

A LIGHT TO THE GENTILES

Study #2 – “The Rechabites and their Pioneers' Steadfastness to the End of the Age”

Reading: Jeremiah 35

Speaker: Bro. Jim Cowie

Bro. chairman and my dear brethren and sisters in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We began this afternoon, by making reference to Isaiah 49 and verse 6, but that passage isn't the only place where the phrase, 'A light to the Gentiles' is to be found in the servant prophecies of Isaiah. There is another, and most of you are aware that it is to be found in the 42nd chapter of Isaiah, where we shall begin this evening, to consider the question of the Rechabites.

Now you might say to me, what relationship is there between Isaiah 42 and the Rechabites of Jeremiah 35? Well, that's the purpose of the next 5 or 10 minutes. I want to establish in your minds that there is a very definite connection. You see, this passage Isaiah 42 and verse 6, yea, 1 to 6 is quoted by the Lord Jesus Christ in the 12th chapter of Matthew, forms the basis of a principle that He established in His dealings with the peoples of His own times, who had rejected Him as Yahweh's servant. And we're going to see how that relates to the Rechabites and their family a little later on. In Isaiah 42 and verse 1, that Yahweh calls upon us to behold His servant, 'whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him'. (What will He do, and young people?) 'He will bring forth judgment (true justice and faithfulness) to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: He shall bring forth judgment unto truth'. The word is 'emeth' in the Hebrew, it is that word that Yahweh chose to declare His faithfulness to Himself, to His Word, and to those who would believe His Word. And the Lord Jesus Christ, His faithful servant, would bring forth judgment unto truth. What for? 'He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till He have set judgment in the land ('mishpat' in the Hebrew). He shall set judgment in the land and to that land, the Gentiles will come. The nations at large, yes, will ultimately come, but , you and I, who were once Gentiles will precede them; we will go to that land first and they will follow after, but all Gentiles will come to see judgment set in the land. And the isles, Australia included, will wait for His law!

That's the context of the prophecy and it sweeps on in verse 5, to show the work of that faithful servant. 'Thus saith Yahweh El, He that created the heavens, and stretched them out; He that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; He that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein. I, Yahweh, have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and will give thee (and here's our phrase) I will give thee for a covenant of (a) people, as it should read, for a light of Gentiles (as it should read). You'll see that I've dropped out the articles before people, and Gentiles, 'I will give thee for a covenant (beriyth-the cutting of the covenant; it has reference to the crucifixion of Christ) I will give thee as a sacrifice of a people (a special people who will be drawn to you) and for a light of Gentiles.' And there Yahweh declared His purpose with both Jew and Gentile, . He demonstrated that the work of that faithful servant, was to be for all men.

So as we come then, and have a look at the way in which the Lord Jesus Christ used that passage, we're going to see that it had particular relevance to the circumstances in which He found Himself, in Matthew chapter 12. There we find in the 12th chapter of Matthew an unfolding of a drama, in which the Gentiles are to take a place. We all know that Matthew 12 begins with the dispute over the 'plucking of the ears of corn', by the Lord's disciples. And the Lord took up the challenge of the Pharisees that challenged Him and He said, 'You don't realize but there's someone in this place who is greater than that temple that you worship; and greater than the Law. You don't understand the principle 'I will have mercy and not sacrifice'. You haven't quite got that, you Pharisees. You don't realize that the Son of man is Lord of the sabbath'. And so He heals a man with a withered hand, in verses 10 to 13, deliberately in their presence on the sabbath day; He healed that man. They went out in verse 14 and took a council against Him, how they might destroy Him'. Here's the light of the Gentiles, and they were about to destroy Him, and when Jesus, verse 15, knew it, He withdrew Himself from thence: and great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them all'. That's what Isaiah

42 was all about; He would bind and heal and He would open the eyes of the blind; He will be a light for the Gentiles and it sweeps on in Isaiah to say, 'that He'd open the eyes of the blind, and release the prisoners from the prison, and give them light to see the way'.

And so He charged them, verse 16, that they should not make Him known' (because He was not accepted in Israel, but He would be accepted by the Gentiles). Hence verse 17, 'That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, (and there you have Isaiah 42 verses 1 to 4.) And twice, in verse 18 and again in verse 21, the word 'Gentiles' is prominent in that quotation, 'In His name shall the Gentiles trust'. And then we have the healing of the blind and dumb man, followed by that dreadful judgment upon those who accused Him of using the power of Beelzebub to heal. There would be no forgiveness for that sin, He said, and in the day of judgment, men would have to account for the words they spoke, in blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, which they saw openly manifested by His hands. They would have to give account of every word that they spoke against it, and the Pharisees spoke many. But then the Lord brings out His witnesses against His own people who had rejected Him, and who were taking council to destroy Him.

And so in verse 38 we read, 'That certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee' (they would believe a sign but He'd already given them two in this chapter and they didn't believe it) They wouldn't believe a sign, because they wouldn't believe a word; and it's a principle of truth that men are not motivated into the kingdom of God by signs. If signs were going to get us into the kingdom, and I mean signs exclusively, then people would not be leaving the truth! Would they? If it was signs that we need to keep us in a straight line, and to make us to do battle day by day with the three giants that are in our nature, then we couldn't get anymore than what we've been given, and people would not have given up the fight in their minds, as I know some have! It's not signs that we need to motivate us into the kingdom, it's faith! And you only get faith from the Word, and to get faith you must believe a report!

And they asked for a sign, and He said, 'An adulterous generation seeks a sign, but you'll get none but from the prophet who God sent to the Gentiles. The only prophet of the Old Testament who came from Galilee, who came from a town, Gath-hepher that was three miles from Nazareth where Jesus would have walked in the days of His youth. His name was Jonas, and when He went to the Gentiles, they responded; they saw no signs, but He says in verse 41, 'That the men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and they shall condemn it'; they shall be witnesses against you because they responded to the preaching of Jonah, and a greater than Jonah is here'. They had no signs, all they heard were words, and they responded for a time.

'The queen of the south, verse 42, shall rise up in the judgment (as a witness against this generation) because she heard the preaching of Solomon' (no signs were given) and she believed what she heard'. , what the Lord has done in this chapter is to take Isaiah 42, the servant prophecy, which He knew spoke of His work, and to show how that He would be rejected by His own people, and by necessity, would have to go to the Gentiles. He understood that, as we shall see, God willing, on Monday morning; He understood that perfectly, and He demonstrates by His use of Gentile witnesses, who He said would rise in condemnation of His own generation in the day of judgment. And you might say to me, Well, where's the connection with the Rechabites? Just hang on a moment, let's just establish this particular point, and you'll see a remarkable connection between what the Lord does here and what is done by Yahweh through the prophet Jeremiah, in Jeremiah 34 and 35.

Let's just take one more example, we could multiply these. Have a look at Luke chapter 4; I want you to look very carefully at the page of your bible as we read Luke 4. We're all familiar with it, we know that this was the time of the Lord's temptation from which He returned victorious. He came into Galilee in verse 14, in the 'power of the spirit and His fame went throughout all the region; He taught in their synagogues being glorified of all until He got to Nazareth, where He was brought up. Verse 16, 'And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up: and as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto Him a book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place (Isaiah 61 verses 1 and 2 which he quotes) The Spirit of Yahweh is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to

(look at the page, and start underlining now) to preach, (the word preach 'caruso' in the Greek means to be a herald, 'to proclaim' 'to publicly announce something'; it doesn't have quite the same connotation that we put upon 'preaching', rather a public proclamation) He would proclaim something. What would He proclaim? 'He would preach the gospel to the poor (and there were none poorer in Israel than the Rechabites as we shall see) and He hath sent Me (not to heal the broken hearted, that phrase can be crossed out because it's not there) He hath sent Me to preach deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of Yahweh.' Now, do you have the point? What the Lord was saying to the people that gathered together in the synagogue of Nazareth was that, it was no good Him doing signs, as they were about to ask Him, (and He anticipated that question), because they were not ready to believe in their heart. And men are not changed for the kingdom by signs! You can have all the signs in the world, and it won't get you into the kingdom, unless you're prepared to believe a report! And that people were not ready to believe a report.

So He goes on (look very carefully at verses 20 to 22). 'He closed the book, and He gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on Him.' (Can you imagine it? Every single eye was set upon the Lord). 'And He began to say unto them (look at these words) This day is this scripture fulfilled in your EARS' (He could have said 'eyes' couldn't He?) This scripture that I've just quoted to you about 'preaching' is fulfilled in your EARS.

Verse 22, 'And all bare Him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?' They didn't believe the words that came from His mouth, but they wondered at the power of those words; they wondered at the boldness of them; the claims that were made, and He anticipates them and said, 'Ye will surely say, Physician, heal thyself: (give us a sign, do something here in this synagogue; we've heard about your works elsewhere; do a sign here! and then we'll believe that you're not just Joseph's son but someone else's son as well! Maybe even David's son).

And He said verse 24, 'Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country. But I tell you of a truth, (who does He bring out as a witness against His own people? The people of Nazareth, who would not accept His words, who does He bring forth as a witness, ? Look at the page, verse 25) 'There were many widows in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, but unto none of them was Elijah sent, but unto a Gentile at Zarephath. There were many lepers in Israel in those times (he could have had many signs) had Elisha in the nation, that stood at his feet; no, but unto none of those was he sent, but to Naaman the Syrian'. WHY, ? did God send Elijah to Zarephath and Elisha to Naaman or vice versa? It was because they believed the report. They had heard with their ears the proclamation of the acceptable year of Yahweh, and they believed it and their lives were changed forever by that! They didn't see any signs; they heard about it! Now there was the contrast and out come the Gentile witnesses against God's own people.

Let's go back to Jeremiah 34 and 35; we've got our foundation, now we can build on it. I'll guarantee that there's not a person in this hall that hasn't heard an exhortation about Jeremiah 35 and the Rechabites! It is one of those very fruitful grounds for exhortation, and we ought to be hearing exhortations about it quite frequently. We need it in these last days! but I'll tell you something as well, I've heard exhortations and I've given them before on this particular chapter, but I didn't really know why it was there! I knew what I was saying, but not why it was there? And do you know what? if it wasn't for Jeremiah 34, it is possible, that Jeremiah 35 might never have been there! You say to me, How do you know that? Well, have a look at it!

Jeremiah 35 begins with these words, 'The word which came unto Jeremiah from Yahweh in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, saying' (then we have the story about the Rechabites). Them being offered wine and refusing, and so on. But do you know what? Jeremiah 35 is not in chronological order. It talks about the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, and if you turn back one page in your bible to the beginning of chapter 34, you read in verse 1, 'The word which came unto Jeremiah from Yahweh, when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and all his army, and all the kingdoms of the earth of his dominion, and all the people fought against Jerusalem, and against all

the cities thereof, saying', and Jeremiah goes on to talk about what was happening in Judah at that time. Now those of you who are quick of mind, or who have done some study on the times of the kings, will know that Nebuchadnezzar came in the days of Zedekiah. The proof of that is in verse 2 for instance, 'Thus saith Yahweh, the God of Israel: Go and speak to Zedekiah king of Judah (he was the last king of Judah) and he was removed in the year 586 B.C. this is a couple of years before that event. But chapter 35, was all about the days of Jehoiakim, and verse 1 is addressed to king Jehoiakim; now he reigned some 12 or 15 years before Zedekiah. So really if you're going to be strictly chronological in the placement of these chapters, you should put chapter 35 somewhere well before chapter 34. Now why has God put them that way? Why has He dismissed the chronological order, and said, well, I want to put them in this way?

Well, there's a reason for it! And as I said, if it was not for chapter 34, we might not even have chapter 35. We might never have known about the faithfulness of the Rechabites, and the exhortations might never had been given, that have been given. But it is there and it's there for a reason. Let's examine that reason. Well, what is chapter 34 all about? Let's see if we can briefly summarize it without going into great detail, although that probably will be hard! We'll take it from verse 8 of Jeremiah 34. 'This is the word that came unto Jeremiah from Yahweh, after that the king Zedekiah had made a covenant with all the people that were at Jerusalem, to proclaim liberty unto them; That every man should let his manservant, and every man his maidservant, being a Hebrew or a Hebrewess, go free; that none should serve himself of them, to wit, of a Jew his brother.' (a word of explanation thus far; you see, what was happening in Jewry at that time, is that the brotherhood had become full of oppression. There were Christadelphians of some prominence and others of less prominence, who were oppressing their brethren in the way that the Egyptians did in Egypt. They kept them in thralldom, a bondage; a bondage of sin or corruption. How did they do it? In their case the bondage was literal; they took their Hebrew brethren and they made them slaves, virtually no pay, board and lodging-that was about it. And when the seventh year came around and it was time to release that slave, they didn't do so. When the year of release, the jubilee year came around, and they were suppose to release the land as well as the slaves, they didn't do so; they held onto them as slaves.

Now it came a time in Judah, when the pressure was so great, and the Babylonians were breathing down their necks, that Zedekiah and others, began to think twice about this, and they thought to themselves, 'we better do something about correcting the abuses of the Law, which have brought these judgments upon us'. They weren't really fullsome in their desire to do that, but at least they wanted to do something, and they made a covenant, the whole nation did, under the guidance of Zedekiah, that they would release their brethren from bondage; they would not treat them as slaves, because of course, as we shall find out in a moment, Yahweh gave a commandment, 'ye shall not make a slave of your brethren'. Now let's just see if we can relate that to our times.

Is it possible at the end of an age, this was the end of an age, and we live in one too, is it possible for Christadelphians today, to be oppressing their brethren and holding them in thralldom? Well, of course, we don't have slaves today, but I'll tell you something that you know is true; it does happen today, it happens by brethren who have influence, turning their principles upside down. It happens by brethren who ought to know better; who might have a bit of money, using that money in a way that can only be a bad example to the less well off, in the ecclesia. It can happen by brethren playing politics in ecclesial life, when inevitably, the weaker brethren are damaged. It can happen by those of us who might have some standing in the eyes of others, whatever reason that might be, giving to them a bad example of behaviour. It does happen, doesn't it? And by such means, the weaker brethren, the poorer of the land, so to speak, are held in thralldom from which they cannot be released until we change our ways! UNTIL WE DECLARE A YEAR OF RELEASE, the acceptable year of Yahweh. You see how it can be done?

Well, they got together and decided to declare a year of release, and they made a covenant. Let's read on, verse 10, 'Now when all the princes, and all the people, which had entered into the covenant, heard that every one should let his manservant, and every one his maidservant, go free, that none

should serve themselves of them any more, then they obeyed, and let them go.' (Thus far so good! They were doing the right thing) 'But afterward they turned, and caused the servants and the handmaids, whom they had let go free, to return, and brought them into subjection for servants and for handmaids' (Now you know what we don't always realize this, Yahweh is absolutely faithful to His covenants. He marks through the pieces of Abraham's foreign victims, to testify that even though there was some question mark perhaps, about Abraham, because he was flesh, there could never be a question mark about Yahweh). He would be absolutely faithful to His covenants. When we make a covenant, He requires us to be just as faithful! When we cut a covenant, which it was what they were doing here, He requires us to meet our committment! and He will hold us blame worthy if we don't. They made their covenant, but afterward they turned, and put their brethren back into bondage. Now that was the issue of Jeremiah 34, let's see how it unfolds, and just if you wouldn't mind, if you can take on board amongst the wilder of words, some very pithy phrases from Jeremiah 34, and just keep them in the back of your mind. You'll need them later on! (In fact, I'm going to get you to use two hands later on, and come back to Jeremiah 34 as we look at Genesis chapter 15 again.

Let's just read on from verse 12 of this 34th chapter, 'Therefore the word of Yahweh came to Jeremiah from Yahweh, saying, Thus saith Yahweh, the God of Israel (covenant name) I made a covenant with your fathers in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondmen' (hence there was a law as I said at that time), 'At the end of seven years let ye, every man his brother a Hebrew, which have been sold unto thee; and when he had served thee 6 years, thou shalt let him go free from thee, but your fathers hearkened not unto Me, neither inclined they their ear. And ye were now turned, and had done right in my sight, in proclaiming liberty every man to his neighbour; and ye had made a covenant before Me in the house which is called by my name. But ye turned and polluted My name' (now there's something that needs to be considered) By making a covenant in the house that was called by His name, and passing between the pieces of the covenant victim, they polluted His name by turning and changing their minds. And Yahweh's name is polluted is it not, when we do the same? When people turn from the truth or turn back to their old way of life, they pollute not just themselves, but the name that they bear, and they will be held accountable for it. 'Ye turned and polluted My name, and caused every man his servant, and every man his handmaid, whom he had set at liberty at their pleasure, to return, and brought them into subjection, to be servants and handmaids. THEREFORE, (look at the words, the somber words of verse 17) 'Therefore, thus saith Yahweh, Ye have not hearkened unto Me, in proclaiming liberty, every one to his brother, and every man to his neighbour: behold, I proclaim a liberty for you (and ironically Yahweh says this) 'I proclaim a liberty for you (this sort of liberty) to the sword, to the pestilence, to the famine, and I will make you to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth' (that was the liberty to be proclaimed to them, and they will become bondmen in lands outside their own). That was their punishment and their reward!

'And I will give, verse 18, the men that have transgressed My covenant, which have not performed the words of the covenant which they had made before me, when they cut the calf in twain, and passed between the parts therof. (Now here's your connection! you notice in your bible in the AV, that when you read Genesis 15, it directs you to Jeremiah 34) We're reading Jeremiah 34 and you'll find probably, if you look carefully enough, that it may refer you to Genesis 15, and it does! because everybody can see that there's a connection with Genesis 15. No problem about that, but why is there a connection with Genesis 15? Why is it that the prophet spells it out, that they made a covenant? the word means 'to cut a covenant'. And they passed between the pieces; aren't we being told, Go back to Genesis 15! Look at that, and you'll understand what this is all about! and we shall in due time, do just that, God willing.

'And the princes of Judah, and the princes of Jerusalem, verse 19, the eunuchs, and the priests, and all the people of the land, which passed between the parts of the calf: I will even give them into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of them that seek their life'. (Look at the next words, just keep them on board) and their dead bodies shall be for meat unto the fowls of the heaven, and to the beasts of the earth'. When you cut a covenant and you divided the animals, and set them asunder side by side, you were really saying to Yahweh, 'that is me!; I am prepared to lay down my life, to fulfill

the conditions of the covenant that I make. That's me! And they passed between the pieces, and Yahweh said, 'Because you haven't fulfilled that covenant, I'll let the fowls of the heaven pluck your flesh; they will take away the pieces of that covenant victim'. Now, you've got that? just keep it in the back of your mind.

Well then, what's this got to do with Jeremiah 35? Why have we got something in Jeremiah 35 that is chronologically out of order with Jeremiah's prophecy? Well, you see Jeremiah 35 is there, for the very same reason, that the Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 12 quoted the case of the Gentiles, remember, against His own generation? And the same reason why in Luke chapter 4 in the synagogue of Nazareth He quoted the widow of Zarephath and Naaman the Syrian! against His own generation. Gentiles had what Israel lacked! The true Israel of God was to be found in Gentiles that had been 'plucked out of darkness' and brought from the prison, 'whose eyes had been opened' and unto whom Yahweh's servant was 'a light'. They were witnesses and will stand in the judgment against them; as will the Rechabites against their generation! And that's why that chapter is there; here are my weaknesses, saith Yahweh, against you! Because you have broken my covenant, because you hold your brethren in thralldom, and you lock them up in bondage which I forbade you to do; I released you from bondage and you were baptised into Moses in the Red Sea, and I commanded you not to hold your brethren in sin, but look what you're doing to them? You made a covenant before Me; you passed between the pieces; you gave witness that you would keep that covenant and then you turned from your way. I'll bring out My witnesses; here they are! You look at them, the Rechabites!

And so we read in verse 2 of Jeremiah 35, 'That Jeremiah was commanded to go unto the house of the Rechabites, and speak unto them, and bring them into the house of Yahweh, into one of the chambers, and give them wine to drink.' What's wrong with that? I've heard those words myself! What's wrong with drinking a little wine? Well, I suppose nothing in those days was wrong with drinking wine; I suppose there are those that argue the same today; , that wasn't the point of it! The point was that the Rechabites had a well known tradition, more than a tradition, they had a family law; a statute, a principle by which their family operated, and they were unique for it. And they had stood for it without ever wavering, from their faithfulness to that statute. That was the point of it; We'll say more about the wine in a moment; just hang on and we'll see what the context has got to say about, who they were, and what they said.

We read in verse 3, 'I took Jaazaniah (his name means 'heard of Jah') the son of Jeremiah (which means 'raised up of Jah' or 'whom Jah hath appointed') the son of Habaziniyah (whose name means 'the lamp of Jah'), and his brethren, and all his sons, and the whole house of the Rechabites (not just a few members; they didn't go around the ecclesia and say, well, you're the best we've got; we'll put them up as an example. He took the whole ecclesia) 'And I brought them into the house of Yahweh, into the chamber of the sons of Hanan, the son of Igdaliah, a man of God, which was by the chamber of the princes, which was above the chamber of Maaseiah the son of Shallum, the keeper of the door' (we could go into that particular matter about the connection between Shallum and Huldah the prophetess in the days of Josiah, and the school of the prophets that were there to be found, but that's apart from the subject we're dealing with, so we'll leave it).

Verse 5 says, 'I set before the sons of the house of the Rechabites pots full of wine, and cups, and I said unto them, Drink ye wine. But they said, verse 6, We will drink no wine; for Jehonadab the son of Rechab our father commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine, neither ye, nor your sons for ever'. Now there would have been many in Israel that would have said, 'Now that's an unreasonable standard; there was no reason why Jonadab the son of Rechab should have laid down a law like that; and we've got no intentions of obeying it; you can obey it if you like; if you want to keep that standard that's your problem, but don't you try to impress upon us that we should keep that standard; we know what the principles of the truth are, that's not one of them'. Well it was one of them! because you see, there was a class of people in the nation, who were never to drink wine, and you know who there were? They were the sons of Aaron, the priests of the nation, 'ye shall not drink wine', said Yahweh to them, as Aaron stood above the ashes of his two eldest sons, and their flesh

was still frying in his presence. DON'T DRINK WINE, because it befuddles your mind; now we know what wine is it's a symbol of the evil, carnal and corrupting doctrines of the Roman Catholic system, isn't it?

'The wine of Babylon', and it's at work today in the minds of people, some of whom should know better. And they had a pioneer did the Rechabites who said, (it is his words and probably in his writings) that 'they were never, ever to drink the wine of Babylon' because of what he saw it do, to Jehu, the judge of the house of Ahab. Brethren and sisters, we'll have cause to look at that particular point in a moment, but let's just extend the other one. How can we learn a lesson from the Rechabites? You know we have a faithful pioneer, not just one but a couple, and one of them, has in a sense, commanded us 'never to drink the wine of Babylon'. The wine of Babylon comes in many forms today; it comes in the garb of reasonableness; it comes in the garb of humanism, the doctrine which says that the interests of man ought to be placed, at least squarely, with those of God, and of His word. And there are those who would go to the extent of saying that the interests and desires of man would be put above the Word of God. Hence, you'll find the people of the churches today, arguing that the bible says nothing really about the terrible crimes of Sodom; and they would dismiss that as not even being part and parcel of the life of a so-called Christian. That he can allow that kind of thing to go on and not worry about it. Wink at it, why worry? They've got their rights they're human beings, if they happen to be bent that way, let them go! THAT'S THE WINE OF BABYLON, the corrupting influence of the church that has always stood for expediency; 'if you want to keep the flock, you bend to the flock! You change your rules and regulations to try and keep them in; if they won't bend, you bend to them', and you change your doctrines as you see fit, and the churches are full of that. You know it to be true and you also know, that we're not unaffected by it in the brotherhood of Christ. If you want to read the most anti-humanist book, apart from the bible, that's ever been written, read Eureka. If you want to be convinced that you should never touch the 'wine of Babylon' in whatever form it might come in, doctrinally or in practice, read Elpis Israel and Eureka. We've got a pioneer too, who laid down a commandment, 'don't drink that wine', and there are brethren today, who are saying, 'it's alright to dismiss the writings of the doctor and to toss out his interpretations on the Apocalypse, and they're not just brethren who would have no impact upon anybody else, are they? They are ones who ought to know better! And as uncomfortable as it might be for us to have to live in an brotherhood that is increasingly going that way, it's going to be a whole lot more uncomfortable if we're sucked in by it!

And here was a generation of people, right at the end of an age, who had kept faithfully the standards of their pioneers for 250 years, and we've been here since Dr. Thomas, a 140 years minus 2. We've got a 110 to go, to match the Rechabites; and if Christ was to delay, and thank God He will not, but if He was to delay can you give me a water tight guarantee, that in 110 years time, the brotherhood of Christ will still have in it, people who will insist upon the writings of the pioneers, and their interpretation of scripture and above all that, will insist upon the way of life that our pioneers lived, and their attitudes to the truth and its standards? Can you give me a guarantee, that in 110 years time, that that will be the case? I CAN'T GIVE IT, AND YOU CAN'T GIVE IT! because I know, and I've said it to brethren, 'give us 50 years, we won't get it but give us 50 years and you'll be lucky, to find someone who still stands, by what we call the 'pioneering approach to the truth'.

250 years they stood by the words of their pioneers! And they could have argued that those words weren't in the bible, in fact they were, as we know, that the bulk of what the doctor wrote, is supported by scripture. And all the nuisance that flows from certain quarters about 'doctrinal matters and other matters' is just that; it is nuisance! And though it may be in sweet sounding words it is the insidious wine of Babylon. When we lose sight of the reality of that, we've lost sight of the lesson of the Rechabites. And like those who stood with Zedekiah, 'the birds will pluck our flesh'. Brethren and sisters, that's the message of Jeremiah 35 in a nutshell; you've heard it before, haven't you? and it's not put there just to see (tape turned) Yahweh's determination, to use such a people, as a witness against His own. Have you got that? As a witness against His own, and they were not His own, in the natural sense, because they were a Gentile family.

What do they do? Let's have a look at verse 6, have a look at why, 'Ye shall drink no wine, neither ye, nor your sons forever. Neither shall ye build house, nor sow seed' (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob dwelt in tents; they looked for a city whose builder and maker was God. They that say such things have no need of a city, they look for one that is beyond the present; they live as strangers and pilgrims on the earth. They're not connected to the things that belong to this life; they might use certain things that belong to this life, but they're not connected to it; but they can't leave it) And the Rechabites never had houses, nor did they sow crops, because that would have meant that they'd have to stay in one place; they were strangers and pilgrims. , here were a people that had an Abrahamic way of life; I'm not suggesting for a moment, that we should sell our house and buy a tent; it's not what it's all about is it? It's all a question of what is up here; it's all a matter of what's in here! , they had it right up there (in their minds)

So in verse 8 they said, and they could say it without boasting, 'Thus have we obeyed the voice of Jehonadab the son of Rechab our father in all that he hath charged us, to drink no wine all our days, we, our wives, our sons, nor our daughters (are you getting this?) It wasn't just a matter of the brethren going to an AB meeting and saying, 'well, we better hang on to a certain standard; it was a question of the whole ecclesia being involved right down to the tiny tots. 'Neither we, our wives, our sons nor our daughters', how on earth do you get an entire ecclesia to keep a set of standards for 250 years? How do you do it? I've yet to belong to an ecclesia that can keep the standards for 2-1/2 years let alone 250 years. Well, you see, you can't make a step towards progress in that matter unless you have education in the home, unless it is a question of we, the brethren, the wives and the sons and the daughters, getting around the table and discussing the things that belong to the Word, being assisted by the words of their pioneers. Do you have a junior Elpis Israel class in your ecclesia? Does your ecclesia have a Senior Elpis Israel class? Do you have Elpis Israel and Eureka in your home? Do your children know those books? Do they have any concept of what's inside them? , we've got no hope in the world of hanging on to the standards of the truth, unless we cultivate the attitude of the Rechabites and get some education into our homes and our families, that it might be transferred to the ecclesia, and that is why the battle is being lost on the wider front, is it not? That is why things are so bad in places; you show me a healthy ecclesia and I'll show you book shelves that are denuded of the pioneer writings, because they're in their hands and they're reading them! You show me an unhealthy ecclesia where there are problems galore, where standards are not being held, and I'll show you a home that bears the name Christadelphian, where the bookshelves are full of the pioneer writings, but they're covered in dust. You know it's true, don't you? and not a soul in this hall would argue with that, and yet there's been some dust gathering on my Eureka in recent times, which ought to be dusted off, because I'm being affected by the wine of Babylon, and the spirit of humanism as you all are as well. , that's the lesson of the Rechabites; let's get back to the pioneers and to their way of living; let's get the education of our children into prominence in the home; let's , get the whole ecclesia centred around the things that we know to be right, then, we can have the promise that was given to the Rechabites that we shall look at later on.

Well, then, quite apart from the issues that we've talked about, the wine of Babylon, the need to honour the fathers, which was the first commandment that was given with promise, 'ye shall inherit the land'. Remember the words of Exodus 20 verse 12, 'ye shall live long upon the land', the Rechabites got that promise and they lived longer upon that land than any of the seed of Abraham, because they had an honour of the fathers, and they were strangers and pilgrims. Well then, who was this Jehonadab the son of Rechab? what was he all about? Why was he such a dominate individual? why was it that his words had impact upon his family? Let's have a look at him!

Let's go back to 2 Kings chapter 10. Ever ridden in a chariot before, ? This feels somewhat like a chariot up here, it doesn't go up and down like a chariot. Those of you that have ridden in a chariot will know, that chariot riding is not, it is not as easy as falling off a log! it requires a bit more balance than that; those of you who have ridden in the chariot of Jehu, the son of Nimshi, would have known what it's like to drive with a maniac? We know of course, that he drove furiously, and in the translations they say, 'he drove like a mad man', (no further comment) You all have had the experience, I suppose, (that's not a reference to bro. Dennis who brought me here this afternoon).

Now, the experience of riding in the chariot of Jehu would have been something to remember; but it wasn't that that Jehonadab remembered as we shall see! 2 Kings chapter 10 comes in the wake of the slaughter of the family of Ahab. 70 heads lay at the gate of Jezreel, in two heaps. In that word, it tells of the grizzly remains of the grandchildren of Ahab, and as Jehu swept from Jezreel towards Samaria, to take the kingdom, he encountered 42 princes of the tribe of Judah, and he slew them in the way, casting their dead bodies in the pit. And as he made his way from that slaughter to take Samaria he lighted upon a man who was coming to meet him, who had heard of the events of the last few days.

Verse 15 of 2 Kings 10, 'And when he was departed thence, he lighted on Jehonadab the son of Rechab coming to meet him; and he saluted him, and said to him, Is thine heart right, as my heart is with thy heart? And he said, (two words) It is;' When Jehonadab spoke he spoke, not a great deal of words, but an enormous amount of meaning! It is. 'Well, come up into my chariot', and he did just that. Well, who was it? We don't know who he was? but yes, we do! We know he was a descendant of a Gentile family that attached themselves to Israel in the wilderness (a little bit more about that in a moment) because he's called Jehonadab the son of Rechab. Now Jehonadab is a name that is very interesting, and it means, 'whom Yahweh hath impelled'. The Hebrew word 'nadab' means 'to impel' and therefore, 'to offer spontaneously'; it's the way that Yahweh should work in our lives and He can work this way; He can make us offer ourselves spontaneously by the power of His word; it impels us, we can't hold back. Now here was a man whom Yahweh had impelled, and he was the son of Rechab; now Rechab means 'the horsemen or the rider' (I suggest to take a note of that because it's quite important). So here was 'he whom Yahweh impelled' the family builder of the horseman or the rider, and he comes to meet Jehu because he was going to go with him to see the destruction of the house of Ahab, and of course, of the worshippers of Baal, which was the wine of Babylon in Israel. That's what he was on about; the destruction of the wine of Babylon out of Israel. Is your heart right? 'Yes, it is!' Well, come up'. Now look at the record.

'Give me thine hand' (they made a covenant) and he gave him his hand, and he took him up into the chariot'. Now in the Hebrew the word for 'chariot' at the end of verse 15 is the word 'merkabah' and it means 'a vehicle, a chariot'. Well you might say to me, 'So what!' just bear in mind, the scripture is trying to tell us something here because it again says in verse 16, 'He said, Come with me and see my zeal (this is Jehu talking) see my zeal for Yahweh' (which didn't quite come out the way that he thought it would) 'So they made him ride in his chariot'. Different word in the Hebrew it's the word 'rekeb' from the root 'rakab' from which the name 'Rechab' of verse 15 comes. So you might say to me, Well so what? Take down these verses and look at them in your own time, have a look at 2 Kings 2:11-12 where the word is used twice, the record where Elijah was divided from Elisha 'by the chariots of fire' they were the 'rekebs'; not the word 'merkabah' which is used of Jehu's chariot in verse 15. Because you see when Jehonadab was in the chariot, it became a 'rekeb' and when Yahweh sent the chariots of fire to remove Elijah from the presence of Israel, He sent the 'rekebs', and those chariots of fire we know, remained with Elisha, because in 2 Kings chapter 6 and verse 17 which is your next reference, when they came and they were in Dotham, and were surrounded by the Assyrians, Elisha said to his servant, 'Don't worry; Yahweh is with us; and he prayed to Yahweh to open the young man's eyes, and the young man's eyes were opened and he saw chariots and horsemen round about Elisha. There they were still with him; and when king Joash the son of Jehu came along to Elisha as he was about to die, do you know what he said to him in 2 Kings 13 and verse 14? Well, he said this, 'Elisha was fallen sick of his sickness whereof he died. And Joash the king of Israel came down unto him, and wept over his face, and said, O my father, my father, the chariot (rekeb) of Israel, and the horsemen thereof'; he was both the vehicle and he was the rider! And that word 'rekeb' , in used in 1 Chronicles 28 and verse 18 in the same verse, right next door to the phrase, that speaks about the cherubims. It is as though Yahweh would have us see, that there was a connection between the chariot (the rekeb) and the cherubims. The chariots of God are 20,000, said Psalm 68:17, because they are the vehicles of Yahweh to take the Lord Jesus Christ into the land of promise, Hosea, as the ark of God. Brethren and sisters, Yahweh has vehicles by which He rides through the ecclesia; and Jehu's chariot did not become the 'rekeb' until such time as Jehonadab the

son of Rechab, the rider, got into it! It is said by John of Jerusalem one of the rabbis that recorded a certain history of the times, that Jehonadab the son of Rechab was a disciple of Elisha; isn't that fitting if it's true? 'My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof'.

So here we have something that speaks to us of a 'divine work' and Yahweh was working through such men as Jehonadab, and in fact, Jehu, to bring about the end of the 'wine of Babylon' in the house of Israel. The drunkards of Ephraim would be swept away, but, there is a hint in the Word, that the reformation of Jehu came to a grinding halt, his chariot ceased to be a 'rekeb' and became a 'merkabah' because there came a time when Jehu, with the wealth of the monarchy, turned to drink wine, and as a result of it, the wine of Babylon did not disappear from Israel, and he turned back to the worship of Jeroboam, and did not complete his zeal for Yahweh, by cleaning up the ecclesia of God. , it was probably after that, that Jehonadab the son of Rechab said to his own children, 'you will not ever drink wine' because you are a priesthood in this nation'. No one else is going to do it, but you are going to do it. You'll never drink wine and you'll never ensconce yourself in a palace like Jehu and start tipping the wine down your throat; live out in the paddocks and tents; don't you plant any crops. And they didn't; they never did; they were faithful to the end of the age, for 250 years.

1 Chronicles 2 gives us a key; (I'm going to have to hurry; I've got a couple of references to look at, 3 in fact, before we can get to Genesis 15.) 1 Chronicles 2 and verse 55 we're told in the list which concerns the house of Judah, 'The families of the scribes which dwelt at Jabez: the Tirathites, the Shimeathites, and Suchathites. These are the Kenites that came of Hemath, the father of the house of Rechab', now there is our key that tells us that the Rechabites were in fact, Kenites. And you'll recall from our session this afternoon, that the Kenites were one of the tribes of Canaan, who inhabited the land in the days of Abraham. So here we have another faithful family of Gentiles in Israel. And uniquely faithful, because, whereas the entire nation had turned away from God, bar a few, a whole family of Gentiles remained faithful to the end, for which they were duly rewarded as we shall see!

Let us go back to Judges chapter 1 where we were this afternoon, and look at two references in Judges which tell us something about the Kenites. Judges 1 and verse 16, 'The children of the Kenite, (and here's our second important point, for here we find the origin of the Kenites or Rechabites in Israel) Moses' father-in-law, went up out of the city of palm trees (Jericho) with the children of Judah' So that verse tells us that Jethro was regarded as a Kenite, and his family were known in Israel as the Kenites. Now Judges 4 as a sad note to play in this story, because in verse 11, we read of the only unfaithful Kenite of the scriptures, who had joined himself to King Sin, to Jabin the king of Hazor. Judges 4:11 we read, 'Now Heber the Kenite, which was of the children of Hobab, the (brother-in-law) of Moses, as it should read, had severed himself from the Kenites, and pitched his tent unto the plain.....'; so we have those two pieces of information, which added to 1 Chronicles 2:55, tell us this; that the Rechabites were Kenites, that the Kenites had their origin in Israel through the family of Jethro, and that the man who brought them into Israel was Hobab, the brother-in-law of Moses.

Now you come with me to Numbers chapter 10, because in Numbers 10 we are told something about Hobab; now we really should look at Exodus 18 in this regard, the record of the way in which Jethro came to Moses in the wilderness; brought Zipporah his wife and how he showed his faith in Yahweh and accepted the principles of the Abrahamic covenant. But because time is escaping from us, I'll let you do that on your own time, Exodus 18:1-12. But here in Numbers chapter 10, we have the record of Hobab. Numbers 10 and verse 29, 'And Moses said, (and this was the time when Israel was about to leave Sinai for the land) Moses said unto Hobab, whose name means 'cherished', the son of Raguel or Reuel, which means 'friend of God' and another name for Jethro, the Midianite (he's called here, because of his background) Moses' father-in-law, We are journeying unto the place of which Yahweh said (this is what Moses said to Hobab) I will give it you: Then Moses said to him, come thou with us, and we will do thee good: for Yahweh hath spoken good concerning Israel'. Now Moses is trying to get Hobab who was a nomad, living in the area of Midian or Sinai, to come with Israel to be their eyes. Verse 30, 'And he replied, I will not go: but I will depart to mine own land, and to my kindred. And Moses said, Leave us not, I pray thee; forasmuch as thou knowest how we

are to encamp in the wilderness, and thou mayest be to us instead of eyes. And it shall be, if thou go with us, yea, it shall be, that what goodness Yahweh shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee'. End of the record. We hear no more of Hobab, we don't hear of his response to what Moses said, we don't know from the record whether his family remained or not, except that we have those accounts in Judges which tell us that there was a family in Israel, who were related to Hobab, the brother-in-law of Moses. So putting it all together, it's obvious isn't it, as we well know, the bulk of us who have heard this study before, will know that there was a family of Gentiles in the nation of Israel called the Kenites who came from the family of Jethro. They were there and they were still there, when Judah was taken into Babylon. And , it goes further than that as we shall see!

Well then, we've got their origins, we know who they were and where they were from, let's now put our hands in our bibles, Genesis 15, Jeremiah 34. Why did they remain faithful for 250 years after the days of Jehonadab the son of Rechab? Why were they faithful through the 450 years of the judges all except for Heber, the Kenite? What was it that motivated that family? Why did Hobab join himself to Israel? , the answers are given for us in Jeremiah 34 and 35 and Genesis 15. And this is why Yahweh brings forth the Rechabites or the Kenites against His own people. If you've got your hand in Jeremiah 34, put a marker in there, and come back to Genesis 15 and make notes with a marker that way when you read Jeremiah 34 and 35 again, you'll always come back to Genesis 15.

And we saw the context of Jeremiah 34 was the 'releasing from bondage' of those that had been taken as 'servants' by their brethren. And the principle was 'I Yahweh released you from Egypt from the house of bondmen, ye shall not have your brethren as bondmen'. That was the principle; six years, yes, if they need to be sustained, but in the seventh, let them go. The nation saw that under Zedekiah, and they made a covenant, they cut a covenant, and they passed between the pieces of the calf; do you know what? you look at Jeremiah 34 it said in verse 14, 'at the end of seven years, let ye go every man his brother a Hebrew'. Why did Yahweh choose that language? Is it not because in Genesis chapter 14 verse 13 we read, 'And there came one who had escaped and told Abram, the Hebrew, and he was at Hebron, where the promise of chapter 15 was made. Remember that? There's your first point of connection, a crosser-over; you've come out of Egypt crossed the Red Sea, even as Abraham came out of Babylon across the Euphrates; (both baptisms). I DID THAT! Don't you take your brethren into bondage again. Got the point? calls it 'Hebrews'-crosser-overs. Right then, they cut a covenant; have a look at Genesis 15 verses 7 to 12 again. He said unto him (Abraham), I am Yahweh that brought thee out of the Ur of the Chaldees to give thee this land to inherit it. And he said, Adonai Yahweh, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?' Reasonable question. 'And He said, take an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of the same age and a ram of the same age, a turtledove and a young pigeon. And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not. And when the fowls came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away'. But , Abram fell asleep in a moment, didn't he? Who drove the birds away then? Who kept the nations away from Israel? Abram's seed; those animals he divided up were typical of himself, and the seed that would flow forth from him. Yahweh was saying, 'I will be faithful; that's you there Abram; and it points forward to your seed, to the Lord Jesus Christ, who will be the great sacrifice and bring all of those offerings, the heifer, the she goat, the ram, the turtledove, all relating of course, to the offerings that are later on to be ensconced in the Law; He will bring all of them together and be the one great sacrifice, and I will cut a covenant through Him, and He will be a light for the Gentiles. This transaction is very important; I will fulfill my covenant to you, through your seed, and what you've done, is to lay the parts of the beasts side by side, and you're keeping the fowls away. Who's going to do it when you're asleep, Abram? God kept the fowls of the heavens away from Abraham's seed until such time as they broke His covenant.

Have a look at Jeremiah 34 and verses 18 and 19 again; 'I will give the men that transgress My covenant, which have not performed the words of the covenant which they had made before me, when they cut the calf in twain, and passed between the pieces thereof. The princes, the priests the eunuchs and all the people of the land, which passed between the parts of the calf (heifer). I will give them into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of them that seek their life: and their dead bodies shall be for meat unto the fowls of the heaven'. Got the connection?

And look at Genesis 15 verse 13, 'And He said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years'; Abraham, your seed are going to be bondmen!

Have a look at Jeremiah 34 and verse 13 again, 'I made a covenant with your fathers in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondmen', see the connection! It's obvious, isn't it? Look at what flows on! Verse 16 again, 'In the fourth generation (this is back in Genesis) they shall come hither again; for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full. And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces. In the same day Yahweh cut a covenant with Abram saying, Unto thy seed (Christ) have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates: The Kenites (you remember don't you) first in the list of nations that were to be taken out of that land. The Kenites we spoke about irony and paradoxes this afternoon, do you know what? When the Babylonians came down, and took the nation of Judah into Babylon, because that's where they belonged, because they were inebriated with the 'wine of Babylon' with its idolatry; and God said, 'I'll take you to Babylon until you learn to hate it. When the men of Babylon came down and took them away, they didn't take away the poor of the land. Jeremiah 52 and verse 16 says, 'Nebuchadnezzar left the poor of the land'; who were the poorest in the land of Judah in that day? Was it not those who had no houses, who had no fields? Was it not those like the Kenites, who had nothing; and there are those who say, (and they're suppose to know, I don't know if they know or not), but there are those who say that when Nebuchadnezzar took away the men of Judah, he left the Rechabites in the land. And they were there for 70 years of Gentile dominion; 70 years! There are those who say that there were Rechabites still in the land in the days of Christ, and that they were left by the Romans; there are those who say that there are Rechabites still in the land of the Middle East areas, somewhere today, some near what was Ethiopia, in the area of the Red Sea, somewhere there that they say, I don't know if it's true or not, but they say there is a family there, who rightly or wrongly hold to the principles of Jeremiah 35, drink no wine, plant no crops, live in no houses. It might be right and it might be wrong, but I'll tell you something it doesn't matter, because as far as Yahweh's concerned, Jehonadab the son of Rechab, shall never, ever want a man to stand before Him.

You come back with me to Jeremiah 35; Isn't it incredible, that here was Abraham promised that his seed, Christ, would be given the land, which would be denuded of Kenites and Kenizzites and others of the tribes of Canaan, and yet when Abraham's natural children would then be taken away from that land, the only people who remained, because of their faithfulness, were Kenites. Isn't that unbelievable? and yet it's not! Because the key was their faith and their steadfastness to the word of their pioneers to the end of the age. Their absolute refusal to drink of the wine of Babylon; they would not have a lowering of their standards, they would not tolerate humanism in the ecclesia; but they kept to those things that were uncomfortable for them, and because of it (and this is what Yahweh said) Verse 16, 'Because the sons of Jehonadab the son of Rechab hath performed the commandment of their father, which he commanded them; but this people hath not hearkened unto me:' (I brought them out as my witnesses, faithful Gentiles like the widow of Zarephath, and Naaman the Syrian, to witness against those who are my own. I've brought them out and you've seen them) Therefore, verse 17, 'Thus saith Yahweh God of armies, the God of Israel (the covenant name again) behold, I will bring upon Judah and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem all the evil that I have pronounced against them: because I have spoken unto them but they have not heard; and I have called unto them, (remember the words; He was sent to preach, this day is the scripture fulfilled in your ears; men are not changed for the kingdom by signs but by believing a report; they have not heard and they have not answered) 'And Jeremiah said unto the house of the Rechabites, Thus saith Yahweh of armies, the God of Israel, Because ye have obeyed the commandment of Jehonadab your father, and kept all his precepts, and done according unto all that he hath commanded you: Therefore, thus saith Yahweh of armies, the God of Israel; Jehonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before me for ever'. And there will always be Kenites, always be Kenites in the land of Israel, in the company of Abraham.