He also said

1 Timothy 1:15 ... Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

The **chief of sinners** has already crossed the Bridge that is Christ. If the **chief of sinners** crossed over to God through faith in Jesus Christ – and if a **Star came out of Jacob** (that old crook and chiseler) – then what stops the lowliest of sinners from being saved? The Bible promises:

Ephesians 2:8-9 For by grace are ye saved through

faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: {9} Not of works, lest any man should boast.

By grace – the unmerited favor of God are you saved by faith, and that not of yourselves. Salvation is based on surrendering the heart and life to Jesus Christ.

Look at the plain text: **by GRACE are YOU SAVED**. How? Through Baptism? Through the blessings of a Priest? Through some rite or ritual? No! **Through Faith**. What type of faith. Mustn't my faith be *strong enough* to save me? What if my faith isn't intense enough? Look further at the text: **and that NOT OF YOURSELVES**. Not of me? Then how does it come? **It is a GIFT of God, NOT OF WORKS**. Neither I nor you nor any believer has a right before God to boast. It is God Who saves. It is God who makes alive. It is God who turns Jacob into Israel. Look further in Ephesians:

Ephesians 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Look at those powerful words. **We are HIS WORKMANSHIP**. We are not self made people. We are Jesus made people. God gave us life because of Christ. That's what the text says. **CREATED in Christ Jesus**. You are **CREATED in Jesus**. A thing that is created cannot create itself. There was a time when you were not, but because of your parents and the love of God you were given physical life. On the day that you, dear Jacob, heeded the call of Christ unto salvation, you

were created in Christ Jesus. Jesus is your Maker and my Maker. He makes Christians – we do not make ourselves.

Only God can bring the Star out of Jacob. Only God can put life into the lifeless. And He has promised to give unto all who come unto Him life – and life more abundantly!

2. The Scepter Can Only Come Out Of “Israel”

FOCAL Numbers 24:17 I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Scepter shall rise out of Israel,

“A Scepter shall rise out of Israel”. Again, we know that this verse looks forward to the Millennial Reign of our Lord Jesus Christ. Before Jacob died he prophesied:

Genesis 49:10 The scepter 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.

It was God's Will that Judah be the ruling Tribe of Israel. But God went one step further when He promised King David:

2 Samuel 7:12-13 And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. {13} He shall build a

house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.

God promised King David that his throne would be established *forever*. This promise was repeated in 1 Chronicles 17:11-14. How could the Davidic Throne be established *forever*?

Isaiah prophesied:

Isaiah 9:6-8 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. {7} Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this. {8} The Lord sent a word into Jacob, and it hath lighted upon Israel.

That which God first prophesied through Jacob, then to King David and the Prophet Isaiah, was fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the **Scepter that rose out of Israel**. Born of a virgin, His lineage can be traced through the Tribe of Judah.

As very God of very God Jesus will one day sit enthroned over an eternal Kingdom. God has said of

Him:

Philippians 2:9-11 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: {10} That **at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;** {11} **And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**

Where Jesus is, He reigns. He will one day rule this world from the Throne of David. This very day He rules in the hearts of His people.

If you belong to Jesus, it is God's intent that you – like the moon – reflect His glorious light! Every pit in the moon mars its light – it's where we see the “man in the moon”.

We want as little of “me” as possible in the Christian walk, and as much of “Christ” as God will give us.

The Scepter shall come out of Israel.

Jesus did not come to this earth to save people *in* their sins, but He came to save people *from* their sins. What does the Scripture say?

Romans 11:26-27 And so **all Israel shall be saved:** as it is written, **There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:** {27} **For this is my covenant unto them, when**

I shall take away their sins.

Israel shall be saved. Jesus gave Himself for our sins, the He might deliver us from this present evil world (Galatians 1:4). Not only does God promise to forget our sins and iniquities for Christ's sake (Hebrews 8:12; 10:17), but God promises the believer in Christ that He will take away our sins (1 John 3:5). The more the believer focuses on the Lord, the more he reads God's Word, the more he seeks God's face in prayer – the less and less the believer will sin. **He that commits sins is of the devil (1 John 3:8).** The Christian, adopted into the family of God by faith in Christ, is not of the devil. He belongs to Jesus!

Jesus brings the Scepter out of Israel. The Christian, like the moon, is designed to reflect the glory of God.

2 Corinthians 3:18 **But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.**

The Spirit of the Lord – Who dwells within ever believer – has ever intention of making us like Jesus. **We have a light that should shine before men, a light of good works, a light that glorifies the Lord (Matthew 5:16).** The normal Christian life is that we who are under Christ's rule:

Philippians 2:15-16 **... may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom**

ye shine as lights in the world; {16} Holding forth the word of life..

The normal Christian life requires that we be blameless, not sinless, that we be harmless and not harmful, that we be lights of God and not darkness, and that we always make it our priority to hold forth the Word of Life.

A genuine Christian is known by the degree in which he or she reflects the glory of God.

ILLUSTRATE & CLOSE Because of the number of counterfeiters in the world today the United States Government has begun to *watermark* its paper money. When you pay for an item at your local department store the wise clerk will hold the larger denomination bills up to the light. If the bill is genuine he or she can see a watermarked image of a U.S. President impressed in the background of the bill. This image cannot be reproduced by a photocopier, nor can someone use a printer to duplicate that bill. The watermark is actually pressed into the paper, and the light reveals this impression.

When you were saved God impressed Himself on your life. If you belong to Him then you are **His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works (Ephesians 2:10)**. If you are saved then His Light shining on you lets others see the impression that God made in your life. If you are one of His Children

then the **scepter out of Israel** rules in your heart. Examine yourselves, dear friends, as to **whether you be in the faith or not (2 Corinthians 13:5)**. Prove your **own selves** while there is yet time.