

Until Shiloh Comes

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In Genesis we find this strange-sounding prophecy: “*The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, **Until Shiloh comes**, And to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.*” [Genesis 49:10](#)

A scepter is held by one who rules, as a symbol of his power.¹ Clearly the most forceful characteristic of the right to rule is the right to impose capital punishment. Looking at it another way, if you don’t have the power to impose the death penalty, then you can’t really be a ruler, certainly not in Biblical times.

The tribe of Judah was the ruling tribe of Israel, so in a general sense it would refer to the right of the Jews to rule themselves. In a number of translations, “*Until Shiloh comes*” is translated as “*Until he comes to whom it belongs*” and is the literal meaning of the Hebrew. It seems clear that this could only refer to the Messiah or the Christ. So, the following paraphrase would seem to capture the essence of this passage: “*The right to im-*

pose capital punishment shall not depart from the Jews until the Messiah comes.”

So, when did the right to impose capital punishment cease from Israel? Clearly they had lost it at the time of the crucifixion of Jesus because they had to convince the Roman government to do it. Amazingly, the Jews ruled their own people, including judging capital punishment cases, even during the Babylonian and Medo-Persian captivities, and until A.D. 6-7. According to the Jewish historian Josephus, at that time a new Roman Procurator named Caponius removed from the Sanhedrin the power to adjudicate capital cases.²

The Jews understood the prophecy, and so mourned in sackcloth and ashes, and proclaimed: Woe to us, for the scepter has departed from Judah and the Messiah has not come. But the Messiah, Jesus, had been born and was a lad living in Nazareth at that time, so the prophecy was fulfilled literally and exactly. Furthermore, they should have known.

They could not have possibly not known about or have forgotten the Wise Men: “... *magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, ‘Where is He who*

has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him.’ When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.” [Matthew 2:1-3](#)

Therefore they must not have believed them, even though they themselves declared that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem: “*And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, ... For out of you shall come forth a Ruler Who will shepherd My people Israel.*” [Matthew 2:6](#)

They also knew Daniel's prophecy of the 70 weeks,³ and should have known that the time was near: “*Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, ... So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks ...*” [Daniel 9:24-25](#)

Who but God could have prophesied this centuries earlier? For a more detailed discussion, see “Until Shiloh Comes”⁴.

This, plus other strong evidence, shows that the Bible is God’s word. Most important of all, the salvation of your eternal soul, is a personal matter between

you and God and does not depend on rites, clerics, traditions, human effort, or belonging to any church, religion or organization: “*For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works...*” [Ephesians 2:8-9](#) No matter what kind of person you are or what you have done: “*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*” [1 John 1:9](#) Pray today to put your faith in Jesus Christ alone: “*For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.*” [John 3:16](#) Then study the Bible to live pleasing to God: “*...if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.*” [Corinthians 5:17](#)

1 [Esther 4:11](#), [Psalm 2:9](#), [Psalm 45:6](#), [Psalm 110:2](#), and [Isaiah 14:5](#)

2 nuggetnetreview.com/m-departing-scepter.htm

3 <http://www.harbingersoftheapocalypse.com/home/index.php/seventy-sevens/>

4 <http://www.khouse.org/articles/1999/187/> 1710