

Until Shiloh Comes

The Israelis and the Lion of Judah

Richard T. Ritenbaugh

Given 05-Aug-06; Tape #787

The Israeli-Hezbollah War has been going on for about four weeks now.

This conflict is not just between the Israelis and Hezbollah, but the Israelis and the Arab nations around them, and it has been going on now for generations. We can even take it back all the way to the sons of Abraham. But even though I have been aware of this for such a long time, this round of fighting has been very instructive to me. I guess I have looked at it from a different perspective during these past four weeks, mostly looking at Israel's conduct of the war, and it has made a very deep impression upon me.

I have been especially attentive to the attitudes, and the calculated actions of the Jewish people. Not just the politicians, but also the people. There is a group called the Karaites—you might remember that name from the sermons on Pentecost—but, they are alive and well in Israel. I got on one of their mailing lists, and they send me an e-mail, usually a couple of times each month (lately it has been a couple of times a week). The man who is head of this group writes commentary on what is going on.

What strikes me is that he is very calm, very determined, and I think that as a whole, the people there are calm and determined, unwavering and unperturbed, and very deliberate about what they are doing. Most of them have sons, nephews, and brothers fighting somewhere in Israel right now. There are only so many people. They have called up just about everyone. And they have various groups that are not only on the Lebanese border, but they have got people all over the county guarding the citizens.

But, despite the obvious propaganda of Hezbollah, and the constant yammering of the international community, and the pundits who have anointed themselves to be the wise of this earth telling us what is going on, it does not seem to faze the Israelis. They are just fighting their war.

This is my perspective. Maybe it is not that way, but this is what it seems like to me.

The people, when the rockets started falling, calmly went to their shelters, sent their children to the south, and have continued on.

For a nation that has been terribly divided religiously and culturally and politically, for many years, these people are unusually united. The last poll that I heard was 80 percent are backing the current government in what they are doing in Lebanon.

To me, to try and put this into a nutshell, it looks like they have done this before. And they have. Since coming into the land and becoming a state, they have been under constant threat for three or four generations now. Most of them have been born in the land. Many more have immigrated into the land and made it their own. But, they are going about their defense of their

land with workman-like efficiency. And, they look like they have had a great deal of experience doing it.

When Hezbollah kidnapped Israeli soldiers, and lobbed rockets into northern Israel, the politicians, and the I.D.F. (Israeli Defense Forces), and the citizenry began an almost choreographed series of activities. And it really has not stopped for a whole month. They have just gone along as if there has been this overall plan, and they are all doing their part, particularly the I.D.F. They began an air campaign that as far as I can determine has followed a pre-set plan. They had this plan drawn up months or years in advance; that this is what they would do. If it seems long and drawn out, it has been. And, that is, I feel, according to plan. They have been systematically going about bombing certain parts of southern Lebanon because that was in their plan. It was what they wanted to do.

The Israelis were not interested in knocking out Hezbollah with one grand blow, as most of the media and the world seems to think that they should have done, or could have done. But, the way that I look at it, they have been thorough, and meticulously doing what they decided they were going to do. They are rooting Hezbollah out bunker by bunker, rocket launcher by rocket launcher, terrorist by terrorist.

In a word, they are in exterminating mode. They cannot abide this group any longer. Probably they were waiting for an opportunity to do this, and Hezbollah presented it to them on a silver platter. So they said, "OK. Plan A—Go!" And they did it.

So now, they are in the initial stages of a very systematic ground campaign to sweep up what their pilots missed from the air. And, if you could call war such a thing, they are executing their grand strategy beautifully. Even amidst all the criticism they are getting from the world. And the United States has basically allowed them the time to do this. Things do not happen in this world unless we allow them to. I am not boasting; but especially in Israel, and that part of the world, the king-maker, the maker or breaker of anything that goes on, is the United States.

So, this has stimulated me to consider the tribe of Judah. And, especially when you talk about the tribe of Judah, you are talking about the Bible's perspective—particularly what it says about Judah at the end time. And particularly what Jacob prophesies about Judah in Genesis 49.

(So, if you have a book mark, you might want to stick it in Genesis 49 because we will be picking through the five verses that are allotted to Judah. And this will eventually lead us to a hopefully more spiritual and uplifting study of the great Lion of Judah, Jesus Christ our king.)

But, we are not going to start in Genesis 49; go to Zechariah 12 because I want to begin here as a way to soften up the ground (like the Israeli air-war) before we get to Genesis 49. Please be aware of the occurrences of, "in that day."

Zechariah 12:1-6 The burden of the word of the Lord against Israel.
Thus says the Lord, who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him: "Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples, when they lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem. "And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all

peoples; all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it. "In that day," says the Lord, "I will strike every horse with confusion, and its rider with madness; I will open My eyes on the house of Judah, and will strike every horse of the peoples with blindness. "And the governors of Judah shall say in their heart, `The inhabitants of Jerusalem are my strength in the Lord of hosts, their God.' "In that day I will make the governors of Judah like a firepan in the woodpile, and like a fiery torch in the sheaves; they shall devour all the surrounding peoples on the right hand and on the left, but Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place—Jerusalem.

I came here because I wanted to bridge what I said earlier about the Israelis and this war against Hezbollah with Genesis 49. And, I thought that this would be a good place to start because it does say, "in that day" seven times in this chapter. We saw three of them in these six verses. Verse 3, 4, and 6 use it. There are two in verse 8, and one in verse 9. There is one in verse 11 as well.

So, when you see that phrase, "in that day," it is telegraphing to the reader that it is talking about the end time. It is particularly talking about The Day of the Lord, but it is generally talking about the time of the end.

So what Zechariah describes, here, is very similar to the actually Middle East today. This is like a sixth century BC view of what it would be like in 2006, because what we are seeing here is exactly that. Jerusalem is a cup of drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples. And they lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem.

What are they doing?

There is this little Israelite nation on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, and it is surrounded by Muslim and Arab nations—in the midst of their enemies. And Jerusalem is the key, cornerstone, keystone, what everything turns around. Jerusalem is the prize. Everybody wants to control Jerusalem.

But, God says that Jerusalem is a cup of drunkenness. And He also calls it a very heavy stone, a burdensome stone. And that anyone who would try to wrest it away from Judah is going to find themselves cut into pieces. And that is basically what has happened.

Since the Israelis took Jerusalem, way, way back when they did, it has remained in their hands. And every time others have tried to take it away from them, they have been demolished by the I.D.F. They have not lost very many battles in their history. And, none of the surrounding nations have had any success against her. And one of the reasons why Israel has been able to continue as it has in prosperity and strength is because of the fact that God says Judah and Jerusalem causes drunkenness in their enemies. In verse 4, it says that it causes madness and confusion.

Now, when you say the "Arab-Israeli conflict," people go crazy. This is what I mean by a cup of

drunkenness. What happens when somebody drinks too much? People start doing and saying things that they would not normally do. They lose their inhibitions. They begin to reel a little bit. They do not have quite the bearings that they had before. If somebody says, "Bet you can't do this!" The drunk person replies, "Bet I can!" The other says, "Go ahead! I would like to see it!" So they do it, and fall flat on their faces.

Well, that is what happens in the Arab-Israeli conflict. The drunken ones are the Arabs. They are mad with this lust for this land, or mad with blood lust to annihilate the Jews. It makes them to think stupid things. It makes them to make crazy decisions. What was Hezbollah thinking when it lobbed rockets into northern Israel? That they were just going to take it? "Oh, I will just lob a few more!"

They showed their hand too soon, they acted precipitously, and they are paying for it now.

Now the world's press, being on their side, is trying to say that this is good for Hezbollah and good for the Arabs because it is showing that the I.D.F. is not as strong as everyone has said it was.

I do not think so. Like I said, if you step back from all this, and look at what the Israelis are doing, they are pounding southern Lebanon into concrete dust. They are not showing weakness. They are showing almost absolute strength and control of the situation.

Now, the Arabs, if they are not acting drunkenly, and are looking at this soberly, they should be telling themselves, "I don't want Damascus to look like this—or any city in Jordan, Iraq, Egypt, Turkey, or Iran."

But, some of them are going to believe the propaganda, and they are going to get hurt. The reason I say this is because there is more to why Israel has been able to continue to exist. The pundits have remarked how strange it is—how almost unbelievable it is—that little old Israel, a land only as big as the state of New Jersey, a nation of only 5 million people, and a lot of them women and children, a lot of them new immigrants, how they could survive against Arab and Muslim nations many times larger and more populous than they.

My sister Virginia sent me something the other day where one comedian-turned-pundit said, "It was like a box of matches (Israel) on a football field (the Arab states)." That is almost like it is. I think the population ratio is almost 100 to 1. Here is this little country with all this might surrounded by huge numbers of enemies stretching over a huge area, and yet they have been able to hold on for over 58 years.

People try to explain this by saying that United States support is the reason why Israel has been able to remain upright. And there is some truth to this. We pump in a great deal of money and arms, and we do help them a great deal.

But, we see the real answer in Zechariah 12. The answer is God. Notice:

Zechariah 12:4 . . . I will open My eyes on the house of Judah, and will strike every horse of the peoples with blindness.

God is watching. God is guarding and protecting—overlooking—because He has a plan.

These are His people that He has put there at the time of the end for a specific reason. And, He is not going to let anything happen to them of any terrible consequence, until the time is right.

And so, He is watching over them. That is what it means it says, "I will open My eyes on the house of Judah." It is like God is standing over them with His eyes open, and He is watching out for them as you would a child who is tottering, stumbling—guiding, helping, guarding, directing.

He is doing this with Judah to make sure that His plan comes to pass.

Zechariah 12:5-6 "And the governors of Judah shall say in their heart, 'The inhabitants of Jerusalem are my strength in the LORD of hosts, their God.' "In that day I will make the governors of Judah like a firepan in the woodpile, and like a fiery torch in the sheaves; they shall devour all the surrounding peoples on the right hand and on the left, but Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place—Jerusalem.

Zechariah says two over-all things about them. The first is in verse 5 where it says that they trust their own people who have a kind of faith in God's ability to give them victory.

It is very interesting here that He is called the Lord of Hosts—the Lord of Armies. That is what they trust in. They trust in God as a Great Warrior on their side. And it says here that the governors of Judah have faith in this. They have faith in the people, the inhabitants of Jerusalem. That is their strength. They are a people of great ability; a people who are enduring; a people who once they set their minds to it finish what they start. And, we know this from the historical characters of the Jews.

They are a very inventive people. They are people who have a scientific and artistic bent to them where they are able to dream and imagine, and then bring it to pass. Most of the great inventions and scientific theories in the past few hundred years have come from Jews. They have been at the forefront of a great deal of the progress that has happened in this world the past few centuries.

So, the governors of Judah trust in this historical ability of their own people. And the people, of course, have a traditional trust in God. That is basically what is being said here.

The other thing that Zechariah said about the governors of Judah in verse 6 is that they are firebrands—they are incendiaries—they are "stirrers of the pot." Do you know what happens when you put a firebrand in the midst of a pile of wood? Whoosh! You will eventually get a fire and conflagration. Basically what God is saying here is that the governors of Judah are the ones that, in a sense, are causing all these problems. But, they are causing it through aggression. They *have* to be aggressive because of their situation. They cannot be passive. If they were passive, the Arabs would just pass right through them. But, the governors of Judah have to be firepans in the woodpile, and fiery torches in the sheaves. They cannot be wimps. They have got to be strong.

And what makes this more interesting is that they can back up their aggression and their strength with military might. We will see a great deal of this as we go through this.

If you would think back historically over the past forty years or so, do you think of leaders like Moshe Dayan, Golda Meir, Menachem Begin, Yitzhak Shamir, Benyamin Netanyahu, Ariel Sharon, or now Ehud Omert as wimps? Were any of them weaklings?

They came from different parts of the political spectrum, but one thing that they all had in common is their desire to preserve Israel. And, they will go to any length to do that. They have had a series, except maybe one or two, throughout their entire history, of very strong and able Prime Ministers. Most of them have been, except for maybe Ehud Omert, military men. And Golda was from a different generation who fought for Israel to establish Israel.

These men and this one woman have stood strong and determined in the face of constant threat of annihilation. So, instead of just waiting for the Arabs, they have taken the fight to them. And, they have won victory after victory.

They have tried to live in peace with their neighbors—that is always their ultimate desire. They have made countless concessions, have signed multitude agreements, they have given their enemies land, and have done so much to bring peace to that region, only to have it thrown in their faces and be attacked again.

So, on the one hand there is this desire for peace. And, on the other hand there is this bold strength, backed up by God watching over them, and putting confusion into the enemy camp. And so, they have been able to endure.

We have seen here in Zechariah 12 that this particular prophecy is being fulfilled, and that the character of the people is of a certain type; they have good leaders and a strong military, although they desire peace. They seem to have their enemies under control.

One thing I failed to mention earlier is that they have turned the land into a prosperous, fertile place, where once before it was swamps and desert and nothing could grow there.

They have taken their ingenuity that they have and have made the land flourish again. Something to remember as we go through this.

Genesis 49:1 And Jacob called his sons and said, "Gather together, that I may tell you what shall befall you in the last days:

Jacob was dying. He was an old, old man. And he gathered all 12 of his sons to him, and he wanted to bless them, or to at least tell them what would happen to their peoples way off in the future. Obviously, God inspired him to do this. It is not something that we necessarily do today. But, Jacob was not only a patriarch, but he was prophet too. And, God gave him these things to tell his sons.

What we see here is that these twelve men, each the father of a tribe of Israel, had certain traits that they possessed; certain characteristics of personality that seems to have been passed down, from father to son, father to daughter, through thousands of years of history. They were tribal traits at first, and after many centuries went by they are now national characteristics.

So, these tribes (now nations) can be identified fairly accurately on a modern map of the world

by looking at some of these characteristics. We have other things to go on too, but these characteristics are especially applicable to today, because this prophecy was given, it says in verse 1, for what would happen to them in the last days. We are talking about an end-time prophecy here.

If we were to go through these various tribes, we would see here—like Reuben. Reuben has a thing, a propensity, for dignity and power. He was the firstborn, the strength, he says, of Jacob. But, they suffer from an instability that hinders them from winning it. They desire, it says, "excellency of dignity and excellency of power", but they have a flaw, which Jacob says is their sensual desire. It distracts them and causes them to fall short. When I say sensual desire or nature, I am not just talking sexual here.

We think Reuben is France. They are not just sexual. That is only one part of this sensual nature. They love all the finer things of life. They love wine and they love food. They love fine clothing and they love perfumes. They love all these fine, wonderful things.

When Dad and I go to France, we like to enjoy the fine food and wines. It is great! You cannot get anything over here like the food and wine they serve over there. It just seems like their daily dinner table is like a sumptuous feast! Their table wine is better than a lot of our great California wines. They think of our wine as something to throw down the drain to clean it!

This nature distracts them from becoming dignified and powerful in the way that they want to be. They want to head up the nations of Israel. But, there is this flaw which does not allow them to do it, as a nation. There are times when they seem to have achieved this, but they end up with it cut short every time for various reasons.

In verse 13 is the family of Zebulon. They have a propensity for sea harbors, for ships and trade. That is the meaning when it says that their land shall border with Sidon. Sidon was part of the Phoenician Empire. They were great traders. And so what Jacob is pointing to here is that Zebulon's descendants would be involved with sea trade, and all the harbor activities—havens for ships.

What we think is that Zebulon is the modern group of people in the Netherlands. They have the propensity for being great shipping people, great traders. They have some of the largest harbors in the world at Rotterdam, and Amsterdam. So, it seems to fit.

If we were to go to verse 27 where it talks about the tribe of Benjamin, they have a voracious predatory streak in them. They are like ravenous wolves, it says. They are fighters and plunderers. Morning and night they are busy plundering and spoiling. They seem to have what we think of as Viking traits. They slip in quietly, steal in, break down the barricades, steal all the treasure, kill all the people, and run away to do it somewhere else down the way. They are a kind of take-no-prisoners type with an aggression for wealth.

We thought of them as Norway and Iceland. I do not know what they use those traits for now, or how aggressive they are anymore, but Mr. Armstrong thought they fit the characteristics. He was mostly going by those Viking-type traits.

But by far, throughout this chapter, the most ink is reserved for Judah and Joseph. It is clear once you go through here, that they are the chief tribes at the time of the end. Judah is

mentioned first because he is older.

It is clear that Joseph receives blessings of abundance and strength, particularly military strength far above any of the other brother tribes. Joseph is the one that is blessed with fruitfulness with branches running over a wall, meaning that they would be a colonizing people.

But they are hated. Archers have bitterly grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him, but they have the strength to face their enemies.

By the time you get down to verses 25 and 26, we are talking about abundant blessings way, way, way more than any other nation has received. As a matter of fact, it says, "the blessings of your father have excelled the blessings of my ancestors." That is strangely worded. It really means that the blessings that have come down through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—the blessings of the fathers—have exceeded the timeless heights. This means that they are so big and forever, that nothing will ever exceed them because they are from God. God has given just an amazing blessing to the family of Joseph.

But we are not talking about Joseph today. We are talking about Judah.

Genesis 49:8 "Judah, you are he whom your brothers shall praise;
your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; your father's children
shall bow down before you.

That sounds like what Joseph's dream was, that his brothers would bow down to him, but that was fulfilled in Egypt when the family came down to get grain.

Genesis 29:35 And she [Leah] conceived again and bore a son, and
said, "Now I will praise the Lord." Therefore she called his name Judah.

Judah's name means "praise," or "acclaim." Some will also say, because of what Leah said, that Judah actually means, "through him, people will praise the Lord." Meaning, that through Judah, praise will come to God, just as Leah said she praised the Lord because of the birth of her son. This interesting little sidelight could go either way.

But, what he says here about Judah being, "He whom your brothers shall praise," has to do with the definition of what Judah means. It can imply two things: That Israelites will come to praise God through the Jews, meaning through Christ, as its overall meaning; or, the Israelites will come to praise Judah for their own accomplishments—inventions, advancements, and victories which they have done. I think that both of them could very easily apply.

But, this is very interesting because this is at total variance as to how the world looks at the Jews. The Jews are among the most hated peoples, and the most discriminated against in the history of the world. But, God says that it is actually the other way around.

And it is true that their biggest advocates in the entire world are other Israelite nations. They are the only ones who step up to the plate whenever the Jews are offended, or attacked, or whatever.

Lately, Germany has done so, which makes me wonder about the nature of Germany. Germany has a bad reputation of being the ones who persecuted the Jews the most, but since the war, they have been very much on Israel's side. But, we will see how this all comes out.

It is interesting to note that it says:

Genesis 49:8 "Judah, you are he whom your brothers shall praise;
your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; your father's children
shall bow down before you.

"Your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies," is what we have seen throughout their time in the Middle East. This figure of speech denotes military dominance. When you have your hand on someone neck, you have control over them. Oftentimes there is a similar metaphor is that one's foot is on the neck of his enemies. At least Judah does not go that far. He only has his hand. There is a lot more control by your hand, than by your foot. The idea that one has his foot on the neck of their enemies is much more degrading than with the hand.

It is also, maybe, something more manipulative. I do not know. The foot is a crushing instrument, the hand is a manipulative instrument.

Israel's military strength has been their best deterrent against the Arabs' and Palestinians' aggression. They have had their hand on their enemies over there. Which is one reason I do not think that the Israelis are going to halt their war against Hezbollah anytime soon. It is not going to do so until it is in full control of the situation.

The other thing from verse 8 is that, "Your father's children shall bow down before you." This is a mark of respect, not of worship. It could be extended to Christ, and people will bow down to Him. He is of Judah, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah. Obviously, we will not be bowing down to the tribe of Judah.

But, it does show that the descendants of Judah are in positions of leadership, in the sense of being respected. This means that the Israelites bow to, or concede to, the leadership of the descendants of Judah. This may have an allusion to the fact that David's descendants are basically the monarchs of Europe and Israel. There has always been some bowing and scraping to the monarchs among Israel. It may be an allusion to that. The Jews seem to produce leaders one right after the other. They tend to be the leaders over Israel.

Genesis 49:9 Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, you
have gone up. He bows [couches] down, he lies down as a lion; and as
a lion, who shall rouse him?

Obviously, this whole verse uses the figure of a lion to describe Judah's character. First, he is as a cub or whelp—meaning a very young lion but it is on its own. It does not need its mother anymore. This is a young lion in its first strength.

Second, he is as a mature lion who couches down, or lies down. The third one is interesting in that he is either like an older lion—"who shall rouse him?"—or a lioness.

The lion's whelp implies a young lion still full of vigor, and learning its way. Remember that it is talking about Judah at the end time. I think that what it means is that Judah is a young nation at this time, still learning its way. It is still in the prime of its strength, or it is still learning its strength here at the time of the end. Or, maybe we can say that it has new found strength—it is like the verse that says something about being borne up on eagle's wings and renewing its strength. The strength of Judah has been renewed. It feels young again.

So, it still has its speed, it still has its aggression, and all of its strength that a young lion would have.

The second—the mature lion is at the peak of his strength. One that feels able to lie down, knowing that he is unassailable in his strength. I think that is where the Israelis are right now. They have matured over the last 50 or 60 years as a state, and they feel pretty strong and able right now.

The one in the last line in verse 9 is most interesting, I think. It suggests two things—either an old lion, or a lioness. The idea behind this is that the old lion is fierce. He is getting old and a bit surly; knowing it does not have much time, and so it tends to be very fierce and aggressive. It is not an old lion about to die. This is an old lion which may be at the end of his rulership over his pride. And, he is trying to hold on to all with all that he has got to his leadership. And any young lion that comes up is going to get a claw full or a mouthful of this lion because he will defend his turf.

The lioness idea that comes out is a lioness with cubs. Fierceness! She will defend those cubs to her last breath. We talk about bears and their cubs. Lionesses and their cubs are the same way. Woe to him who tries to rouse such a lion who goes into the lion's den when there are cubs about!

What we come away with here in this last phrase is that Israel at the time of the end is a ferocious predator. You had better not make him angry. He is very confident in his power, and he will lash out at the slightest sign of disrespect or aggression against him. And that is what we have seen. The Israelis are very willing to use their power. We in the United States—our leadership—have been holding them back a bit. They will listen to us, but there is a time where they will say, "Look, we have got to do this...", and they do.

Well, we are now going to get to the meat of the sermon. I have been looking forward to this for a long time

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.

The scepter began as a rod. The rod like a shepherd would use to punish, as well as to judge, his sheep. The shepherd would use it to knock some sense into a predator, but sometimes he had to knock some sense into a sheep to get them to do what he needed them to do. So, what he had was a short, stout stick. Sometimes it had a gnarled end, and, he would use it like a person would use a club. Sometimes, if needed, he could even throw it like a spear or club to

help chase away wolves, dogs, lions, or whatever he needed to do. Just bonk them right on the head!

This idea of a rod evolved into a scepter. If you have ever seen a scepter, maybe the ones the kings and queens of Europe have, they are usually rod with a ball on the end. They looked kind of like a mace. They do not use them anymore to bonk people on the head, but it is symbolic of that. They have rulership, and they have power; and they have the ability to judge, to make judgments, and pass sentence. It later became a symbol then of rulership, and of royal power.

What we see, here, despite giving Joseph the birthright and the blessings, Judah receives rulership over Israel. They are given the scepter promise.

What seems ironic in all of this is that, when this was spoken by Jacob, the rulership over the family was obviously his, and he passed it to Joseph. Joseph, evidently, became the patriarch, the one that everyone looked to. He was the Prime Minister of Egypt, and the one with the most power, and so it went to him.

And then, later on, it went to Moses. He was of Levi. And after him, it went to Joshua. Joshua was of Ephraim, a part of the family of Joseph.

And except for the next leader, the patriarchy went to leaders of tribes who were not Jews. The only one descendant of Judah among the judges was Othniel. He was the one, I believe, who was directly after Joshua. He was the son-in-law of Caleb, son of Kenaz, the one who took Hebron. So, he was the only Jew to rule over Israel until David. All the others were mostly of Ephraim, and Manasseh; Saul was a Benjamite; Samuel was a Levite. It took 600 years for this particular prophecy, "The scepter shall not depart from Judah," to begin to be fulfilled.

But once it was fulfilled in David, it has not ended since.

Now, it says here that "it will not depart from Judah." "Not" is fine, but "never" is better. "The scepter shall never depart from Judah." The promise given to David was of a perpetual monarchy and rulership.

II Samuel 7:12-13 [God is talking to David] When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. "He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.

II Samuel 7:16 "And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever.""

Now, at this point, there is no indication of Messiah. That is missing from this particular promise. But, if we turn to Jeremiah 33, we will see that it is included. And, what is interesting about this is that God gave that promise to David about 1000 BC. This prophecy that He gave to Jeremiah was about 400 some odd years after that.

Jeremiah 33:14-17 ` Behold, the days are coming,' says the Lord,
` that I will perform that good thing which I have promised to the house
of Israel and to the house of Judah: ` In those days and at that time
[there are those phrases] I will cause to grow up to David a Branch of
righteousness; He shall execute judgment and righteousness in the
earth. In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will dwell
safely. And this is the name by which she will be called: THE LORD OUR
RIGHTEOUSNESS.' "For thus says the LORD: ` David shall never lack a
man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel.

So, here we begin to see the Messiah coming into it—the Branch of Righteousness. And His Kingdom will never end. So, where it says that the "scepter shall not depart from Judah," it is better translated as "never depart from Judah."

Next, it said, "nor a lawgiver from between his feet."

A lawgiver, as it says in the *New King James* is a literal translation of the Hebrew. I think that it is better to call it what it means, which is a ruler's staff. The first part of the verse said, "scepter shall not depart from Judah," and the second part says that the "ruler's staff" will not depart from Judah. That is what it means, not a lawgiver per se.

When we say, "law giver," we think of Moses or somebody who gives laws. But, that is not exactly what he is saying. He is saying that the ruler's staff, which is the other part of the rod and the staff that a shepherd used—the rod for smiting and judging and the staff was for guiding and directing. It was more helpful than a rod, sometimes.

But, the idea, here, is that it is a ruler, not a lawgiver necessarily. Obviously, a ruler enforces the laws, not necessarily makes them. The idea is the ruler's staff.

"Until Shiloh comes," (which happens to be the title of this sermon). This is *the* pivotal verse, not just of the prophecies to Judah, but to the entire family of Israel; and some have even gone so far to say that it is the pivotal verse of the entire book of Genesis. Maybe not the pivotal, but the crescendo—this is what the whole book has been leading up to, and then suddenly, "...until Shiloh comes..." That is the thing that Moses wants us to leave this book thinking about. And he echoes this a bit later in:

Genesis 49:24 ... And the arms of his hands were made strong by the
hands of the Mighty God of Jacob (From there is the Shepherd, the
Stone of Israel)...

That is poorly translated. This should be, "...his hands were made strong by the hands of the Mighty God of Jacob through the name of the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel." So, he is backing it up, that this Shiloh is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel.

It is the third in last Messianic prophecy in the book of Genesis. The first one occurred in Genesis 3:15 where it is talking about the enmity between the Seed of the woman, and Satan.

The second one is found in Genesis 12: 3 where Abraham is introduced, where He says to him, "In you shall all nations be blessed." That is repeated again in chapter 22, verse 18 after Abraham and the sacrifice of Isaac. He says that, "because you have done this, all nations shall be blessed in you." And then the third one is here, Genesis 49: 10.

Do not let the word, "until," push you off the track here. It makes it sound like that the scepter will not depart *until* Shiloh comes. But, that is not what it means. It is not "an end." The scepter is not going to stop right when Jesus comes. That is not what it means, even though most Protestant commentaries take it that way. They say Judah's rule would end with Jesus' first coming. But, actually, this is talking about Jesus' Second Coming.

Judah would still bear rule until—up into the time—that Shiloh came. But, what it means is that it comes up to that time, and continues through Him. *It will not be passed down any more* after Shiloh comes. When Shiloh comes, as a Jew, He will be the Ruler and Leader forever!

We could say that it ends in a physical sense at that point. But, because Jesus is of Judah, the physical sense remains too.

Shiloh must be the most disputed word in the entire Old Testament. You should see how some of the commentators go back and forth about this word. They seem baffled by it. Others are adamant that it means this thing, or that thing. But, there is a general agreement that it implies a Messiah, but what kind of Messiah they just cannot seem to decide on.

Now, Shiloh is not used anywhere else in the Bible as a personal name. It is used as a proper name for a town in the tribe of Ephraim. And we know that is where the tabernacle was set up early in the period of the Judges. This is also where the ark was.

As I said, what Shiloh means is disputed. But, after studying this a good deal, I think that it comes down to two likely possibilities of what the word Shiloh actually means.

The first one is "whose right it is." Some of your Bibles may use that phrase, saying that, "the scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between His feet, until [whose it is] comes," or "...until He [whose right it is] comes."

This reads in Hebrew slightly differently than what is actually written. You have to change some vowel points and whatnot to get it to say this. Remember, Hebrew was written without vowels. And so, if you put in different vowels, it can say something slightly different. And that what this meaning "whose right it is" does. But, this is allowable.

Ezekiel 21:26 ...thus says the Lord GOD: "Remove the turban, and take off the crown; nothing shall remain the same. Exalt the lowly, and abase the exalted.

Remember, He is talking about the line of Judah, and the two lines, Zerah and Phares. And, the one line that had not had the rulership was going to become the line of rulership.

Ezekiel 21:27 Overthrown, overthrown, I will make it overthrown! It shall be no longer, until He comes whose right it is, and I will give it to

Him."

So, this seems to be some support to that argument. Some people think that he was trying to echo the prophecy in Genesis 49 with the phrase, "until He comes whose right it is."

In a way, Mr. Armstrong used it in his way in terms of this particular prophecy in Ezekiel 21, that he had said the throne, the line of David would be overthrown three times, and then remain in the final one until Christ came, whose right it is, and then He would take the throne.

That one is okay. Sounds good. It seems to work. It has to be pointed a bit differently in the Hebrew, but it seems to be backed up.

The second one, which I think is the more likely, and the reason why is I think the subject of the previous verses demands this, but this meaning is, "peaceful, or restful." This is a straight up understanding of the Hebrew.

This meaning of Shiloh connects with the Hebrew word group that gives us the words "Salem, Shalom, Shiloah, and Shlomo," which is the Hebrew for "Solomon." Did you notice that they all sounded similar?—Salem, Shalom, Shiloah, Shlomo, Shiloh. All of these words convey quietude, calm, peace, or rest.

Hebrews 7:1-2 For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, being first translated "king of righteousness," and then also king of Salem, meaning "king of peace."

Psalms 122:6-7 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: "May they prosper who love you. Peace be within your walls, prosperity within your palaces."

Here we have the word shalom, as in peace—pray for the peace of Jerusalem—and we also have that word Jerusalem which contains the word "Salem." So, we have, "pray for the peace of the City of Peace."

We will pick up another of these words. Notice the peaceful, restful connotations of these:

Isaiah 8:6 "Inasmuch as these people refused the waters of Shiloah that flow softly, and rejoice in Rezin and in Remaliah's son;

They refused the gentle, peaceful, calming waters of Shiloah, and went after this warlike son of Remaliah.

I Chronicles 22:9 ` Behold, a son shall be born to you, which shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies all around. His name shall be Solomon, for I will give peace and quietness to Israel

in his days.

So, his name was really Jedidah, but God called him Solomon because of what he was to do during his reign. He would bring rest.

I prefer this first meaning, "peace," due to the subject here, because, remember, verses 8, 9, and so forth, we have been talking about war; and He says that the scepter shall not depart—this need for strong leadership—will not depart until Shiloh comes, who is going to give rest, and peace.

Jacob had been talking about warfare, and enemies, and ferocity, and all those things, and this is definitely needed—these leaders are definitely needed—up until the time that the Peace-bringer comes, Jesus Christ, and He will give rest to Judah and all Israel.

Zechariah 9:9-10 "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey. I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem; the battle bow shall be cut off. He shall speak peace to the nations; His dominion shall be ` from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.'

Isaiah 9:6 For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Ezekiel 37:24-26 "David My servant shall be king over them [the Millennial setting], and they shall all have one shepherd; they shall also walk in My judgments and observe My statutes, and do them. Then they shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob My servant, where your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell there, they, their children, and their children's children, forever; and My servant David shall be their prince forever. Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them, and it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; I will establish them and multiply them, and I will set My sanctuary in their midst forevermore.

So, He promises to bring a covenant of peace.

Ephesians 2:11-15 Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands—that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our

peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of division between us, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace.

I hope that you were paying attention to those verses, because the idea of peace-bringer is often accompanied by a prophecy of the peoples of the earth coming to Messiah, and obeying Him.

Genesis 49:10 ...And to Him shall be the obedience of the people[s].

That word, "people" should be plural, not singular."

We are talking about the Gentiles here, not just Israel. And, as we saw in Ephesians 2, Jesus Christ by His sacrifice came and broke down the enmity between the Israelites and the Gentiles. And now, they can be one people in Christ.

And so now, to Him—to Shiloh—shall be the obedience of the peoples. And He will eventually gather all Israel, and all the rest of the world to Him, and they will obey Him.

I was going to go through verses 11 and 12, but I do not have time. But, I would like for you to know that they are a physical/spiritual type/antitype prophecy. The physical part talks about the prosperity of Judah, and the spiritual is talking about Jesus Christ, and the work that He does.

If you will remember, in Matthew 21, He took a donkey into Jerusalem and was proclaimed by the people. But He put that off, and shunned that for the time being, in order to wash His clothes in wine—his own blood. And so, this is kind of a prophecy of that.

I would like to end in here in a psalm thought to be written by Solomon, and I think it is page 54 or 55 in our songbook—our hymns there. But, we can hear echoes of Jacob's prophecy in this psalm in which Solomon uses his own God-blessed reign as a type of millennial reign of Jesus Christ, the Lion of Judah.

Psalm 72:1-19 Give the king Your judgments, O God, and Your righteousness to the king's Son. He will judge Your people with righteousness, and Your poor with justice. The mountains will bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness. He will bring justice to the poor of the people; He will save the children of the needy, and will break in pieces the oppressor. They shall fear You as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations. He shall come down like rain upon the grass before mowing, like showers that water the earth. In His days the righteous shall flourish, and abundance of peace, until the moon is no more. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth. Those who dwell in the wilderness will bow before Him, and His enemies will lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles will bring presents; the

kings of Sheba and Seba will offer gifts. Yes, all kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him. For He will deliver the needy when he cries, the poor also, and him who has no helper. He will spare the poor and needy, and will save the souls of the needy. He will redeem their life from oppression and violence; and precious shall be their blood in His sight. And He shall live; and the gold of Sheba will be given to Him; prayer also will be made for Him continually, and daily He shall be praised. There will be an abundance of grain in the earth, on the top of the mountains; its fruit shall wave like Lebanon; and those of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth. His name shall endure forever; His name shall continue as long as the sun. And men shall be blessed in Him; all nations shall call Him blessed. Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only does wondrous things! And blessed be His glorious name forever! And let the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen and Amen.

I hope that this has been instructive and helpful to you all.