

Fundamentals of Belief
#16C: The Davidic Covenant and the Two Nations

Edited Sermon Transcript
Jon W. Brisby; 1-26-2002

This afternoon, brethren, we are going to continue with this series on the Fundamentals of Belief of the Church of God, The Eternal. We've already had two sermons on the topic of fundamental number sixteen, concerning what some call "British Israelism" or "Spiritual Israel." Let's read this fundamental again very quickly. I've got a lot of material today that I hope to get through, so I certainly need to move as quickly as I can. Here is fundamental number sixteen again in order to refresh our memories:

We believe the PROMISES were made to Abraham and his "seed," Christ, and that the Covenants (including the New Covenant), and the promises pertain alone to ISRAEL. That our white, English-speaking peoples of today are enjoying the national phases of the promises—that of MATERIAL blessings—called the "Birthright," which was handed down thru the sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh, whose descendants we are; but that the "Scepter"—the promise of kings, and the SPIRITUAL phase of the promises, including Christ and salvation thru Him—was given to and shall not depart from Judah of whom are the race we know today as the Jews. We believe eternal life is God's gift resting upon the promises made to Abraham and his "seed," Christ, designating this earth (made new), not heaven, as our eternal home and reward. That salvation is thru Christ alone, and not inherited thru the Birthright (right of birth) and that salvation is freely open to Gentiles, who, thru Christ, become Abraham's children and are adopted into the family of Israel and become heirs according to the promises.

Again, as I've told you in the past, that is quite a mouthful in one fundamental of belief, which is why it's going to take a number of sermons in order to get through all of the principles and concepts that are included in that belief. In the first two sermons, we began by going through the covenant promises that God made first to Abraham, that He then reconfirmed to Abraham's son Isaac, and then reconfirmed again to Isaac's son Jacob. In changing Jacob's name to Israel, those promises were to be fulfilled in the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob through Jacob's twelve sons, the sons of Israel.

I asked you to think about the fact that there are many in the world who have challenged the veracity of the entire Bible—the Holy Scripture—and the promises of God because they have looked to those whom we call the Jews today for the fulfillment of all of these incredible promises that God made to Israel. And because they have not seen the fulfillment of all of this national wealth, prominence, growth and dominance within the world, then they have doubted the very legitimacy of that God who is expounded in the Holy Scriptures. Thomas Paine, one of our Founding Fathers, is one of those who actually began to doubt the validity of the Bible and to treat it as just a book of fables. One of the main reasons was because he never saw the fulfillment of those covenant promises made to Israel manifested in the Jews of today.

The reason this fundamental is so important is because, when you understand how God has fulfilled, and is still fulfilling, those covenant promises that He has made, then it becomes an incredible blessing and something that is very inspirational—to see how God actually does keep His word. Keep that in mind as we go through this—the fact that God does fulfill His promises. He is honest; He is true, and He never lies. Not at all.

God fulfilled His promise to make Israel a nation. We saw that God did give Abraham a twofold promise, which we now call the promises of race and grace. The descendants of Abraham would be great and wealthy, physically. They would receive a Birthright promise of incredible strength and national wealth. The second, most important part of that promise was one of grace—that all nations of the earth would be blessed through the seed, Christ, who would be the descendant of Abraham. Through Him, all humankind would have an opportunity at salvation, to be a part of spiritual Israel at the time of God's choosing.

Well, God did fulfill His promise to make Israel a nation. Where we left off last time, we saw that Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel, blessed the sons of Joseph.

Ephraim and Manasseh were the ones to whom those promises of the Birthright were given. Remember, we saw that Israel, Jacob, actually adopted the sons of Joseph as his own sons so that those two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, would share a full measure in the inheritance of Jacob, just like his natural sons. We saw, then, the very fulfillment. We don't have time to go through all of the story, but we know that after the death of Jacob and Joseph, the Israelites were growing and expanding that family incredibly. They became slaves in Egypt; but even in the wake of their persecution for over 200 years, they continued to multiply and grow, and God did promote them. They grew into a great people, probably somewhere between two and three million in number, even within the depths of their slavery down in Egypt.

Now, that was still not the fulfillment of God's promise to make them a *great* nation. He made them a nation, so certainly that was the first step in the beginning of the fulfillment of these covenant promises that God gave to Abraham. He did make of the descendants of Abraham, through Isaac and Jacob, a nation, even as slaves down in Egypt. Then, as you know, He miraculously brought them out of that slavery—that which we are going to be picturing very soon in the Spring Holy Days, with the Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread. There's no instance anywhere in history where you find a nation actually being created in the midst of another nation, and then coming out of serfdom and becoming their own nation; yet that's precisely what happened with the children of Israel.

God brought them miraculously out of Egypt, made of them a nation, and protected and shielded them in their journey through the wilderness. He brought them out and made them truly separate, and He also made a special covenant with the children of Israel, this new nation. So we've had covenants that were made with Abraham, and then reconfirmed with Isaac and Jacob; and now, we have God confirming a covenant relationship with the children of Israel after He made them a nation. Let's read that in Exodus 19:3, just very briefly—just trying to hit the high spots here in order to give you the overview, because we have a lot to get through today.

And Moses went up unto God, and the [Eternal] called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation . . .

There, in synoptic fashion, is a rehearsal of the covenant that God made with the children of Israel at Mount Sinai, probably occurring on the Day of Pentecost when He actually spoke to them and scared them to death because of the strength of His voice that was like thunder. That's when they asked that Moses be allowed instead to speak on behalf of God as His instrument in dealing with the people. Yet God did make that covenant with them. He selected them—He didn't just make them a new physical nation and then send them off into the world. He made them His special nation; and through this covenant, He promised to take care of them if they would obey.

Who was the ruler of that new nation? Every nation has some kind of a government structure and so did this new nation that was created in and brought out of Egypt by the hand of God. Who was the ruler of this nation when God made this covenant with them on Mount Sinai? God Himself. God Himself was the King of Israel. That's very important to understand because what we're going to cover now is part of the history of the kings of Israel. So the first thing we need to understand is, who was the first king of this new nation after God formed it? God Himself was their King. How long was it, though, that the people continued to accept being ruled by this incredibly powerful Spirit Being? It wasn't very long at all. Notice 1 Samuel 8:6. "But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us . . ." You see, the people didn't want to be ruled by an invisible God. They wanted to be like the other nations around them. They didn't want to be different; they didn't want to look weird or unusual. And there was something that was comfortable—and always is to human beings—about having something tangible to put their hands on. So they didn't want an invisible king to rule over them, speaking through an intermediary like Moses, Aaron, Joshua, or one of the other judges like Samuel; no, they wanted a king. They wanted a government; and they wanted some input into the process.

But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the [Eternal]. And the [Eternal] said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.

What is God certifying here? Who had been reigning over the nation of Israel up to this point? God Himself. God Himself was the invisible King of Israel; and at this point now, the people do not want Him for their king anymore. They want a human king. Verse 8:

According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee. Now therefore hearken unto their voice: howbeit yet protest solemnly unto them, and shew them the manner of the king that shall reign over them.

God said, "Samuel, go ahead and give them what they want. Let them have a king, but warn them and tell them what they're getting themselves into." You can read the rest of the account about how a human king, through time, was going to be an abuser and was not going to be benevolent at all, but ultimately would take advantage of and merchandise the people. That's what human beings always do in time, through human rulership in the flesh. It's always an abusive curse, and so it was going to be to Israel.

Remember Genesis 49:10; we don't have time to turn there, but what was the promise in that prophecy that Jacob spoke when he pronounced the blessings upon his twelve sons? Remember what the promise was to one particular son? The scepter of kingship was going to remain with whom? Judah. "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah . . ." Now that the people have demanded their own king, what would you expect should happen at this point? There should be a king of Judah, wouldn't you think, that God raises up? Now that the people have rejected the invisible God as their direct King and they're going to have a physical human king, this is going to be the beginning of the fulfillment of that which Jacob spoke to his sons when he gave them those blessings before he died. It said, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah." What we would expect to happen at this point is that a descendant of Judah would now be selected to be king of Israel, wouldn't you think? But who was the first king of Israel? Saul. Saul was not of the house of Judah at all. As we're going to see, Saul was actually a Benjamite, not a Jew. Let's read this very quickly, and then we'll expand upon it.

1 Samuel 9:1:

Now there was a man of Benjamin, whose name was Kish, the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Bechorath, the son of Aphiah, a Benjamite, a mighty man of power. And he had a son, whose name was Saul, a choice young man, and a goodly: and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he: from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people.

Physically speaking, he was very tall; and, in the way men judge, that obviously made him a better candidate for kingship—just by his stature. Then, skipping down to verse 17:

And when Samuel saw Saul, the [Eternal] said unto him, Behold the man whom I spake to thee of . . .

Notice that God is the one who chose Saul. But He chose someone whom the people would accept; because, remember, the very act of wanting a human king to replace God was an act of rebellion, a rejection of God's will, and obviously they were thinking totally according to the flesh. So God gave them what they wanted. This is very much, brethren, like God giving them what they wanted in the wilderness when they wanted meat to eat. You remember what happened there; they cried, they complained, and they wanted things their own way, so God finally said, "OK, I'll give you meat to eat." He sent quail, and they ate it until it came out of their noses; and thousands of them got sick and died. Well, this is the same kind of thing that's going on here. God is giving them precisely what they asked for, according to their own human wisdom. Who did He give to them? Saul—someone who appeared, from a human standpoint, to have all of these wonderful characteristics. And, besides that, he was very tall and probably very handsome, so the people would automatically accept him as their first human king.

And when Samuel saw Saul, the [Eternal] said unto him, Behold the man whom I spake to thee of! this same shall reign over my people.

God certainly ordained it and approved it, but how interesting that He selected and pointed out to Samuel a man who He knew could not begin the dynasty of the kings of Israel. He was a Benjamite; he was not of Judah. Have you ever stopped to think about that? God knew that He could not fulfill His covenant promise and that which was spoken of by the prophecy of Jacob—that the scepter would not depart from Judah. There's no way this promise could be fulfilled in Saul, yet Saul was selected to be the first king of Israel. Saul failed, as we know, and then David was raised up by God to be king. This was the man who was after God's own heart—the one who He had determined was going to begin the fulfillment of His covenant promise.

2 Samuel 7:4:

And it came to pass that night, that the word of the [Eternal] came unto Nathan, saying, Go and tell my servant David, Thus saith the LORD . . .

We're speaking of a special covenant that God is going to make with David. We've seen all of these promises—God has bound Himself for centuries, for generations, with special covenant promises, beginning with Abraham. Now He's getting ready to make another covenant promise to David. It's going to be very similar to the original covenant promise to Abraham. In what way? It will be an unconditional, binding promise. Remember, in some cases, God gave conditional promises—meaning that God promised to bind Himself to do something as long as the people fulfilled their part of the bargain and lived up to God's expectation to obey Him. Then, there were other promises He made that were totally unconditional—meaning that, no matter what the people did, no matter how good or bad they were, God was still binding Himself to fulfill them.

After Abraham was willing to sacrifice Isaac and after he proved by his actions that he had faith in God, God made that covenant promise perpetual and obligatory forever. Those promises would be fulfilled through the descendants of Abraham, including the promise of Christ. Now we're getting ready to see another such covenant that was made with David. Why? Because of David's faithfulness—a man after God's own heart in his obedience and love for God, in spite of all the mistakes and the terrible things that David did in his life. How would you like to be David and have your heinous sins recorded in the Bible for all to read throughout the generations of modern humanity? He was an adulterer and a murderer. That's what David was, yet he was repentant. He had a fear for God, even though he fought his human nature all of his life. David was teachable. David was not seeking to justify himself. He responded, and God forgave him; and He still blessed him and called him a man after His own heart. These were the things that caused God to make this special covenant with David. What was the covenant?

Go and tell my servant David, Thus saith the [Eternal], . . . [Then, skip down to verse 12.] And when thy days be fulfilled [Here's the promise.], 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.

Who are we talking about? There's great debate over this because many want to say that this is referring prophetically down the line to the arrival of Christ as a descendant of David. No, it's not. Let's pay very careful attention here. Verse 13:

He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity . . .

Now, wait a minute, how could this apply to Jesus Christ? We're talking about a provision of the covenant that God made with David concerning what would happen if his descendant committed iniquity. This cannot apply to Jesus Christ at all; Jesus Christ was perfect. No, we're talking about someone human. Who are we speaking of? We're speaking of David's son Solomon. Who was it that built a house for God? God prevented David from building the house. David put together the plans and all of the material for it, but God prevented him from building the temple. Solomon was the one who built the house of God.

. . . I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee.

What is God saying in this covenant? Saul was disobedient and rebelled against God. Because of that, God ultimately stripped him of his throne, and He stripped him of the ability to have one of his own sons be the successor to that throne. He ended Saul's dynasty, or the opportunity for Saul to have a dynasty over Israel, because Saul disobeyed and sinned. What is God doing with David in this special covenant? He's saying, in so many words, that no matter how bad your descendants might be, no matter how they might break My laws, no matter how much idolatry they might turn to, I am still going to continue the throne through your sons. What a promise that is. What an incredible covenant promise that God made and to which He bound Himself inexorably because of David's faithfulness.

How important, brethren, is the example of even one faithful individual? Do you see how much God has highlighted that, even within the Bible—in these Holy Scriptures? We have the example of Abraham and how incredibly unusual it was for someone to have so much faith that he was willing to sacrifice his own son. The majority of human beings would never be willing to do it. And also how unlikely and unusual was David who was willing to obey God and put Him first. In spite of all the heinous mistakes and crimes he committed, he always turned back to God, repented and asked for forgiveness. How unusual a man was David and was Abraham—these two

men with whom God made these special covenants and bound Himself inexorably. No matter what their descendants would do, God said, "I'm still going to fulfill this promise." So all of the sons of David became the beneficiaries of these promises. God said, "Even if I chasten them, I'm not going to destroy them." He promised that He was not going to remove those sons of David from the throne—that there would be one, and only one, dynasty of David. And so it was all the way down.

As we'll see later on—I don't want to get ahead of the story—there were nine different dynasties, different families, that ruled over the northern tribes of Israel, because they never were faithful. God never made a promise that one family would continue to reign, but to David He promised that one of his sons would always be on that throne, no matter how good or how evil they were individually. There were some evil kings that were sons of David who deserved nothing but death, yet God fulfilled His promise to David in this covenant. That's how important the example of a faithful servant like David was and how God highlighted it by making such a special covenant. Verse 14 again:

I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.

What do we read within this covenant? ". . . thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever." The "house" was the lineage of David—a physical descendant of David was promised to be on that throne and to continue in perpetuity, without end. The kingdom was going to continue uninterrupted without end. The throne was going to continue uninterrupted, in perpetuity, without end. Those three factors are all a part of this Davidic covenant that God made with His faithful servant. It is the linchpin of all that we're going to go through as we see the extent to which God fulfilled the promises. It becomes very important for us because, as we've already read, the fundamental number sixteen that Mr. Armstrong wrote applies it to the modern day, and says that we are actually living as the descendants of that house of Israel in the flesh. The Birthright promises are being fulfilled in the United States, Great Britain and the democracies of Northwestern Europe. It all plays an incredible part in filling out the details of the story.

The promise concerning Solomon, David's son, had to be fulfilled. Keep it in mind. It was not a promise of Christ. This was not a foreshadowing of Jesus Christ at all; this was a foreshadowing of a physical descendant of kings, a dynasty of the descendants of David. The covenant was unconditional whether David's descendants were faithful or not. Saul's dynasty ended because of his disobedience, but David's dynasty would never end. That's the importance of this covenant.

Turn with me to 2 Chronicles 13:4. Here is further confirmation of that covenant promise.

And Abijah stood up upon mount Zemaraim, which is in mount Ephraim, and said, Hear me, thou Jeroboam, and all Israel; Ought ye not to know that the Lord God of Israel gave the kingdom over Israel to David for ever, even to him and to his sons [It doesn't say "son," like that one seed, Christ. No, "sons."] by a covenant of salt?

What does that mean, "a covenant of salt"? It means a perpetual covenant, a covenant that could not be broken. It was not conditional in any way. There is no disobedience on the part of the descendants of David that could cause God to break His covenant to maintain that dynasty.

Psalm 89:3:

I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations.

How long was that throne of David going to last? To all generations. It was going to be unending. Verse 28:

My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him. His seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven.

Keep in mind what is being said about this throne. It was going to endure forever.

. . . his throne as the days of heaven. If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments [which is exactly what they did]; If they break

my statutes, and keep not my commandments; Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes.

Oh, yes, He was going to make them pay some incredible prices, and certainly they did with captivity and being conquered by other pagan nations. They suffered, yet God never allowed them to be obliterated, as we're going to see.

Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break [So said God.], nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.

That's a pretty strong statement from the Eternal God who rules heaven and earth. To bind Himself in a vow in such a covenant was pretty awesome and incredible.

My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me.

Think about that.

. . . his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven.

How permanent do you think that covenant promise was, that the descendants of David would continue and that the throne that David sat upon would continue? Whose throne was it? It was God's throne on earth. God was the first One who held that throne as the first King of Israel. Then it was given temporarily to Saul. Saul failed, and God installed David upon that throne. That throne is a perpetual throne, and as we're going to see, the day is coming when Jesus Christ is going to sit on that very throne.

Jesus Christ was the first One to sit on that throne over Israel, because He was the God of the Old Testament who led Israel out of Egypt and made them into that holy nation. It was that Being—the invisible God who led them, God of the second part who became Jesus Christ—who was the first King upon that throne. Ultimately, that throne is going to be given back to Him again at His Second Coming, as we're going to see.

That throne must be perpetual. Now, how can a throne be perpetual if it ever ceases to have someone sit upon it? People will try and tell you that there is no king of Israel right now. We understand that the Bible shows that David's dynasty lasted through King Zedekiah. King Zedekiah was the one on the throne of Judah at the time of the Babylonian captivity in 585 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar, as the king of Babylon, came in and took Judah and Zedekiah captive. He actually put Zedekiah's eyes out, threw him in a dungeon in Babylon, and killed all of his sons. Nebuchadnezzar did his best to try and end the dynasty of David. That is the last king of Judah listed in the Bible. The question is, did God lie? Was there really a fulfillment of the covenant promise to David that there would be a continuation of that throne, meaning that someone would be sitting on that very throne—a descendant of David—forever, in perpetuity? Even as the sun shines, we just read. How does the sun shine? Does it shine for awhile, and then it takes a rest and it goes dark? It's still the sun, but it's not shining; and then it turns back on again when something happens. No, the sun shines, and it continues to shine. That's how God compared it, even as we saw. "His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me." And the moon continues to be up there, doing its work—even as God placed it within the heavens.

That's how that covenant promise was made. The analogy that God gave meant that, from that time forward, there would be a descendant of David sitting upon the throne. The only question is, how was that fulfilled after King Zedekiah, if God didn't lie? From the time of King Zedekiah, there has not been a physical king over Judah that we know of, or none that the Bible shows. Did God lie, or is there another way, in fact, that He absolutely did fulfill that very promise? He certainly did. Those are the things that we're going to see as we continue with this story and with this study.

Jesus Christ will not return to a nonexistent throne. He is going to sit upon the very throne of David when He returns as King of Kings and Lord of Lords and takes possession of the earth. He's not returning to a nonexistent throne that has been vacant for all of these thousands of years. He is actually going to take possession of a throne on which someone will be sitting when He becomes that King.

Let's notice Luke 1:31. Yes, Christ is a descendant of David. He is ultimately going to be the final King who will sit upon that very throne and fulfill the promise that there will be in perpetuity, forever and ever, a descendant of David upon that throne.

And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David.

You bet Christ is going to sit on the throne of David.

. . . the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever [Jacob whose name was changed to Israel]; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

God is going to fulfill His promise. Many have tried to say that there is an interruption for the time being, from the time of Zedekiah until now. There has been no throne and no one sitting on that throne, yet Jesus Christ is going to fulfill that. Well, many actually say that Christ fulfilled that when He came in the flesh and did His ministry on this earth, but did Jesus Christ come as a King? Did Jesus Christ come in the first century to take possession of His throne? No, He did not. Christ never sat on a throne when He came. He did not fulfill this promise. That's going to be fulfilled at His Second Coming when He comes as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Remember those examples when His disciples wanted Him to fight? He said His Kingdom was not of this world. For if His Kingdom were of this world, then His servants would fight; but the time was not yet. Christ was not coming at that time to take possession of this throne, the throne of David. That is yet to be fulfilled in the future at His Second Coming.

Has God fulfilled His covenant promise to David, and if so, how? First, Jesus Christ was both the root and the offspring of David. Oh, yes, He is worthy. Revelation 22:16 says:

I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.

Jesus Christ is the root, meaning He is the originator of that throne. This Being who became Jesus Christ was first to possess that throne when He was King over Israel, even in the wilderness, even at Mount Sinai. David inherited that throne by God's decree, but Christ—physically being born as a descendant of David—is yet going to possess that throne. So He is both the root and the offspring of David, and He is worthy

to sit on that throne. The throne began as God's, was transferred to David, and will return again to God in Jesus Christ. It will remain a perpetual throne.

Notice with me now Jeremiah 33:14:

Behold, the days come, saith the [Eternal], that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and to the house of Judah.

God has not forgotten His promises; He has not forgotten those covenants that He made with the patriarchs, and He is going to fulfill them. Verse 15: "In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David . . ." What are we speaking of? This is a prophecy of the return of Jesus Christ yet to occur in the future. He is that Branch of righteousness.

In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David [Yes, He is a descendant of David from His physical birth.]; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The [Eternal] our righteousness. [That's going to be the King.] For thus saith the [Eternal]; David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel.

That's part of that covenant promise. Keep something else in mind. Who was this descendant of David going to reign over in perpetuity, Judah or the house of Israel? What's the difference between Judah—the Jews—and that which is called the house of Israel? Keep it in mind because, hopefully, we're going to get through that this afternoon as well. Notice that the covenant promise was that the descendants of David would be on that throne, but did He say that the throne of David would always rule over Judah? Here, the promise is expanded and says, "David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel." Who is this house of Israel? We're going to find out that it's not Judah at all. That throne was going to be perpetual, but it wasn't always going to rule over the Jews. That, brethren, is the missing piece of the puzzle that most human beings today do not understand. They're looking for the fulfillment in that little country called Israel over there in Palestine on the Mediterranean Sea. That nation is not the house of Israel at all; that is the house of Judah, which is something very different. We're going to see that in a moment. Just keep these pieces in mind as we go through it. Verse 18:

Neither shall the priests the Levites want a man before me to offer burnt offerings, and to kindle meat offerings, and to do sacrifice continually.

Is this saying that the sacrifices would continue to be done through all perpetuity? No, it's saying, "Neither shall the priests the Levites want a man before me . . ." It's saying that the descendants of the Levites, who were the only ones authorized to be the priests in that nation, were also going to continue. The line of Levi was not going to be stomped out at any time in history. The sacrifices themselves didn't continue. Obviously, those sacrifices stopped at the destruction of the temple, yet it said that the descendants of Levi were also going to continue and come down through time. Verse 19:

And the word of the [Eternal] came unto Jeremiah, saying, Thus saith the [Eternal]; If ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season; Then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne . . .

Is there any way that God can make that more convincing about how serious He is about His promise? He says that the only way it's ever possible that there not be a descendant of David in the flesh on that perpetual throne is if you can stop day and night. If we're still having the sun come up and set, and nightfall and morning come again, then you can believe that there is still the fulfillment of God's promise of the continuation of that throne of David today and that a descendant of David is sitting upon that throne, even at this very moment. Do we believe that, or are we like Thomas Paine and other men who doubt and decide that there is nothing to it and that it's all a fable? That, we will see.

Verse 24: "Considerest thou not what this people have spoken . . ." What are we getting ready to read? We're getting ready to read what the people said, the naysayers who don't think that God is serious, capable or honest in fulfilling His covenant promise. This is what the naysayers, the people, say.

Considerest thou not what this people have spoken, saying, The two families which the [Eternal] hath chosen, he hath even cast them off?

Someone is saying that God broke His promise. Who were these two families? The house of Israel and the house of Judah. We're getting ready to see how those two separate houses in Israel came to be.

. . . The two families which the [Eternal] hath chosen, he hath even cast them off? thus they have despised my people, that they should be no more a nation before them.

The others look at all that God allowed to happen to the descendants of Israel—their persecution, their being conquered by other peoples—and they decide, "There is no power in this God whom they serve. Look, their God has abandoned them and allowed us to have our way with them and to destroy them and take them as slaves." They lose confidence and respect for God, and they lose respect for the people. They decide that there is nothing to any of God's promises at all. But notice verse 25:

"Thus saith the [Eternal] . . ." Here is a rebuttal. We read in verse 24 what these naysayers, these doubters, say about the people of God because of the penalties that they've paid in the flesh, but now here is what God says in rebuttal.

Thus saith the [Eternal]; If my covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth; Then will I cast away the seed of Jacob and David my servant, so that I will not take any of his seed to be rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: for I will cause their captivity to return, and have mercy on them.

He's saying, "Don't be so quick to judge" because of the way He allowed His people to be scattered and persecuted because of their sins. Don't think that He has cast away His love for Israel, His holy nation that He raised up and formed. No, He's saying, "I have not broken My covenant. If you still see the sun rising and setting, day and night, and years going by," then we can have absolute confidence that God has also continued to fulfill His promise to David.

The promise is that this perpetual throne will be ruling over the house of Israel, not the house of Judah. That's the mistake that most make. They saw the end of the Judah line with Zedekiah, and from that time forward there was no king ruling over Judah; and so everyone thought that was the end of the throne of David. Not so. Most who want to uphold their confidence in God and the veracity of the Bible will say, "Well, see, Jesus Christ fulfilled that when He came in the first century A.D." Even if

that were true—and it's not true, because we've already gone through and shown that Christ did not take possession of a throne then. He hasn't even taken possession of it yet and will not until His Second Coming. But even if we accepted this argument that Christ took possession of the throne when He came in the flesh in the first century, who was on the throne perpetually from the time of Zedekiah until the first century A.D.? You see, there is still a big hole there. You did not have a king over Judah during all of those centuries. So how did God fulfill His covenant promise?

The answer is, don't look for that king—that descendant of David—to have ruled over the house of Judah from Zedekiah forward. The promise and the covenant was not that the king would also continue to rule specifically over Judah, but instead, that he would rule over the people of Israel—and even specifically, in this confirmation in Jeremiah, over the house of Israel, which was totally separate from the house of Judah, as we will see. The kings will be of David and Solomon, so the lineage is going to be Judah. The kings are going to be Jewish because that's the promise—it has to be a son of David, and he was of Judah. But the kingdom over which they would reign perpetually would be over the lost house of Israel, the northern ten tribes. Now let's look at the history of those two nations. How did one nation, Israel, end up turning into two separate nations in a divided state?

Let's begin in 1 Kings 11:11:

Wherefore the [Eternal] said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant.

Why did the division happen within Israel? Because of Solomon's sin. Solomon was not faithful as was his father David. Solomon did not turn out to be a man after God's own heart like David, his father, was. Solomon started out very well. Solomon accomplished all kinds of magnificent things. He received the special blessings of wisdom, advancement and riches; and he expanded the kingdom of Israel to its height during his reign, but somehow Solomon went wrong. He got caught up and full of himself. He took all of these pagan wives out of other nations. They turned his heart away from God, and he became an idol worshiper.

"Notwithstanding in thy days I will not do it for David thy father's sake . . ." He had so much respect for the example of David, even though Solomon had turned so

pagan. He still had honor for David and said He would not rend that kingdom from Solomon in his own day. He would wait until Solomon was dead. Now that is a testament to His love and respect for the example of David. It's incredible.

Notwithstanding in thy days I will not do it for David thy father's sake: but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son. Howbeit I will not rend away all the kingdom . . .

Why? Because He had made a covenant promise to David that there would be one of his descendants perpetually sitting on that throne. So He couldn't take the whole thing away from Solomon. "Howbeit I will not rend away all the kingdom; but will give one tribe to thy son for David my servant's sake . . ." Not because Solomon deserved it. Not because Solomon was deserving of anything in the end. But in recognition of the faithfulness of David, God was going to save even one tribe ". . . to thy son for David my servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake which I have chosen"—to fulfill His covenant. God would have broken His covenant had He done anything else, and He wasn't going to do that.

God fulfilled His covenant with David by giving one tribe, Benjamin, to Judah. Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, preserved his own tribe, Judah, of which he was a member; and God gave one additional tribe, which was Benjamin. So you really had two land-bearing tribes who were a part of that which became the house of Judah.

Also, as we'll see later, a great number—if not the majority—of the tribe of Levi was added to that house of Judah. So you really ended up with three tribes who made up that which later became known by the one name, the house of Judah. There was the one tribe, Benjamin, who aligned themselves with Judah after the revolt, and the Levites. But the Levites didn't have land. When Israel came in and settled Palestine, the Promised Land, God gave territory, like states, within the nation—the same way we have states within the United States, or provinces in Canada. Within Israel were twelve states according to the twelve tribes of Israel. Remember, I think I went through this last time, but it's one of those common questions that is asked. How do we have twelve tribes of Israel, but ten tribes break away and become part of the house of Israel, yet we still have three tribes left that are a part of Judah? That adds up to thirteen, not twelve.

The answer, if you remember, is that when Israel, Jacob, adopted the two sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh, and made them his direct heirs, all of a sudden instead of twelve, you had thirteen. From that time forward, when Israel adopted Ephraim and

Manasseh, you had thirteen and not twelve because Ephraim and Manasseh shared equally in the inheritance, just like the other sons of Jacob. It was a double portion for Joseph. So you really have thirteen parts. But when the Israelites came into the land and possessed it, how many parts were there? How many states? Twelve. Why? Because Levi wasn't given land. Levi was divided out as the priestly line and as those who were serving in the Tabernacle. The Levitical priesthood, then, was given cities within all twelve of the territories of Israel. They didn't have their own property; they didn't have their own states like all of the other tribes did. That's how you still ended up with twelve parts, geographically, but remember that Ephraim and Manasseh each had one of those states. That's how Joseph had a double portion within the land. Then, you had the other ten tribes who were the other sons of Jacob, and the Levites dispersed among them all.

Judah in the south, including Jerusalem, and Benjamin's inheritance were adjacent to each other, so there were political ties—an affinity for one another—because of the relationship between Benjamin and Judah. At the time of the division of the two houses of Israel and Judah, there were a lot of reasons why Benjamin, as well as many of the Levites, aligned with Judah and became known under the term "the house of Judah." But because the Levites never had property, they're not mentioned here. Many of these references to Judah only receiving one tribe are speaking of property and territorial control of those tribes. Because Levi didn't have an inheritance of land, they're not mentioned; yet many other passages show that they certainly were aligned and that a number of the Levites became a part of the nation that was later called the house of Judah.

Let's see how that division occurred. God fulfilled His covenant with David by giving one tribe, Benjamin, to Judah and then many of the Levites also aligned with that house as well. The rest of the entire kingdom was given to a man named Jeroboam. God gave it to a man who, as we're going to find out, was not of Judah at all; he was an Ephraimite. Let's notice, continuing now in verse 31:

And he said to Jeroboam, Take thee ten pieces: for thus saith the [Eternal], the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee.

God is the One who determined to do this. Why? Because of the sins of Solomon. He didn't do it while Solomon was still alive; but as soon as Solomon died,

Solomon's son, Rehoboam, automatically became the new king of Israel. But God was going to fulfill His promise that He was going to take that kingdom out of the hand of Rehoboam because of Solomon's sins.

(But he shall have one tribe for my servant David's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel:) Because that they have forsaken me, and have worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the children of Ammon, and have not walked in my ways, to do that which is right in mine eyes, and to keep my statutes and my judgments, as did David his father. Howbeit I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand: but I will make him prince all the days of his life for David my servant's sake, whom I chose, because he kept my commandments and my statutes: But I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand, and will give it unto thee, even ten tribes.

Here was a prophecy that God gave to Jeroboam through a prophet, and said, "I'm going to take ten tribes and give them to you. You're going to be the king of Israel."

And unto his son will I give one tribe, that David my servant may have a light alway before me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen me to put my name there. And I will take thee, and thou shalt reign according to all that thy soul desireth, and shalt be king over Israel.

Who was going to be the new king of the nation of Israel? Was it going to be Jeroboam, or was it going to be Rehoboam, the son of Solomon? It was going to be Jeroboam. Keep these terms in mind; it's important. Who is Israel? Again, we have this country over in the Middle East called Israel. It's not Israel. Yes, the Jews are part of Israel, but they are not all of Israel; they're only one tribe. The makeup of that which is called the Jews today, is really based upon the descendants of only three of the tribes: Judah, Benjamin, and Levi. They don't even have all of the Levites by any stretch. Not at all. And probably not all of the Benjamites either. The Jews are spread all over the world, so you certainly do not have the fulfillment of a cohesive nation representing all of the descendants of these Israelites. Not at all. Where are the rest of them? That, we're going to see.

Who was the new king of Israel? Jeroboam who was an Ephraimite. We won't turn to it, but 1 Kings 11:26 tells you he was an Ephraimite. He was not of Judah. He

was not a descendant of David, but now Jeroboam is the new king of Israel, not the king of Judah. Israel rejected its king, who was Rehoboam, and installed Jeroboam. We're going to read this in a moment in 1 Kings 12:19, but let me give you the preface so you understand what happened. How did God bring about this division of the kingdom as a result of Solomon's sin? Well, through Rehoboam's own lack of wisdom. Solomon had taxed the people incredibly for the sake of building many of his magnificent palaces and structures and expanding that kingdom to its greatest height. The people were suffering under that taxation, even as God said would happen as a curse. Now that Solomon is dead and Rehoboam, as Solomon's son, takes the throne, the people of all of those northern tribes come to Rehoboam and appeal to him to relieve the level of taxation. Rehoboam ultimately listens to his young inexperienced advisors rather than the wise elders within his court, and decides to take a heavy hand with them. Basically, he says, "You think my father was hard on you; you haven't seen nothing yet. I'm going to tax you even more, and you're going to live with it."

What happened? Basically, the nation revolted. They said, "Sorry, that's not going to happen, and you're not going to be our king anymore." They basically threw Rehoboam out from being king of Israel, and they installed Jeroboam instead. It was a rash act, yet it was all according to God's will because God is the One who prophesied years before that He was going to install Jeroboam as the king of Israel. The very act of the people in this rebellion was a fulfillment of God's will.

Notice 1 Kings 12:19:

So Israel rebelled against the house of David unto this day. And it came to pass, when all Israel heard that Jeroboam was come again, that they sent and called him unto the congregation, and made him king over all Israel . . .

How much of the nation was Jeroboam king over? All Israel. He was the king of Israel.

. . . there was none that followed the house of David, but the tribe of Judah only. [As we're going to see, Benjamin ultimately made the decision to align with Judah as well.] And when Rehoboam was come to Jerusalem, he assembled all the house of Judah . . .

Now here's one of the first places we see the reference to the term "house of Judah."

. . . the house of Judah, with the tribe of Benjamin, an hundred and fourscore thousand chosen men, which were warriors, to fight against the house of Israel . . .

Who were these men of Judah and Benjamin going to fight against? Against Israel.

. . . to bring the kingdom again to Rehoboam the son of Solomon. But the word of God came unto Shemaiah the man of God, saying, Speak unto Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, king of Judah . . .

How does God call Rehoboam at this point? Is He still calling Rehoboam the king of Israel? Rehoboam is no longer the king of Israel. From this point forward, Rehoboam is the king of a different nation—a new nation—called Judah and the house of Judah because Jeroboam is now the official king of the nation of Israel.

Speak unto Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and unto all the house of Judah and Benjamin, and to the remnant of the people, saying, Thus saith the [Eternal], Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel: return every man to his house; for this thing is from me.

He told Rehoboam, "No, don't call them treasonous; don't try and take revenge. This is from me. Live with it." Why didn't Rehoboam's kingdom keep the name of Israel? Basically, the entire nation revolted, and there were only two tribes—plus later some of the Levites—who remained faithful to Rehoboam. But this was not a case where the northern ten tribes seceded from the nation of Israel, set up their own nation and called themselves something else. No, this was like those coups that happen in other countries in modern times, where the people in the nation throw out their leaders and install new leaders.

This just happened in Argentina. That's still the nation of Argentina, isn't it? They didn't secede and break away, start a new nation and call it by a new name. No, it's still Argentina; they just threw out the president and that government, and installed new ones. They keep changing them about every two or three weeks at this point. This is what happened to the Israelites. The Israelites, as an entire nation, threw out Rehoboam, and they installed Jeroboam as the new king of the nation of Israel. What happened next? Rehoboam, the Jews, and the Benjamites said, "We're not going to go

along with this." In essence, they separated themselves, and they're the ones who started a new nation called the house of Judah. From that time forward, Rehoboam became known not as the king of Israel, but the king of Judah.

Why is that important? Because, as we will see, there are those who are trying to say, and have always tried to claim, that Israel stayed together and that the lost ten tribes never were lost. They went into captivity, but they came back when the Jews came back from captivity; and so you had a representation of all thirteen tribes within the exiles that came back with Ezra and Nehemiah. They would have you to believe that all those that are called Jews, represent all twelve of the tribes of Israel and are represented in the Middle East right now in Palestine. It's just not true.

The house of Israel was not under the king of Judah from that time forward. The descendants of David, from that time forward, were not ruling over the house of Israel. They were ruling over the house of Judah. That throne of David, according to the covenant promise, continued not over the house of Israel, but over the house of Judah. It continued over the house of Judah until when? Until the Babylonian captivity in 585 B.C. when Nebuchadnezzar invaded and took them all across the Euphrates. That was the last king over Judah.

What happened to the kingdom from that time forward? We know and we believe that God did not break His promise that there would always be a descendant ruling over the people of Israel. The thing we know, though, is that there wasn't a king from that time forward ruling over the Jews. So, if God fulfilled His promise, there still must have been a king of the line of David ruling over Israelites somewhere else besides over the house of Judah. That's the point we want to get to.

The nation of Israel was now ruled by the Ephraim-Manasseh tribes who were the inheritors of the Birthright. Remember that from Genesis 48? Very quickly, Genesis 48:15:

And he blessed Joseph [Jacob, on his deathbed, gave this special blessing to the sons of Joseph.], and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads [Who? Ephraim and Manasseh.]; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.

Who was going to grow into a great nation? The descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh who were given the Birthright promises and adopted by Jacob as sons of Israel. Now, for the first time, we have Jeroboam, an Ephraimite, who is king of the nation of Israel—separate from this new nation that was created, the nation of Judah, which preserved Rehoboam, the line of David, over that house of Judah.

All Jews are Israelites, but not all Israelites are Jews. That's the way Mr. Armstrong used to put it; the same way he would say that all Californians are Americans, but not all Americans are Californians. That's the piece that most people and most churches today absolutely reject because they want to make "Jew" and "Israelite" synonymous, and they're not. Jews are one tribe of the nation of Israel, but not all Israelites are Jews. Not at all. The first time that the word "Jew" is even used in the Bible is in 2 Kings 16:5. Let's look at that very quickly. "Jew" is a nickname for Judah. It refers to someone who came from the tribe of Judah or was part of the house of Judah, which included Judah, Benjamin, and the Levites.

2 Kings 16:5:

"Then Rezin king of Syria and Pekah son of Remaliah king of Israel . . ." What do we have here? We have a king of Israel, and his name is Pekah. He has created a military alliance with the king of Syria, and they're going to do something together. What are they going to do? They're going to go fight against the king of Judah. Let's notice it:

Then Rezin king of Syria and Pekah son of Remaliah king of Israel came up to Jerusalem to war: and they besieged Ahaz [Who was Ahaz? He was the king of Judah at the time.], but could not overcome him. At that time Rezin king of Syria recovered Elath to Syria, and drove the Jews from Elath [the first time that the term "Jew" is used in the Bible]: and the Syrians came to Elath, and dwelt there unto this day.

What significance does this have? This very text refutes the idea that Israel and the term "Israelite" are synonymous with the Jews. Why? The first time the word "Jew" is used has to do with when the Jews are fighting against who? The Israelites. They're fighting against the king of Israel. How could "Jew" be the same as Israel when the first time it's used is when they're fighting the king of Israel? You see, it doesn't make any sense. The house of Judah was not known as Israel from that time forward.

Whenever the name "Israel," "house of Israel," "Samaria," or "Ephraim" is used, it never refers to the Jews exclusively. Now, many times, the use of the term "Israel" in the Old Testament, or even in the New Testament, certainly includes the Jews. There are references in the New Testament where they appeal to "you men of Israel," and they were talking to the Jews at that time. Yes, Jews are Israelites, but they are only one tribe of those that are Israel and they are not synonymous with all of the house of Israel.

Why Samaria? Samaria was the new capital of the nation of Israel. When Jeroboam took those ten tribes, he set up his capital in Samaria. So, in all of these prophecies that you see through Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah, and all the minor prophets, very often the key to understanding who God is addressing when He is pronouncing blessings and curses, is to understand the difference between the house of Judah and the house of Israel. When you see "Israel," "house of Israel," "Samaria," and "Ephraim" used, it's referring to the ten tribes—that northern kingdom—after the separation of the two nations. Just keep in mind also, neither Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, or Moses were Jews. Remember, Judah was just one son of Jacob. Moses wasn't a Jew. Jacob wasn't a Jew. Judah was his son, so obviously, Abraham and Isaac were not Jews. Only those who are racially of Judah or who later attached themselves nationally to Judah, became known under the term "Jew" or "house of Judah."

Israel, that northern kingdom under Jeroboam, ultimately rejected God's rule. We won't take time to look at it, but you can read for yourself 1 Kings 12:26–33, and see how Jeroboam immediately rebelled against God. Remember, God had given him this promise, "Now, I'm going to make you king over Israel; and if you obey me, I'm going to bless you and take care of you." And immediately, as soon as he became king, Jeroboam set up Baal worship, the calves, in Bethel and Dan. He changed the Feast of Tabernacles to the 15th of the eighth month instead of the seventh month, and had his people keep it in their own pagan cities rather than going to Jerusalem. No, he didn't want his nation going down into Rehoboam's jurisdiction in Jerusalem. He was afraid that the people might leave and reassociate themselves with Judah. He didn't trust that God had given him that throne and that he was going to be able to hold onto it as long as he was faithful. No, he took things into his own hands and rebelled against God immediately.

Brethren, through nine dynasties in the house of Israel, under nineteen different kings, Israel never was faithful to God. They were an idolatrous, rebellious state from the beginning, and there was never a faithful king in Israel. There were faithful kings in Judah; there were also a lot of unfaithful kings in Judah. But there was not a single

faithful king of Israel, including Jeroboam, all the way through. What was the penalty that God pronounced for Jeroboam's rebellion and this pagan idol worship that he set up?

1 Kings 14:15:

"For the [Eternal] shall smite Israel . . ." Who? We're not speaking of Judah now. Who does Israel refer to? The nation of Israel. This is not a synonymous term covering both houses. He's speaking about Jeroboam's rebellion.

For the [Eternal] shall smite Israel, as a reed is shaken in the water, and he shall root up Israel out of this good land, which he gave to their fathers, and shall scatter them beyond the river, because they have made their groves, provoking the [Eternal] to anger. And he shall give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam, who did sin, and who made Israel to sin.

We're speaking about Jeroboam's sin. That didn't apply to the house of Judah. God fulfilled His promise and removed the house of Israel completely out of the land—those who made up the northern ten tribes. Because of their rebelliousness for all of those years, God pleaded with them, and He sent His servants, His prophets, to try and get them to change, and they never did change. Finally, He used the Assyrians to come and take them captive. The Assyrians took them completely out of the land and left not a single one of them.

Judah didn't go into captivity until 120 years after that. They at least had some faithful kings along the way who brought the house of Judah back into obedience to God—at least to a certain extent. And so God was more merciful to them, as He even told David that He was going to be. Ultimately, they were just as bad, and even worse, than the northern kingdom of Israel. So God took them into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians. But 120 years before that captivity, Israel, the northern kingdom, had already been taken completely out of the land; and instead, the king of Assyria had settled other pagan peoples—who were not Israelites at all—in that territory.

Notice 2 Kings 17:16:

And they left all the commandments of the [Eternal] their God, and made them molten images, even two calves, and made a grove, and worshipped

all the host of heaven, and served Baal. And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire [They were practicing human sacrifice.], and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the [Eternal], to provoke him to anger. Therefore the [Eternal] was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight: there was none left but the tribe of Judah only.

You see, it was the tribe of Judah who was left—and actually referring here to the house of Judah—which included those who had attached themselves to Judah: Benjamin and Levi. Jeroboam had set up his own priests of the lowest of the people in his Baal worship of the calves in Bethel and Dan. They were not Levites, so Jeroboam didn't use the Levitical priesthood at all. Obviously, that's the reason why many of the Levites fled from Jeroboam's kingdom and went with Rehoboam in the south, with Judah, because Jeroboam set up his own priesthood of other tribes. Verse 21:

For he rent Israel from the house of David; and they made Jeroboam the son of Nebat king: and Jeroboam drave Israel from following the [Eternal], and made them sin a great sin. For the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they departed not from them; Until the [Eternal] removed Israel out of his sight, as he had said by all his servants the prophets. So was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day. And the king of Assyria brought men from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from Ava, and from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel . . .

The Israelites were taken out root and branch, and they didn't come back. Other pagans were settled by the king of Assyria in their place, in the territory of those northern ten tribes. ". . . and they possessed Samaria, and dwelt in the cities thereof." This is not referring to the whole house of Israel. Judah, as we already mentioned, stayed for another 120 years in their own land, in their territory, before they were taken captive by the Babylonians. It was the house of Judah that returned from the exile 70 years later under Zerubbabel, and then Ezra and Nehemiah. But those northern ten tribes never came back to Palestine. They disappeared from sight, and they were lost. That's how they became known as the lost ten tribes. Those that now are called the Jews are the descendants of those who came back out of Babylon. Many of them didn't come back, but those who we call the Jews today are of that house which came back under Ezra and Nehemiah. But the lost ten tribes never returned. Where did they go?

The house of Israel lost its name, its language, and its identity; yet it was still promised to carry the Birthright promises of great national wealth. Remember, it was Ephraim and Manasseh who had the Birthright promises, and they were part of the tribes that were totally lost. Where did they go, and how has God fulfilled His covenant promises that those descendants would be great in national wealth? How do we solve the problem of the descendants of David who were to continue perpetually upon that throne, even to hand it over to Christ at His return? That's what we're going to begin to see next time, brethren. We're going to look at a fascinating story—Jeremiah's commission and something called "the mysterious breach." Next time.