



**BELIEVERS CHAPEL**

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | [believerschapeldallas.org](http://believerschapeldallas.org)

The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Isaiah 66:1-24

“The Seat of the Scornful in the Day of Salvation”

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee and we praise Thee for the way in which the Holy Spirit teaches us the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, and Lord we know there are many things in the Scriptures that we do not yet understand. We look forward to the day when we shall know as we are known. We do know, Lord, that the Scriptures unfold the way of salvation so plainly and clearly through the redemption of the Lord Jesus Christ, and we know that this is the sovereign work of our God to bring to heaven the people of God and we are so grateful Thou has given us a measure of enlightenment to know Christ as our Savior and Lord and to entrust ourselves to him for time and for eternity. As we look about at the things upon which men seem to be resting their life, and destiny we are amazed and troubled and concern that so many seem to be resting themselves upon their own understanding of spiritual things without any sense of the divine revelation or any conviction concerning it, resting themselves upon their own works or their own wisdom.

And we are so grateful to Thee that Thou hast shown us that the mind of the flesh is enmity against God. It is not subject to the law of God nether indeed can be, and that is long as we are in the flesh we cannot please Thee, but the Scriptures go on to say that we are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit if so be the Spirit of God dwells within us. And we thank Thee for the gift of the Spirit through the saving work of the Son of God who

shed his blood that we might have life. And, Lord, as we conclude our studies tonight of the prophecy of Isaiah and the ways in which we look forward to the future, we pray that we may not conclude our study in our reading of Scripture but press on to know more of the glorious hopes that we have through Christ. We ask that Thou will be with us tonight in our study. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] Tonight we are turning to the last chapter in the prophecy of Isaiah for the last of our series of studies on the Messianic prophecies, in the Book of Isaiah. And it is of course very fitting, I think, that Isaiah should conclude his study, which he has given us with the emphasis, with which he began it because in chapter 66, he talks about God's hatred of ritual, of pretense without reality, and that's precisely the way in which he began his study. In the first chapter in verse 11 through verse 15 of chapter 1, this is what he was talking about. He said, “To what purpose is the multitude if your sacrifice is unto me. Saith the Lord, I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts, and I delight not in the blood of bullocks or of lambs or of he goats.”

Now, you must remember of course when the prophet says something like this he doesn't mean that God is not happy with the Levitical system. He is happy with the Levitical system, but he is happy with the Levitical system, and the offerings of the sacrifices when the individuals who offer them offer them out of faith and trust. But when they offer them out of wote or ritual and do not have the faith, then that is very displeasing to the Lord. Hypocrisy is something that God hates.

Now, Amos is stronger than Isaiah, if it's possible. He says,  
“I hate your solemn feasts. (Now listen to what he goes on to say.) When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand to tread my courts. Bring no more vain ablations. Incense is an abomination unto me. The new moons and Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, (That's like the calling of church on Sunday morning.) I cannot

away with it. It is iniquity even the solemn meeting. (Think of that. The meeting in which the people of God gather is to the Lord God when it is done hypocritically iniquity.) Your new moons and your appointed feasts my south hateth. They are a trouble unto me. I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you. Yea when ye make many prayers I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood.”

So even when men lift their minds and hearts in prayer, if it is not done in simplicity and in earnestness in the Spirit of God, God does not hear, so he says. As a matter of fact he not only does not hear, he does not even like to hear them. “Your hands are full of blood.” So the prophet, in the 66th chapter of his long book comes back to that theme with which he began this magnificent prophecy. It lays stress upon the fact that if we are going to acknowledge the Lord God as our God then of course there must be reality in our profession of faith.

It's really foolish and unrewarding for us to claim that we are Christians, and yet at the same time not live up to the things that we say are the truth of God. Dr. Barnhouse has in one of his books, a story about a butcher who was asked what difference it made to him when Christ entered his life, and he said, “Well, I stopped weighing my thumb.” He then told how before he had become a Christian he always had managed, when he was weighing the things that he was selling to rest his thumb on a part of the scales, and usually he said, I got an ounce more of payment, out of the individuals who bought things from me, but after Christ came he stood away from the scales, and he gave a full sixteen ounce of the meat, and he also said, when he served customers, whom he had formally cheated, he added an ounce to make up for his past peculations from them.

Well that's really something of the difference that salvation does make, so Isaiah speaks about reality, and chapter 66 is a kind of summary of the prophecies of the last days with a return to the importance of reality in the spiritual life. There is, as you will

see when you read through this chapter with me, there is a lot of echoing of the previous prophecies, and so I am sure that we will not be able to find much that is new in chapter 66, but there is some marvelous prophecies and promises just the same. He begins with a warning to the wicked in the first four verses.

Now, remember the context historically, he is speaking of the worldly majority of the nation when they are in captivity in Babylon. That lies in the future, but it's evident that the nation is soon to go into captivity, and so historically he speaks of them, but the captivity of Babylon is an adumbration. A kind of foreshadowing of their captivity when they are set out to the four corners of the world, and so one notices the language of these references to the captivity in Babylon, but it goes beyond the captivity in Babylon, and actually reflects a dispersion of the people of Israel to the four corners of the earth, and so historically we are thinking of the nation in captivity in Babylon, but prophetically of the worldly of the nation who are scattered to the four corners of the earth.

Now, let me read beginning with verse 1, “Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? And where is the place of my rest?” It's characteristic of men to want to build something for God, but man can do the Lord God no service by building him a temple as if he is a kind of person who needs something like that. He doesn't need a Crystal Cathedral for example. Why all of the things in this earth, he has made. And the idea that we construct a building for God is foolish. “The heaven is my throne, the earth is my footstool where is the house that ye built unto me, and where is the place of my rest.”

Stephen, you'll remember in his great sermon, makes reference to this text. Why the grandest cathedral of all God himself sits in and it's even bigger than space because he is Savior person who is bigger than space itself. He is to use the old theological term “immense”.

Now, that is that he is present everywhere, but he is also present beyond this creation which he has created, and so he doesn't need the Crystal Cathedral of Robert

Schuller, and he doesn't need St. Peter's in Rome. He is one who has this whole universe as his own. It's part of his creation. “For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.” What a magnificent description of an earnest Christian, one who trembles at the word of God.

This has always been associated in my thinking, with an incident that happened in the life of Adam Clark. Adam Clark was one of the commentators, who wrote a commentary on the whole of the Bible and you can buy his commentary, I think still. It's about six great big volumes that cover the whole of the Bible. Adam Clark had a very religious and pious mother, and in his early she nurtured him with the sincere milk of the word of God. She taught the word of God to this man, even when he was not much of a believer at all. When he was a little boy, one of the texts that his mother had taught him was the passage from Proverbs chapter 30. I think it's verse 17. “The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it.” Modern psychology does not use this particular text in family discipline, but it's not a bad text to use. At any rate, he was one day out in the yard play just as little boy, and happened to look up after he had been disobedient to his mother, and as he looked up playing in the garden he saw a raven flying above him, and at the sight of it, this text flashed across his young mind, and fell with such power upon his conscious that he dropped every thing that he was doing, covered his eyes with his hands and rushed into where his mother was trembling.

Well that is the right response to the word of God, and God says, “To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit and trembleth at my word.” You know we really wouldn't have a whole lot of trouble with our children if we had so taught them the Scriptures that they really trembled when they found themselves being disobedient to the word of God.

One of the great difficulties in our family life is that our children do not even know the Bible. They do not even know when they are disobedient to the Lord God. They have never been taught that by their parents. In fact it's almost as if there is no opportunity. We know of course God is sovereign. He can make his opportunities if he wishes, but he wants us to do it this way. He wants us to teach our children the word of God, and pound it into them so that when they are experiences enter their lives, those Scriptures will come home to them. Everyone knows if you haven't learned something in the experiences of life, it will not come to you, and one can see this is Adam Clark's little experience and probably you've had some experiences like that too. But if we were teaching our children what they ought to be taught, we wouldn't need the psychologists, and psychiatrists, and poor old Bill Gothard wouldn't have anything to do at all except preach the word of God. But we neglect that.

Have you ever noticed in the Bible that almost from the beginning that's one of the things stressed by the word of God? One of the reasons God said that he would use Abraham was because Abraham was the kind of person who taught his children. Isn't that interesting? And you go back to the Book of Deuteronomy later on, and Moses talks about the importance of teaching your children. Over and over again he does that. Not simply in the case of the Passover incident, but in general teaching children the law of God, and then of course when we instruct a little child in the word of God, when he is old he will not depart from it. Those are the promises of Holy Scripture.

Now, the warning to the wicked continues in verse 3,

“He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol. (All of these things you see God hates when they are not done out of faith.) Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations. I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon

them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not.”

Well now after this warning to the wicked in verse 1 thorough verse 4, the prophet has some words for the faithful beginning with verse 5, the faithful shall be accepted although their enemies reject them and are judged. He says in verse 5,

“Hear the word of the LORD, ye that tremble at his word; (See there are people who do that, and there were in the nation and will be in the nation in the future.) Hear the word of the LORD, ye that tremble at his word; Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the LORD be glorified: but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed. A voice of noise from the city, a voice from the temple, a voice of the LORD that rendereth recompense to his enemies. (And now in verse 7,) Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child. (That's a very interesting verse because it seems to suggest an unusually easy delivery of a child.) Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child.”

Now, we all know it's customary for a woman who is getting ready to give birth to have hours of labor often. Sometimes a dozen hours or more, and yet here is a striking thing that is contrary to nature, “Before she travail, she brought forth. Before her pain came she was delivered of a man child.” What's the meaning of this? Well perhaps the prophet is speaking collectively. That is it's a reference to the nation of men, but it's also possible that it's a reference to the Messiah himself. In other words the prophet may be saying that God is so going to work in Israel in the future, that he is going to bring about a birth of the nation by his sovereign grace. That will be just as he describes it here, a miraculous thing. “Before she travails, she brought forth, before her pain came she was

delivered of a man child.” So that’s a possibility and we wouldn’t want to rule it out. On the other hand, the fact that it is put in the singular means that it also might be a reference to the Messiah himself.

Now over in the Book of Revelation in the 12th chapter in the 5th verse, in one of the visions that the Apostle John has in the Isle of Patmos, he makes reference to the birth of a man child. Listen to the signs with which this chapter begins. He says,

“And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: (This incidentally is a figure of the nation Israel, the woman. There have been all kinds of explanations of this. Some have sought to find in this a reference to, well the church. Some have even sought to find in this a reference to Mary Baker Glover Patterson Eddy. The founder of Christian Science, but of course it couldn’t be Mrs. Eddy because contrary to what happens in the 12th chapter here, the dragon that represents Satan was not able to overcome the woman, and we all know the dragon got Mrs. Eddy, so it could not be Mrs. Eddy. So we read,) And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon (You can see the references to the fall of the angelic beings with Satan in his fall.) And the dragon stood before the woman, which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a man child, (Now the term that is used in the Greek text is a term that means a male. No question about it. It is a reference to our Lord Jesus Christ.) A male child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: (And that phrase or that clause comes from Psalm 2, where it is applied to the Messianic king, and so this person who is to be born of the woman Israel is the man child who is to rule all nations with a rod of iron.) and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.”

Now notice in the Book of Revelation here, the whole period of the present age is passed over and the remainder of the chapters the struggle of the woman with the dragon, and then that goes on in the remainder of the Book of Revelation until finally the man child comes in his Second Advent, and the Kingdom of God is established upon the earth. The cross is passed over because in the Book of Revelation the great thrust of the book rests upon the sovereign rule that the Lord Jesus shall introduce at his second coming, so I just pass this on to you as a possibility when we read in verse 7, of Isaiah 66, “Before she travails she brought forth. Before her pain came she was delivered of a man child.” This could be of course a reference to that national birth of Israel in the last days, but it also could be a reference to the Messiah himself. We go on and read, “Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.”

“Shall a nation be born at once?” In other words, contrary to history a nation shall grow to maturity at once. That is contrary to history. Ordinarily nations begin and then they grow and then they reach a climax of power and then they wane. The history of the kingdoms of the earth is like that. And those who have studied the rise and the fall of empire have noticed that. In fact some have even said that there have only been fourteen great world empires and they have all followed that pattern. In other words empires, kingdoms, nations are just like people. They begin young, they grow, become stronger, and stronger, they come into their strength. They spin their years of power, and then like us old men they begin to get weaker and weaker, and the gray hair appears. It’s sad when a nation doesn’t realize that gray hairs are here and there upon him, and he doesn’t know it, and because of the corruption and the things that lead to decay nations soon pass off of the face of the earth.

Well, of course as an American we all hope that the Lord comes before this one passes off the face of this earth so far as it's power is concerned, but this text says, “Shall a nation be born at once?” That's contrary to the pattern of the nations, and furthermore her birth at once is going to be brought to pass through tribulation. Or “Shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travails she brought forth her children.”

Now of course if you will turn back a few pages, you will see that in the time that Isaiah writes the nation is not a fruitful nation. Look at verse 1 of chapter 54, just a few chapters back. “Sing oh barren thou that dist not bear. Break forth into singing and cry aloud, thou that dist not travail with child for more are the children of the desolate, than the children of the merit wife, Saith the Lord.” So Israel is now barren and the Gentiles have had more children than the woman, but the time is coming when Israel shall have a sudden national rebirth.

In Chicago, in teaching students up there, one of the courses that I teach from time to time, is the use of the Old Testament and the New Testament, and then I also teach the Hermeneutics of biblical prophecy, and in the course of teaching the Hermeneutics of biblical prophecy, I try to point out to them that the Hermeneutics or the principles of interpretation that we should follow are the principles of interpretation that are set out in the Scriptures. And one of the keys or clues to that is the Old Testament interpretation of the Old Testament, and then the New Testament interpretation of the Old Testament, and what I seek to show by that, one of the things I seek to show, is that in the Old Testament the prophets never spiritualized the earlier prophecies, and furthermore the New Testament writers do not spiritualize the Old Testament prophecies either, and therefore we should abandon the method known as spiritualization, because it's not practiced, as the writers of Scripture unfold Scripture, they do not use that principle.

Now one of things that I urge the men to do, which is often in fact it's so far as I know rarely ever done, is to observe how the Old Testament authors use Old Testament Scripture. In other words the later authors what they think about the earlier authors

writings. One thing you learn from the Book of Zechariah, when you study the Book of Zechariah, is that he is a very close student of the prophecy of Isaiah. One can see many reflections and references to Isaiah. Just take one outstanding one. Isaiah is the one who speaks of our Lord as the branch. In fact he speaks of him as the branch of Jehovah, and it's Zechariah who also gives us more than one other prophecy concerning the branch, so Zechariah uses Isaiah. In other words, Zechariah was a student to Isaiah.

Now in chapter 3 in verse 9 of the prophecy of Zechariah we read, “For behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua upon one stone shall be seven eyes. Behold I will engrave the graving thereof sayeth the Lord of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.” Isn't that interesting? You see he is a student of Isaiah and he has, not only through the teaching of the Holy Spirit but the teaching of the Holy Spirit as he was studying Isaiah, he's lead also to add that a nation shall be born at once, and furthermore the iniquity of the land shall be removed in one day.

There is a time coming in the future in which the prophecy of Romans chapter 11, “All Israel shall be saved.” Which does not mean every single Israelite shall be saved. Again if you'll study the use of terms in the Old Testament, it means Israel as a whole. That is it's leadership and the mass of the people but not everyone, just as when we say, “Israel rejected our Lord.” Not every Israelite rejected our Lord, but the leaders rejected our Lord with the mass of the people. The Christian church, that which became the Christian church did not reject our Lord. So here in verse 8 then, “A nation shall be born at once, (And then also we read,) For as soon as Zion travail she brought forth her children.”

In other words her new birth will come through tribulation, and the tribulation of the future is set out in so many passages in the Bible, it's useless for us to turn to them in a brief study like this, but if you want the details in addition to the Old Testament prophecies from the Book of Revelation, chapter 6 through chapter 19, we have the details of the tribulation or the travail through which Israel shall come into the experience

of the ancient promises God made to Abraham and confirm to Isaac and Jacob and expanded in the words to David and to Jeremiah.

In Isaiah chapter 26, in verse 9 in the latter part of that verse the prophet wrote, “For when Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.” Sometimes the Lord has to bring us into disciplinary judgment before we will listen to him.

Now we know that’s a principle in our Christian life, too. Often if we will not listen to the Lord in our Christian life, well he’s just like a good father, you know. A good father, is one who disciplines his children, and so he brings in a little bit of the discipline, a little bit of the restraint and then if we will not pay attention to the restraint and discipline he will bring in severer restraint and discipline, and in fact in spiritual things that ultimately will lead to physical death if we refuse the disciplinary chastisement of the Lord God. So we read then, “As soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children” that is in the midst of the great tribulation of the future, Israel’s disciplinary judgment shall become so severe that just as when they were in Egypt and the bondage there finally, they couldn’t stand it any longer and God raised up Moses as the deliver, so in the future of the nation finally reaching the place where she cannot stand it anymore God will bring it to pass that they will cry for another deliverer and the Lord God will give them the greater than Moses, the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is an old saying about Jachabed the mother of Moses that there was once a woman, in fact is a Talmudic teacher who roused up the sleepy scholars of the Beth amidrash. There was once a woman who was delivered of six hundred thousand children in one day.” And of course when he was asked to explain he said, “It was Jachabed who, when she gave birth to Moses, brought six hundred thousand to the light of freedom.” Well, the Lord Jesus will surpass that in the future.

Now, the prophet continues as he gives words of encouragement in verse 9,

“Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? saith the LORD: shall I cause to bring forth, and shut the womb? saith thy God. Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her: That ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations; that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory.”

Various figures here, of the way in which Israel shall be the means of consolations to the Gentiles. You’ll notice the figures of the river and the stream because rivers were scarce in that part of the land, as you know today, and so he speaks about that when he says in verse 12,

“For thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream: then shall ye suck, ye shall be borne upon her sides, and be dandled upon her knees. As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem. And when ye see this, your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like an herb: and the hand of the LORD shall be known toward his servants, (And I will leave that last clue out for just a moment. These are words that concern the promises of the Lord to them but beginning with the last of verse 14, there are some words of wrath. He says,) And his indignation toward his enemies. (And if you want to know what it is, well notice the verses that follow. Verse 15 through verse 17.) For, behold, the LORD will come with fire, (In other words the time of consolation for Israel is going to be the time for judgment for others. The Gentiles. Not all the Gentiles, but the enemies of the Lord.) For behold the Lord will come with fire and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by his sword will the LORD plead with all flesh: and the slain of the LORD shall be many. They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind one tree in the midst, eating swine's flesh, and the abomination, (Ah,

look at this. How would you like that for supper?) and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the LORD.”

Now I have forgotten exactly the force of that. I should have looked that up. Why are they eating the mouse? That’s almost as bad as Luther’s diet to which he went, the Diet of Worms. Except the Germans pronounce it *worms*. They ruin it by that don’t they? The Diet of Worms. The Diet of Worms sounds much more interesting I think.

Now those are words of wrath, and finally in the last verses of the chapter now the prophet gives witness to the future consummating, and the path of Israel’s history is marked out and it will go through a time of tribulation and trouble and travail through universal judgment on to the glory of God ultimately. Listen to the great promises. These are kind of a summary of the things the prophet has said previously. “For I know their works and their thoughts: it shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come, and see my glory.” Now notice, they shall see my glory is probably in the light of the context see my glory in judgment and in justice. There are two ways to see the glory of God. You can see the glory of God in his grace and you can see the glory of God in his justice. That’s why he decreed that sin should exist in our universe, in order that men might see his grace through the forgiveness wrought by Jesus Christ and they might see his justice in his judgment. Paul makes that plain in Romans 9. That explains why we have evil in the universe. The problem of evil has been a problem that has troubled philosophers and troubled theologians, and of course I don’t claim to settle the problem of the ages in a few sentences, but I think that the answer to the problem lies right there, and perhaps we should add something here and there to it, but it seems to me that that is a satisfying explanation. Otherwise, we would not know the glory of his grace, and we would not know the glory of his judgment and justice. Verse 19 continues,

“And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal, and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles. And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the LORD out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the LORD, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the LORD.”

So the nations are going to be gathered together against Jerusalem, but the Lord Jesus is going to come in fire, and like a whirlwind, and he will render his anger with fury, we read in verse 15, and his rebuke with flames of fire. And as a result of this there will be worldwide salvation and men from all over the face of the earth, shall make their way back toward Jerusalem. And I think it's interesting that in verse 19 those that escape of them are evidentially the Gentile survivors at Armageddon. And they go out to evangelize the Gentiles. “I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the Gentiles.”

And furthermore, these Gentiles shall be useful in bringing back the brethren. Notice verse 20. “And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord out of all nations back to Jerusalem.” So evidentially within the plan of God there will be saved Gentiles, who shall bring eth Jews back to the Holy Land in the latter days after our Lord has come in his Second Advent. That may be the reference of chapter 49 in verse 22. If you will turn back there just a few pages in this great chapter of the suffering servant of Jehovah, Isaiah had written verse 22, “Thus saith the Lord God behold I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people and they shall bring thy sons in their arms and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders.” So the gentiles will be useful in the return of Israel to the land, so Israel's office is returned to her

in verse 21 and she is the priestly nation again. Verse 21, “And I will also take of them for priests and for Levites, saith the LORD.”

That’s one of the things that we’ve read just a few studies back in chapter 61 in verse 6. Because there the prophet had said, “But ye shall be named the priests of the Lord. Men shall call you the ministers of our God. Ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves, and so Israel shall again become the head of the nations as is stated so often in the Old Testament Scriptures. “So I will take of them for priests.”

Now we won’t mind that. We may think that that’s partiality now, but this is the ancient program of God. And then in verse 22 we read, “ For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain.” New heavens and new earth. That’s an interesting expression, and as you know in the New Testament it is found in 2 Peter chapter 3 in also in Revelation chapter 21. What makes it interesting is that evidently Peter was thinking about this chapter when he referred to the new heavens and the new earth because if you’ll turn to 2 Peter chapter 3, you’ll notice just a little phrase, and this little phrase will tell you I think that he interprets the new heavens and the new earth to be the new heavens and the new earth that are referred to here.

In 2 Peter chapter 3 in verse 11, he’s just been talking about the day of the Lord, which is associated with the Second Advent of our Lord. He says,

“The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, and the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt, with fervent heat. The earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in all holy conversation and Godliness? Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God where in the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved and the elements shall melt with fervent heat.

Nevertheless we, according to his promise, (Notice that expression.) According to his promise”

Where is his promise? Well his promise is the reference to Isaiah 65 and 66 it seems. It's the promise in chapter 65 remember. And in verse 17 he had said, “For behold I create new heavens and new earth. The former shall not be remember nor come to mind.” And then here verse 22, “For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain.” And so here nevertheless we according to his promise look for new heavens and a new earth where in dwelleth righteousness, “Wherefore beloved seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace without spot and blameless.”

George N.H. Peters has written a classic work on the Theocratic Kingdom. I have referred to it already a couple of times, and I haven't noticed that there has been a great rush to read Peter's work. I explained to you that it was three volumes. Maybe that disappointed you, and discouraged you a bit. And not only is it three volumes, but each of the volumes have seven hundred and something pages. And then in addition to the twenty one hundred pages or so, about half of the pages are in very fine print. So really it's the equivalent of about thirty one hundred pages, so perhaps that had something to do with the fact that I am told the book room has had no rush for Peter's Theocratic Kingdom. In fact it may well be out of print now. I can imagine that when they made the reprinting the last time, they didn't print vast numbers of it. In fact, I image that Hal Lindsey's book, *The Late, Great Planet Earth*, probably has sold a few more copies than Peter's book, but let me tell you this: there is more theology in Peter's book.

Now he has an interesting interpretation of the new heavens and the new earth, and I would like to pass it on to you for you to think about. It's his opinion that the new heavens and the new earth is a phrase that refers to the millennial kingdom. In other words the Kingdom of God upon the earth is this new heavens and the new earth.

Now he is a very strong believer in a millennial kingdom, but he concludes his study of the millennial kingdom by pointing out that while there will be a rebellion at the end of the thousand years, and then there will be a prolongation of the millennial kingdom into eternity that the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus will bring about more of a transformation of this present creation as we know it now, than some interpreters have thought, and so he suggests that in 2 Peter 3, reference is made to the fire. We have that right here in Isaiah 66 verse 16, “For by fire and by his sword will the Lord plead with all flesh and the slain of the Lord shall be many, and when you look at the other chapters in the New Testament in the description of the Second Advent of the Lord, fire becomes a very prominent part of the Second Advent and the judgment that takes place then, and even the heavens are involved in the Second Advent of our Lord, and so he suggests that what Peter is doing is thinking about this and he’s referring to the millennial kingdom, and therefore this text is a reference to the millennial kingdom as well.

Now there are other interpretations you can find one in the Scofield Bible, which some have sought to support, and then there are several others, but I’ll pass that on to you for you to think about, and if Peter’s is right the new heavens and new earth are a reference to the millennial kingdom in which the ancient promises to Abraham will be fulfilled, for they are unconditionally fulfilled, at the conclusion of that time as Revelation chapter 20 makes plain, there will be a rebellion for a brief time, but then that millennial kingdom will be prolonged into eternal for the King, the Lord Jesus, the mediatorial king will turn over the kingdom that God may be all in all. Well you think about it, and see what you think about it.

Let me conclude our study tonight by reading the remainder. Well, there’s one thing in verse 22 that I didn’t say anything about that perhaps we should say something about, “For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain.”

Now, you see that underscores the unconditional nature of the Abrahamic Covenant and the promises made to Israel, “As the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make shall remain before me.” That is, “They are eternal saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain.” So the ancient unconditional promises made to Abraham reach their fruition in the Kingdom of God upon the earth, the great mass of the world, and the great mass of Israel parish, but the seed and the name remain.

Now of course there are great masses of people that are converted during the period of the great tribulation, so many that is was impossible to number that innumerable multitude that come out of the great tribulation, and finally verse 23 and 24, “And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD.” So evidentially from all over the earth, people are going to constantly come back to Jerusalem, everybody will have their own private 747 then, and you will be able to do your worshipping in the city of Jerusalem very easily. Now it doesn't say that. “And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.”

Now that's a strange way to end a book isn't it? To end a book with a kind of curse and in fact in the lessons prepared for the Jewish synagogue, verse 23 is repeated again after verse 24, very much the way they do the end of Malachi because it was not right to end a book on a curse and so verse 23 in the readings of the synagogue are repeated after verse 24 so you can have a nice sweet ending. That's the beginning of the intrusion of a God of love apart from justice into theology. It's the kind of thing we find in contemporary theology so often. God is the God of love, oh yes, he is the God of justice but we don't want to emphasize that, let's just emphasize that he's a God of love, and he's a God of mercy, but the Scriptures do not always yield to our view of things.

Now, it's very proper actually that this chapter end as it does because remember that last section of the Book of Isaiah is the twenty seven final chapters. The first thirty

nine chapters, the first part like thirty nine books of the Old Testament, the last twenty seven chapters like the twenty seven books of the New Testament, and then everybody in this room knows that twenty seven divided by three is nine, and at the end of chapter 48, the first nine of the last twenty seven chapters, we read, “There is no peace saith the Lord unto the wicked.” And then the next nine chapters end with chapter 57. “There is no peace saith my God to the wicked.” And the last nine ordinarily would end with verse 24, in which there is also a curse, “They shall go forth, look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me for their worms shall not die. Neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.”

It was very fitting that these three chapters should conclude with a curse, these three divisions of the last twenty seven chapters should conclude with a curse, and so the attempt to reverse things or add another is just one of the things that God curses. That is changing the word of God, and by the way as you probably have been told by students of the prophecy of Isaiah, the central section of the last twenty seven chapters is Isaiah chapter 53, verse 5, and verse 6, where we read, “But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed, all we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned everyone to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”

As Franz Delitzsch, the great old German commentator said, “The central one of the final twenty seven orations is chapter 52:12 through chapter 53, which is the fourteenth of his messages in that last twenty seven chapters, and so he says the cross forms the center of this prophetic trilogy of three nine chapters each. *Para cruxum aud luxem*, he says. Or, through the cross, to light, is its watchword. The self sacrifice of the servant of Jehovah lays the foundation for a new Israel a new human race, a new heavens and a new earth. And that new Israel is not the church. That new Israel is a new Israel, redeemed Israel. Of course those who believe in the present age are united with Israel in the one people of God, but he is talking about a new Israel. And we look forward to the

day when the nation shall as a nation come into the possession of its promises. The Scriptures seem to suggest they will not come into their promises until the judgments of God are falling in the earth, and they are not falling in the earth yet, but Israel's in the perfect position for them to fall. And the stronger the Arabs get, and the stronger the anti-Semitic forces in the world get the more likely we are approaching the time when the wrath of the Gentiles will be turned upon the nation Israel, and Israel will be forced by their travail. Finally all of this by the efficacious grace of God to cry out for a new Moses to deliver them, and Jesus Christ is that one. We look forward to that. It's going to be interesting isn't it in the future. Our time is up. Let's close with a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for these marvelous prophecies. Lord, give us further light. Enable us to understand more and more what Thou art saying to us through Holy Scripture, and oh Lord, may we like young Adam Clark, and like the ones spoken of in Isaiah 66, truly tremble at Thy word, for Jesus' sake. Amen.