



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Genesis 49:8-12

"Miscellaneous Topics #34: Judah Raised,

Triumphant and Reigning in the Coming One"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] We're turning this morning for our Scripture to Genesis chapter 49 and reading verses 8 through 12. The subject for the exposition that follows is "Judah Raised, Triumphant and Reigning in the Coming One." These words are part of Jacob's blessing of his twelve sons as he was dying, and therefore represent the important words of a patriarch as he passed from this life and was gathered unto his people. And beginning with the 8th verse he has these important words to say concerning Judah, his fourth son.

"Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee. (You know in reading the Bible it's very important to pay attention to every word. I think very few people realize this. I think very few people have the understanding of the word of God that would urge them to note every particular word. Now, you may remember that Judah was the fourth son and mentioned here, but you may also remember that Judah was the son of Jacob and Leah. There were four of those sons, as I remember. But notice the way in which Jacob gives this prophecy concerning Judah. He does not say "Thy mother's children

shall bow down before thee that would be four of the total. But he says "Thy father's children shall bow down before thee. In other words, Judah is to be sovereign over all of the children of Jacob, not simply those from Jacob and Leah. Even that little distinction between thy mother's children and thy father's children is of great importance.) Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? (That Hebrew word translated "old lion" here is probably not a reference to an old lion but simply a lion. Who shall rouse him up?) 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. (Some of you may have a modern translation, and probably your modern translation has instead of "unto him shall the gather of the people be" the word obedience. Unto him shall be the obedience of the peoples or something similar. That probably is truer to the Hebrew text at this point. Although this word is not used very often. But nevertheless the thought of obedience of our Lord is also in harmony with, "Unto him shall the gathering of the peoples be." So the reference of the gathering of the peoples to him is gathering to him in obedience.) Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes: (Sometimes the simple phraseology of the word of God has some later significance. As you can tell the description of wine as the blood of grapes makes wine clearly a very useful symbol of the blood, it's the blood of grapes. And so it's not surprising that when our Lord instituted the Lord's Supper and remembered the giving of himself and the shedding of his blood that he should take bread and wine, because wine is the blood of grapes. So it was suggestive of the thought of blood to anyone who looked at it.) His eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk."

That last expression is not easy to understand and when I come to it I will take a certain view point. Of course, I do recognize that there is some discussion over the precise force of these figures that Jacob uses. But the general sense of these verses is

very plain, and that is the sense that we will seek to bring out in a few minutes. May the Lord bless this reading of his word. Let's bow together in a moment of prayer.

[Prayer] Our heavenly Father, we are indeed grateful and thankful for this lovely day, for this unusual season of the year in which we still think, even if not so directly as in the ages past, of the life and ministry of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. As we look around, Lord, upon life in this western world of which we are a part, we recognize the fading significance of the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ in the minds and thoughts of the citizens of these countries in the west. We think back over the years and think of the marvelous way in which Thou hast blessed this western world. And we are disappointed when we see that our society has so largely become a spiritually superficial and artificial kind of society. But we thank Thee Lord that Thou has in Thy wonderful grace enabled us to know him whom to know is life eternal. And thank Thee for the calling that Thou hast given to us to be as salt in our society, to be as lights in the midst of this crooked and perverse generation to use the expressions of Scripture. We know our failings, we have failed so often.

We pray Lord that Thou will strengthen us and give us spiritual courage to truly represent the Lord Jesus Christ. Deliver us from fear and cowardice. How reprehensible to say that we belong to him and hide our lights under a bushel. Lord, we pray that by Thy marvelous grace, through the power of the Holy Spirit, that Thou wilt give all of us who hear these words, including me, courage, spiritual wisdom to represent the Lord Jesus Christ, to say the word that will be fruitfully used by the Holy Spirit to do that which will be used by him, and particularly at this time of the year when some people's thoughts consider after a long absence Jesus Christ. We thank Thee for him, for the book that was shed for us, for the assurance of the forgiveness of our sins. How marvelous that is.

We thank Thee too Lord for this assembly of believers, this church, its elders, its deacons, its members, its friends and the visitors who are hear today. We ask Lord thy

blessing upon this ministry and upon each of us. We pray that Thou will sustain us, supply the needs that exist. We especially commit to Thee the ministries which flow out of the Chapel over the radio, through the publications, through Bible classes, through other outreach forms of ministry, we commit them to Thee. We pray especially to that those who are unable to be with us and some who are very weak and sick, Lord minister to them, encourage them, comfort them and give healing as it pleases thee.

We pray for our country, we ask Thy blessing upon the United States of America. Give wisdom and guidance to our leaders who need it so desperately. And Father we pray for the whole church of Christ, all of those who shall be gathered to the Lord Jesus, may Thy hand be upon us for spiritual good. Bless as we sing the hymn that follows and in the ministry of the word. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] One of things that I find myself doing driving around the city is listening to one of the local radio stations and particularly on that specializes in the news and in sports. This is the Christmas season, I'll often hear one of the men, a very fine announcer whom I often listen to in reporting sporting events, speaking about giving something simply, I'm sure that was handed him to read, Christmas is for kids. And then the station is supporting a very good work for as I believe for underprivileged children to help them, certainly a worthy effort and the station is to be congratulated and helped for what it is doing. This man is a Jewish man. He has acknowledged the fact that he is, and he lives by his convictions so far as I know, so I was, as I think, driving around the city I hear him say, Christmas is for kids. And it's caused me to think about it a good bit. Christmas is for kids. Now, of course, as I say he's a Jewish man, and naturally he doesn't think of Christmas as I would think of Christmas. And so, in this particular text given to him, "Christmas is for kids" well there is a sense in which we can echo that. Christmas is for kids in the sense that it is a happy time for children. But if we mean by that that Christmas is for kids in the sense that Christmas is only for kids, then we have surely

misunderstood Christmas. So far as I can tell from those words given to him to read, that's as far as his words go.

Actually Christmas is for adults, too. We mustn't forget that, because that's an easy thing to do. The incarnation is the step that leads on to the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ, and Christmas is important for adults. In fact, Christmas is more important for adults than it is for children. And consequently, when we hear Christmas is for adults, then we're hearing something that is far more significant than Christmas is for kids. In fact, I think that's the way we treat Christmas; we treat it as if it was kid activity rather than adult activity. The sense of Christmas, as we all know, is largely lost on our western society. But most of all Christmas is not simply for kids, shallow kind of treatment of Christmas; Christmas is not only for adults which ought to be something significant, but Christmas is for Christ most of all. Christmas is the time when we render to the Lord the respect, the appreciation, the gratitude and the worship that we should render to one who engaged as his atoning work, a first and significant step of which is the assumption of human nature and then his birth that he might be the atoning sacrifice. So when we think about Christmas is for kids, wait a minute, Christmas is for adults, Christmas is for Christ. And let it be an incentive for us to go to our prayer closet, wherever that might be, in my study, in my chair, in the bedroom by your bed, or wherever it is that you spend some time in prayer with the Lord, and this Christmas offer up some of the praise and thanksgiving that will make Christmas for you, an adult, that much more significant.

Now, we are thinking about Christmas this morning, and so I've selected Genesis chapter 49 in order to give a message that I think is appropriate for this time of year. A prevalent view in modern theology is that the early church ransacked the Old Testament text for texts that they might put together as proof that Jesus is the Messiah. In other words, the writers of our gospels, and incidentally those writers whoever they were very creative people. You know I don't like the word creative, because I think it belongs to God. He's the only one who can create. I tell all of my students, "Creative belongs to

God, why are you saying that a man or a woman is creative?" Men or women may be original but creative, that belongs to God. Gospel literature is creative literature. There was never anything like it beforehand; there has never been anything like it since. It is a particular form of literature that the Holy Spirit created and used Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John to give that literature to us.

But modern theology generally speaking like to think that these authors, whoever they were, for ultimately they believed that they were simply the later early church. The ransacked the Old Testament for Messianic texts, put them together, and gave the authors of each book non-deplumes of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. But Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John were not the real authors of these books. Now, that is what we ordinarily find in our New Testament explanations of biblical literature. There are many flaws in this scheme. We really literally could spend two lecture hours in talking about them. Just think for a moment, all of the tradition of the Christian church is nullified by that. That's a very serious objection. Tradition, those people that were closest to the scene, everything that they said about these events is done away with, and now we're given a 20th century interpretation. On the face of it the burden of proof should resurrection

t with such individuals to show that that is true. That is only a minor objection really. Can you imagine the early church having no interest in the biography of our Lord's life? That is, in the historicity of the events that they were recording. Can you think that they went and selected texts in order to give us a picture that was not true? Can you think of that? Are not people interested in a historical accuracy of a person's life and ministry? But that kind of theory tells us essentially the early church was not interested in that kind of thing. Well, I mention only those several things; there are a long list of things we might say. Some of them even more cogent for those who are students of New Testament and Old Testament literature.

Most of this arises from a fundamental presupposition. One of the outstanding New Testament scholars has said that so far as things happening in our society is

concerned, it's impossible for a miracle, as we understand miracle normally in common speech, to take place. Because everything that transpires in our life is transpiring according to natural law. Consequently we live in a closed continuum. And therefore, miracle is excluded by presupposition. You see some instances of this in modern and recent literature as well.

R.P. Carroll has written a book published five or six years ago in which Mr. Carroll says "It's impossible," by the way, the title of it is *When Prophecy Failed* and in this book Mr. Carroll contends that God doesn't have foreknowledge. In other words, God is not able to look down through the years and see what is going to happen. He can look down through the years and see the general range of things that may happen; in fact I've a fairly good idea of things that may happen. We may find out that my ideas are pretty bad, but I think I've got a pretty good idea of what may happen. But God can only tell us that. So far as telling us what will happen, that's beyond God. And the reason it's beyond God is very simple, human freedom. How can there be any human freedom if God knows what is going to happen and says what is going to happen?

Well, that's not a bad argument in one sense if you just want to be that kind of a theologian, a person who believes that God is a frustratable God and frustratable because of certain purposes that he has preeminently of human freedom. Well, that fits with that. But fundamentally if God is unable to foresee the future and prophesy the future, then one can understand what we contend to be the origin and source of the biblical literature is faulty. It always reminds me of that famous Chinese proverb, "To prophesy is extremely difficult, especially with regard to the future." [Laughter] Well, we can all understand that, I'm sure. You know, if you will look at the New Testament in the light of things that are said by scholars, you'll have some good smiles, because if you look at the New Testament and look at the texts to which the New Testament authors appealed, and then look at the Old Testament and read the Messianic literature found in the Old Testament you will discover that the New Testament authors were very restrained in the

citing of the Old Testament. As a matter of fact, they overlooked many texts that had to do with the Messianic ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.

If you think they ransacked the Old Testament for texts to apply to this person they were setting forth as a fulfillment of the Old Testament, those fellows omitted and neglected a lot of texts and some very fundamental ones. For example, they overlooked Genesis 3:15. That's the first of the Messianic passages. They overlooked Numbers 24:17, especially relevant for Christians and Christmas, because there our Lord's ministry is likened to the star. We'll talk about that the next Sunday, the Lord willing. They overlooked Isaiah 9:6 and after all what more significant and pointed text can you find than "Unto us a child is born, unto a Son is given, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. That's not cited in the New Testament either as applying to him. Isaiah chapter 32 verse 1 and 2, another very significant passage, that's overlooked. And surprisingly even the critics acknowledge that Isaiah 11:1-5 is Messianic in force and Jeremiah 23:5-6 is Messianic in force. And those fellows who gave us the gospel or the early church, by the way I've never seen a body of people who were ever created. Think of any committee that you can think of; think of our Congress, have they ever invented anything? Well, listen this is creative literature. Creative things, if I may be allowed to use the term just for this particular meeting, creative things always are the products of individuals.

Why, here are passages that were acknowledged by these critics to be Messianic, and they are not cited in the New Testament either. So I'm going to look this morning at another passage that they forgot to cite in the gospel records. It's Genesis 29 and verse 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." The context is very plain. Jacob is on his death bed. He rises up from his death bed, and he gives his famous prophetic blessing of his sons, the tribal heads of the nation.

Now, immediately someone says, well this couldn't possibly be true, for after all it's incredible that this decrepit old man could utter thoughts so clear cut and virile as these prophecies. I ran across Robert Orbin's words, an old man like I'm an old man. Orbin said, "I don't even remember when I was young. Sometimes I think I went directly from Dr. Spock to Dr. Scholl." [Laughter] Well, I think I can understand that objection, because it is surprising that Jacob on his death bed is able to utter this remarkably long and pointed prophecy. But then I remember also another statement made by another fellow who had a little intelligence. His name was called Socrates, and when he was dying he said, "I'm about to die, and that's the hour in which men are gifted with prophetic power." And it's not surprising then, to me that Jacob lifted up, strengthened by the Holy Spirit for a task that would have eternal significance, looks out at his sons and gives a fore view of their future.

Now Judah is the fourth of the sons, but he's first in the list to receive the rich and unmixed blessing. Jacob, after he finishes this, the text says, will gather up his feet into his bed, yield up the ghost, and be gathered into his people. Incidentally, don't read that as if in Jacob is in control of his life. The Authorized Version says that he gathered up his feet up into bed and yielded up the ghost. That almost sounds as if he had control of things, but strictly speaking the Hebrew text says simple, "He breathed his last." Far different from our Lord's death. In the description of our Lord's death we read, "He bowed his head and he gave up the ghost," or his spirit. That's the way someone who is in control of his destiny dies. Now, you won't find me doing that. If I were to suddenly have a heart attack what would happen to me would be my spirit would go, and then my head would collapse, because the life is gone. But our Lord does it in the reverse way. He drops his head; he gives up his ghost, because he's in control of things.

Jacob is not in control of things, he yields up the ghost at the beck and call of God. He breathes his last. And then he was gathered to his people; suggestive of a consciousness that he will enjoy as he passes into the presence of Adam and others and

also of the communion that he is going to have with them. You can just imagine Jacob coming into the presence of Adam and being introduced to Mr. Adam. Mr. Adam, this is Mr. Jacob. And Adam says, "I know all about him." And then Jacob will be introduced to Adam and he will say, or rather they will say, "This is Adam, this is the one who caused us all our troubles." But he will be introduced as the head of the covenant, as the head of both covenants as a matter of fact historically, because of course, men fell in Adam. And Adam is the first believer, so far as we can tell from Scripture, in the covenant of grace or in the Messianic covenant. Call it what you like. Adam is the federal head who failed. Christ is the federal head who succeeded. And Adam, so far as we can tell, is the first who entered into relationship to him as part of the people of God. Well, that's Jacob's great experience. That's the experience that we're going to have, too. We're going to yield up the spirit at God's beck and call and we're going to be gathered unto our people, and then begins the life that is life indeed.

But Jacob has a few things to say before he goes, and so we're going to look at these verses. I'll look at verse 8 through verse 12 and center our attention on verse 10. On verses 8 and 9 the prophecy of Judah begins with a statement concerning the princely power of Judah. "Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise." Well, that's a play on words, because of course Judah is a term that is derived from the Hebrew root that means to praise. So that means that Judah's name is Mr. Praise, just like Judas the apostle who failed was Mr. Praise too. They both are related to the term for praise. So his name was praise, and Jacob trades upon that. He says, "Mr. Praise, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise." Judah thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise. In other words, his name is an omen. How do you like that? That proves that old men can come up with something unique, not creative but unique.

Now, what he is saying essentially is his royal stature is acquired by his lion like nature. "Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies." Whether that means upon the nape of the neck or whether that means

they're grasped by the neck and life is crushed out of them, Jacob doesn't tell us. The figure is clear, "Thy father's children shall bow down before thee," all of them. And then he says this is recognized by the prophetic word as well. "Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?" Here's a picture of a young growing lion seizing his prey, killing his prey, then ascending up into the mountains probably at night, because lions, as you know, are nocturnal beasts. He goes up into his lair, and there he settles down finally upon his haunches. And those mountains, those lions up in the mountains sitting in that majestic quietness have nothing to fear at all from any other beast upon the face of the earth. What a beautiful figure of our Lord Jesus Christ as the lion of the tribe of Judah. If the tribe of Judah is likened to a lion, Judah's noblest son, Jesus of Nazareth, is most effectively and suitably designated the lion of the lion tribe.

And it's not surprising that we read, "Who shall rouse him up?" I think of those magnificent statements made in the Book of Revelation. If you've got your Bibles, and why did you come here if you don't have your Bible, why turn with me to Revelation and we'll just read a few of the texts there that fill in the details. I think particularly of chapter 6 and verse 17 where we read, "And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" That's very much like this "Who shall rouse him up?" He's absolutely sovereign and supreme.

Now, if you will think of the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ your thoughts will ultimately come to the 5th chapter of the Book of Revelation where we have this magnificent vision given to the Apostle John of the lion of the tribe of Judah. And John writes in chapter 5 and verse 1, "And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals." Now, anyone who read this in ancient times would recognize immediately that this was a will, for it was customary to seal documents with seven seals that were wills. So this is a will and

involved in it is the disposition of the whole universe. It's a will. "And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon." For the simple reason that all men hath sinned and come short of the glory of God, and therefore have no right to rule of themselves. John begins to weep. "And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon." And one of the elders standing by one of the angelic beings said, "John stop weeping, behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof." In other words, there is someone who can do it, the lion of the tribe of Judah.

And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a "lion, no a "lamb." What a surprise, a lamb, "as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed," now I'm going to translate this as it is in the original text, "Thou has redeemed to God by thy blood some out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." This construction makes it evident that not every one is involved. It is from that number that these people have been redeemed, "And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and they shall reign on the earth." In other words, the lion of the tribe of Judah, the lamb, by virtue of the atoning sacrifice has purchased a people who shall rule and reign with him over the face of the earth. The rest of the chapter describes the whole universe falling down and worshipping the God who has made all of these things

possible. He is the lion of the tribe of Judah, and he has become sovereign and supreme over the face of this universe, because of the atoning work, which he has finished.

Now, now having said all of that and that certainly creates a great deal of expectation doesn't it? Those two verses, what will verse 10 say? And here is the magnificent Messianic prophecy. "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." In other words, Judah's leadership shall be to a time until Shiloh come and then beyond that time. Progressive march in the picture of the Messiah and his rule is plainly in the words that Jacob gives. I wonder how much he understood of what he was saying. Maybe he understood it all, I don't know. But I know this, it was a magnificent prophecy, and it's one that our New Testament scholars who have constructed their theories about the origins of our gospels as if they ransacked from the Old Testament to prove that Jesus was the Messiah, they've forgotten a good one. They've not only forgotten a good one, but they forgot one that even Jewish interpretation acknowledges as being a Messianic text. Strange isn't it? You would think that people who were trying to construct a gospel to fool people would at least select texts that everybody could agree were Messianic, but they missed this one.

What is meant by Shiloh? Well, let me say it's unsafe to dogmatize. You know, we all have favorite texts and favorite names. You'll listen to some people's conversation and you'll hear them refer to the Lord as Jesus all the time. Now, I think that is a little bit of a mistake, but it's valid. After all, even in the Book of Revelation near the end of the New Testament, our Lord is called Jesus. It's perfectly all right. That's a name that expresses the true humanity that he possessed. But generally Christians, at least evangelical Christians, will speak of him as the Lord Jesus. In fact, that may be the favorite name of some people. Some people call him master. Well, that's a suitable name as well, for that's what he is. He is a teacher, he is the teacher. And then some speak of

his as Redeemer. In fact, a friend of mine has suggested that this was just Jacob's favorite name of the Messiah to come, Shiloh.

Well, other interpretations have been put upon it by scholars. In fact, six or eight; some see in this some reference to the term son. No need to go into the ways by which this done. Some see in this some relationship to the Hebrew word *shalach*, although this is not quite that in one character. And think of this as a reference to the sent one and lay stress upon the fact that the Vulgate does have a reference to his being sent in its rendering of this passage. But others see in it still other meanings. One of the commonest meanings is that this is simply the term for the city, Shiloh. And they render this particular clause as until he come to Shiloh, a possible rendering. But Judah had no rule at Joshua 18 where reference is made to Shiloh. It's irreconcilable with the prophetic character of this blessing. And so that's probably not the meaning.

Most interpreters center upon this as a personal name for the Messiah. Some of them seeing in it, like Luther, a reference to the things that our Lord did. It can be related to a word that means rest. And so he would be the rest giver, Shiloh. Well, that's certainly true of the Lord. He's the rest giver. He's the peace bringer. And it's possible that those individuals who think of this as simply as a personal name with the idea of rest or peace it's possible that they are right. I tend to go to another interpretation. In fact, on Friday I came down to my office where I have the London Polyglot. And some of you will know, you've been in the office, you look they're on the floor because I don't have any place to put them here. It's a most valuable part of the library down here. And in fact, I don't have room for them at home either. Six big volumes that are about this size and about that thick, each one of them, so in order to read the text carefully again I came down and just looked at in the London Polyglot you have the Old Testament in the Genesis part; it begins in Genesis and goes through the Old and New Testaments. And you have the Hebrew text with a Latin translation. And then you have the vulgate, the Latin version of the Old Testament, the Latin version of the Old Testament. You have the

Septuagint with a Latin translation. You have the Syriac with a Latin translation. You also have Arabic with a Latin translation. And then very valuable section of it is that the Jewish Targums, the paraphrases of the Old Testament are there with Latin translation as well.

Now, I've had a little Syriac and a little Arabic and Aramaic and so I was just curious to see everything that was said in those particular passages. And strikingly in the Jewish Targum what you have is something like this, "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Messiah shall come whose is the reign or the rule." And the Aramaic term for Messiah, meshikah is used and also the Aramaic term for rule is used, malkuphah. Those very terms are used in other words, the Jewish interpreters as recognized in the Targums understand this as a Messianic text. And so I'm inclined to think by revocalizing the texts slightly that what this, and it's justifiable I believe, "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs; and to whom it," the "it" is a reference to the kingdom, "to whom it belongs." Universal rule, eternal rule, everlasting rule, it belongs to Judah. Now if you'll go back in Judah's history you'll notice that these things begin to appear in the Old Testament, Judah was the fourth of the sons. He didn't have the birthright. Those who had the birthright lost it, and then it was given to Joseph and his sons. But Judah, from the beginning, and this prophecy makes it very plain, is given rule and sovereignty and when Israel moved on the march with the tabernacle, it was Judah, the tribe that led the march. And the first judge in Israel was Osneal, a member of the tribe of Judah. And then later on ultimately David had the Davidic covenant and everlasting rule confirmed to him and to his seed. So "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs."

But the rule doesn't stop there. For he goes on to add, "And unto him shall the obedience of the peoples be." Now, that expression peoples is a reference not simply to the nation Israel but encompasses also the Gentiles as well. In other words, Judah is to

rule to the coming one and Judah is to rule after he comes. The worldwide dominion of the lion of the tribe of Judah in Revelation chapter 5 expresses it is set out here in Jacob's prophecy a long time ago. The sacrifice that was later made was the ground of the salvation and sovereignty that were to come through Judah's noblest son. And incidentally, he's the only true center of unity in the people of God and unity in the world. And God will make that very plain, ultimately. In fact, in the lion of the tribe of Judah as the one who has accomplished the redemption and made it possible for all authority to rest in his hand is the one in whom Calvinists and Arminians will be united. Now, that is a sovereign work of the Lord God

You know, many of you sing the hymns of Arminian, and you sing the hymns of Calvinists. And the Arminians who are Christian and the Calvinists all worship our Lord; often write marvelous hymns about him. John and Charles Wesley wrote some marvelous hymns. They were Arminians. Augustus Toplady, a Calvinist, wrote some marvelous hymns. They didn't like each other. The Wesley's didn't like Toplady, and Toplady didn't like the Wesley's. In fact, he called John Wesley an "old fox." And so the Wesley's, Charles Wesley wrote, "Jesus Lover of My Soul." What a marvelous hymn, how beautiful it expresses devotion to Christ. And Mr. Toplady wrote, "Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me." Now, you couldn't find a better hymn than that. These two people find their ultimate union in the Lord Jesus Christ. And Mr. Toplady and the Wesley's are all in happy union and fellowship in heaven now, all three are Calvinists. [Laughter] Well, I'm sure that we will find some interesting things in heaven, and it's possible that some of us who are Calvinists have been wrong on a few minor points. You understand, but anyway he's the true source of the unity of the saints of God, and not only that, but he's the true source of unity in the human race. And God is going to ultimately make the Son of God the lion of the tribe of Judah, the center of this whole universe.

Now, the last two verses are very simple. I won't say much about them. It's obvious that the temple sequence continues. Now he talks about the golden age of

abundance that is to follow. In fact, one of the commentators says every line in verses 11 and 12 speaks of "exuberant, intoxicating abundance. It's the golden age of the coming one. Deliberately the language of excess." Now, notice the language of excess. He says in verse 11, "Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine." Think about that. Choice vine and it's now a hedging post for your colt. In other words, the abundance is so great you don't have to worry about your choice vines. You can hitch your animals to them. And then look at the next one. He says, "He washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes." Wine is the bath water of that age. All of this is figurative, of course, ultimately designed to express the glorious abundance of the age that follows the finish of the work of the lion of the tribe of Judah.

And even the 12th verse, " His eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk," speaks as a commentator has said, "A farewell to the pinched regime of thorns and thistles and sweat for the shout of them that triumph, the song of them that feast." Reflective of the first miracle that the Lord Jesus performed when he came in Cana of Galilee, turned the water into wine and introduced symbolically by that symbol, the new age that he would bring.

Well, let me close for our time is up. I go back to what I said in the beginning. Christmas is not simply for kids. It's not simply for adults, though it's more for adults than for kids. Christmas is for Christ. And when we celebrate his first coming let us not forget the conclusion of his work, the cross, the Second Advent, the kingdom of God upon earth. He's the subject of a long expectation of the Old Testament authors and the climax, one of the great climaxes is not simply the first coming, but the second coming of Shiloh. And let us be sure, my dear friends, that we are gathered to him. He's the great gatherer. He's the one to all people shall render obedience. And the only alternative to be gathered to him in obedience is to be gathered before him at the great white throne to suffer judgment, eternal judgment. May the Lord God deliver us from the superficiality and artificiality and shallowness of our age. And may the Lord help us particularly who

are believers to celebrate Christ at the Christmas season in the spirit of worship and praise for his first coming and his second coming and his eternal kingdom.

If you're here today and you've never believed in him, you don't have any hope except that of being gathered before him in eternal judgment. May God in his wonderful grace so move in your heart that you recognize your lost condition, that you recognize your need of the purchased of the blood of Christ that purchased redemption, and may you come to the Lord Jesus believing on him unto eternal life. Come to Christ. What better season of the year to come to him than at Christmas time. Believe in him. Trust in him. Do not leave this auditorium without the forgiveness of sins and the possession of eternal life. Let's stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Father, how marvelous is this text that so beautifully announced the ministry of the lion of the tribe of Judah. How marvelous was Jacob Shiloh. How marvelous is Jacob Shiloh. How wonderful shall it be in the future when he to whom the kingdom belongs receives that which has been promised to him and which he has earned by his saving work. Oh God, may we truly worship him. May we not tell it simply upon the mountains, but tell it on Hillcrest and Preston...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]