



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

The Jewish People, Jesus Christ, and World History

Zechariah 1:1-17

"The Man Among the Myrtles"

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for the privilege of the study of the Scriptures. We thank Thee for the way in which the word of God gives us light regarding our daily path and regarding the future. We again ask, as we turn to consider the story of the nation Israel and the past, the present, and the future, that Thou will give us enlightenment and understanding. Enable us, Lord, to profit from the things that we study, and may our thoughts be thoughts be given us by the Holy Spirit. We commit our time to Thee. In Jesus' name. Amen.

[Message] Returning to the Book of Zechariah again, chapter 1, verse 7-17, and if you have your Old Testament with you, I would like to read these verses beginning with verse 7 through the 17th verse. And then in a little while we'll look at them in a bit more detail. You notice as you read these verses that what we have here is something of a vision, a night vision that was given to the Prophet Zechariah and it's the first of a series of them. We'll say more about it in a just a moment. Remember, it is the year 519 now. In the first part, the introduction, Zechariah dated his section as 520 BC. Now, in February of 519 BC, he writes these words,

"Upon the four and twentieth day of the eleventh month, which is the month Sebat, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the LORD unto Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo the prophet, saying, I saw by night, and behold a man riding upon a red horse, and he stood among the myrtle trees that were in the bottom; and behind him were there red horses, speckled, and white. (Incidentally, this statement here, "I saw by night, and behold a man riding upon a red horse, and he stood," that, if we were to take that really literally as found in the Authorized Version, that would be something of a contradiction, because you cannot ride and stand at the same time. And so, probably we are to understand that first words, translated riding as mounted. And then, of course, the second word as halted. So,) "a man riding upon a red horse and he halted among the myrtle trees that were in the bottom; and behind him were there red horses, speckled and white. Then said I, O my lord, (notice the little "L") O my lord, what are these? And the angel that talked with me said unto me, I will shew thee what these be. And the man that stood among the myrtle trees answered and said, these are they whom the LORD hath sent to walk to and fro through the earth. And they answered the angel of the LORD that stood among the myrtle trees, and said, we have walked to and fro through the earth, and, behold, all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest. Then the angel of the LORD answered and said, O LORD of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, against which thou hast had indignation these threescore and ten years? And the LORD answered the angel that talked with me with good words and comfortable words. (Or comforting words,) So the angel that communed with me said unto me, Cry thou, saying, thus saith the LORD of hosts; I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy. And I am very sore displeased with the heathen (In the Authorized Version, the term heathen is most frequently a rendering of the Hebrew word that means simple, nations. And so it is the Gentile nations as over against the nation that is in view. So,) I am very sore displeased with the nations that are at ease: for I was but a little

displeased, and they helped forward the affliction. Therefore thus saith the LORD; I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies: my house shall be built in it, saith the LORD of hosts, and a line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem. Cry yet, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; my cities through prosperity shall yet be spread abroad; and the LORD shall yet comfort Zion, and shall yet choose Jerusalem."

Well, you can see that the title of this second section of the prophecy of Zechariah is usually aptly called, "The Man among the Myrtles," because it is a vision of a man who is mounted upon a red horse, and who is standing in a low place, the bottom, and with him there are red horses, and speckled horses, and white horses. And since he is among the Myrtle trees, the "Man among the Myrtles" is usually the title that is given to the section. We are looking at Zechariah with special reference to the past, and present, and future history of the Nation Israel, because that is one of the greatest of the themes of the Old Testament, and particularly the theme of the Book of Zechariah. One of the most astonishing developments of our time has been the eclipse of Western Europe. Now, when I was born, though I don't remember this, but when I was born Europe was dominant in human civilization. In fact, in 1918 after the First World War, Europe was in a place of dominance, with the United States, of course because of their part in World War I, rapidly coming to the front. But Europe was still the dominant continent. But now when we look at Western Europe we think of nations that are of secondary importance. In fact, deterioration has so taken place that today we have two major nations, Russia and the United States, and those nations such as Britain, and France, and Germany, which when I was going to college we studied so much about in Western European history, have become secondary nations. And in fact, are appendages of the United States in so many ways, and Russia on the other hand is the great power to the east.

From the time of World War I, there has occurred what Arnold Toynbee called, "the dwarfing of Europe." I like that expression, because I think that is very close to what

has really happened. Europe has become a dwarf among men. And by men, I speak, of course, of Russia and the United States. When I was first living in Europe, there was a brilliant spoof of English history that I bought entitles, *Ten Sixty-Six and All That*, by W.C. Sellar and R.J. Yeatman. And it was designed to make fun of English history, and that's what it did. These two men signed themselves as having, I think, BA from either Cambridge or Oxford, I can't remember which. But then they had in parentheses, "flunked MA." And of course, that's funny to the English, because a MA degree from either Cambridge or Oxford doesn't really mean anything. All you do is stay on the rolls of the university for one year, and pay a fee and the MA degree gives you the right to vote in the elections for the head of the university. And that's all an MA is from those two universities. So, when they put "flunked MA," they meant simple, "We didn't pay our money in order to get the right to vote."

Well, it was a funny little book. I still have a copy of it. I've bought several of them to give to my friends, because I thought it was so funny. Also, one of the subtitles was, it comprised all the parts you can remember of English history, including "one hundred and three good things, five bad things, and two genuine dates." [Laughter] And then after it went through English history with all kinds of funny comments, the last line in it was, World War II has come to an end now, "America was thus clearly top nation, and history came to a," and they left the blank space with just a period. History came to a period. So, when England was no longer the great nation of the earth, history ended at that point. Well, there is a sense in which that caught what was really happening, because Britain was no longer the power that she had been, and Europe, as well as England or Great Britain, had been dwarfed by the facts of history.

Another astonishing development in connection with this is the reappearance and reemergence of the ancient biblical powers. If you read the Old Testament, I know when I first started reading the Old Testament the nations that are referred to in the history of the Old Testament were rather strange to me, Syria, Lebanon, of course doesn't appear

too much in the Old Testament, but Syria is there, Persia, Assyria, Babylonia. Many nations appeared that we didn't know anything about. But today, on the front pages of our papers are Syria, and Lebanon, and Iran, which is ancient Persia, and Iraq, which is ancient Assyria. And then we have Jordan which was ancient Amon and Moab, and then we have Egypt and Israel, and everyone recognizes that the Near East is a focal point of world history. And what is happening over there, the nations of the world, the big nations Russia and the United States, know has significance for all the nations of the earth now. So, with the demise of Western Europe, there has come the rise of the east in importance. And one might ask, is there a connection?

We note some strange things about history. In the year, 1492 when Columbus was discovering the United States of America, or what became the United States of America, that was the year that the Spanish Jews were driven out of Spain. It's almost as if God was preparing a place for those people, by the discovery of this land. At the result, of course, of the persecution of the Jews, was that Spain began to experience demise as a nation, which finally less than one hundred years later lead to their Spanish Armadas attempted reconquest of Britain, and the establishment again of the Roman Catholic Church there. And as you know, what happened was they met overwhelming defeat, as much by natural disaster as almost anything else, and the result was that Spain, which had been mistress of the world and queen of the seas, entered a new era of decline and decay from which she has never recovered even to the present day. It is remarkable the things that one can see if he looks at history from the stand point of the teaching of the word of God.

In 1939 to 1945, approximately four million Jews were exterminated by Nazi Germany. And what has happened, of course, has been that European Jews have begun to exit from Western Europe when they possibly could. They have started back for the land of Israel, and today we have a land of Israel there, almost as if the things that happened in Israel's history among the nations, have their counterpart in the diving

providence by which they are preserved. It's a remarkable thing that Israel today exists in the family of the nations, but exists precisely as the Bible said they would, as a nation apart. They're like the Gulf Stream in the midst of the Atlantic Ocean. It is there; it is in the midst of the water, but yet it has its distinct existence. So, one notices as one reads the Old Testament, that the flow of history, the flow of the history of the nations is affected by what God is doing with the nation. So, really the key to human history is not what is happening among the nations, except in so far as what happens among them may affect the nation. It is what is happening to, and in the midst of the nation, that is really significant.

God marches on to the consummation of his program, and the time in which we live is really the servant of God. As the apostle in Romans chapter 11, verse 26 reaches his climax in his analysis. In answer to the question, "Has God cast away his people?" Incidentally, that's put in the negative form. "God has not cast away his people, has he?" The climax is finally reached with, "And so, all Israel shall be saved." In contrast to the remnant referred to in the 5th verse. There has always been a remnant of Jewish Christian believers, or Jewish Christians. But there is coming a time when all Israel shall be saved, as the apostle sets out. So, God has not cast away his people, has he? They are undergoing discipline. They have been scattered to the four corners of the earth, but they have a magnificent future told out in the word of God so fully in the Scriptures.

There are people who say, "Well, in the New Testament there is very little about the land promises of the Nation Israel." A believer in the 1st century would have smiled at the ignorance displayed by that, because what was the Bible of the early church? What was the Bible of our Lord? Well, the Bible was the books of the Old Testament, such as they had. The Bible of the early church was the Old Testament. And so, if someone had said, where are the promises concerning the land? They would have said, "Can you read? Do you not read the Scriptures?" They did not feel it necessary to have any other writing concerning those promises, they already had the Scriptures. So the Old Testament

Scriptures were their Scriptures, and those Scriptures have hundreds of promises concerning their national future. So time is the servant of the Lord God, and he is carrying out his purposes, and they have to do with the nations, and they have to do with the nation, the nation Israel.

Now, Zechariah is a prophet of the end times, just as the other prophets. And we'll notice as we go through, that he has many prophecies that do relate to the end of our time. That is, end times, inclusive perhaps of the times of which we are a part. There are four parts in Zechariah's book. And I just mention a couple of them, because it is necessary at this point for us to know them. Last Tuesday night we looked at the introduction, and in the introduction the prophet gave to the nation a call for repentance. After all, they've been in captivity for seventy years, now a remnant of them, about forty-two thousand, has come back into the land. And having come back into the land by the grace of God, after a few years they are more busy building their own little houses than they are building the work of God. And so, Haggai and Zechariah were raised up as prophets to appeal to them to turn to the Lord. And so, Zechariah following the illustration of Haggai, appeals to them to repent. Then having given his appeal in verse 1 through verse 6 there follows eight visions that were given the Prophet Zechariah.

Those eight visions are night visions. That is, they were given to him in the night time. Just as we read here in verse 8, "I saw by night." And then the second one, which begins in verse 18, "And then lifted up mine eyes and saw, and behold four horns," and that too was in the night time. And again in chapter 2, verse 1, "I lifted up mine eyes again and looked, and behold a man with a measuring rod." And so on and so forth. So there were eight visions that were given to the prophet in the night time, and these visions finally conclude with a coronation scene. And they conclude in chapter 16, in verse 15. So beginning at chapter 1, verse 7 through chapter 6, in verse 15 there are eight night visions, followed by a coronation scene. And the theme, as you will see from

reading, if you don't remember these chapters in your Bible reading, the theme is Israel and the coming kingdom.

We look first at verses 7 and 8, in which the prophet's vision is described. We know from the Epistle to the Hebrews in the New Testament, that God speaks in many ways. He speaks by vision. He speaks by prophecy. He speaks by institution, such as the tabernacle. He speaks by ritual, such as the cultus of the Levitical ceremonies, and he speaks by vision. This is one of the ways in which he speaks. Now, the symbols of the Book of Zechariah are not easy to interpret. If we're looking for some clue, perhaps to speak generally we can say this; we may not arrive at every interpretation with one hundred percent certainty, but if we follow these general principles we will, generally speaking, come to the sense of the text. The symbols are interpreted, first of all, by the context. That is, the things that are found in the passage that we are studying. And then secondly, by the general content of Scripture, and of course if we are reading something like Zechariah, we're interested in the prophecies of the Old Testament, the things that the other prophets have written. And then, now and then we have some clues from the culture of the times. But primarily, the symbols are interpreted by the context in which the account is found, and by the content of Scripture, that is by the comparison of this passage of Scripture with other passages of Scripture. So, that's just a simple outline of how to understand symbols. And if one follows that, you can generally come to the sense of the passage.

First of all, we note the time of the vision, it is in February of the year 519 BC. So, Zechariah is prophesying after Haggai has prophesied. Haggai prophesied just shortly before this. The persons who are prominent in this vision are the prophet, of course, who is given the message that he is to proclaim, then the angelus interpres, or the interpreting angel. You'll notice as you read through hear, that he is spoken of as the angel who was speaking with him. And so, over and over again you will find reference to the interpreting angel. We do not know, of course, whether this is a reference in

symbolic form to the Holy Spirit. That's a very difficult thing to answer; it's not important so far as the ultimate meaning concerned.

We also notice in this passage, the angel of Jehovah. Notice verse 12, "Then the angel of the LORD answered and said, O LORD of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah?" And here, it seems fairly plain, that this is a Christophany; that is, an appearance and a ministering appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ before his incarnation. There are a number of these in the Old Testament. They were designed, evidently, by God to prepare the nation Israel for the incarnation when it came. A characteristic thing about the appearance of the angel of Jehovah are these things; frequently in the context he will be addressed as the angel of Jehovah, then suddenly the one who is addressed as the angel of Jehovah is speaking, and it is said of him that the Lord is speaking. So the angel of the Lord and the Lord begin to merge into the description of this one person. And almost all students of Scripture of orthodox character have acknowledged that these are pre-incarnate appearances of the Lord Jesus Christ. That's why we call them Christophanies, appearance of Christ before the time of his incarnation. So, the three persons are prominent, the prophet, the interpreting spirit, and the angel of Jehovah, the man among the myrtles.

One other characteristic thing about references to the angel of Jehovah is that sometimes a Christophany appears, and in the Christophany a man is referred to, and then suddenly the man becomes again the Lord God. Abraham had such an experience. Joshua had such an experience. Jacob had such an experience, and others also had such an experience. Now, the places and things of the vision are described in verse 8. What we read here is a man who is mounted, that's the sense of the Hebrew word here, is mounted on a red horse followed by troops that are on red, bay, and white horses. And the man halts; I think that's the sense of the Hebrew text here, amidst the myrtle trees, in a low place. Exciting isn't it? It might seem very dull. Just think, a man riding on a red horse, some others following him on horses, and he halts in a little low place among

some myrtle trees. Exciting isn't it? No, it's not exciting. [Laughter] If you just read that, it's not exciting. It seems like a very ordinary thing doesn't it? Well, sometimes things that are very ordinary things can be rather exciting things.

He's on a red horse. Now, evidently, that red is designed to represent something in the light of the context that follows. One thinks of Isaiah 63, and the picture of our Lord that is given there, with his garments dipped in blood. And so, let's just assume that what this red is designed to represent is that he is a man prepared for judgment, and the blood, or the red, suggesting the blood of conflict and judgment. Revelation chapter 6 might be compared as a parallel passage as well. He halts among the myrtle trees. These were imported trees, very fragrant trees. And they were characteristic of the land of Palestine, and they suggest to us, because of their lowness, their fragrance, and the fact that they were associated with the land at this time, though imported there. That wouldn't be contrary to what we know of Israel, would it? But they suggest the nation Israel. Now, in Scripture when we have the nations of the earth, the Gentile nations pictured frequently in books like Daniel there, pictured as great trees, mighty trees, because that's the way the world looks at things. But the myrtles were small trees, but fragrant trees, characteristic of the land of Palestine.

Now, the fact that our Lord halts with these animals in a low place, in the bottom, as we read here in verse 8, "the trees that were in the bottom," we, of course, cannot speak with absolute certainty, but "in the bottom," the low place, might suggest the degradation of the remnant that has come back into the land, and perhaps also, the fact that they have been the object of a great deal of persecution. They have entered into considerable experience of affliction. At least, it's something to bear in mind.

Now, he's also followed by individuals that are on red horses, or speckled horses, and white horses. I have a friend in the ministry who was a former cavalry man, and when he sees something like that his ears prick up. And he says, "No, these are not red, these are sorrel, red mane and tail with a brown body. And those that are described as

speckled are really bay horses with two colors." We said bays, black mane and tail and red or reddish-brown body. And the third, referred to here as white, is really gray. As we say, a gray to describe a horse, grays. And so, he thinks that what that means is something significant. That is, that he is followed by individuals on horses, that suggests slaughtering, and separating, and delivering. I think that that's probably something that is not intended by Zechariah. It's maybe interesting to that individual, but I think that when we go to suggest things like that, we have to realize it's pure speculation.

What's the meaning of this little vision then? Well, the meaning would appear to be that Israel is brought low in affliction, that's characteristic of their experience at the present time. But the man, the angel of Jehovah, the pledge of the covenant of God made with them, still is among them. He is mounted on a red horse, followed by his angelic helpers, and he waits to accomplish judgment, judgment and mercy, for them and to bring victory to his scattered nation. In other words, this is designed to be a message of comfort for the nation. They are pictured as in affliction, but their hope lies in the redeemer and in the covenant that has been made with them, and has been made with them centuries back, but which God never forgets. Now, if we were to sum it up in a sentence or two, that's what I would say this referred to.

Now, let's notice what follows. The prophets' going to have a conversation about it, and I'm not surprised because if I had been there I certainly would have a conversation too if I could speak. I might have been so astonished I couldn't speak at all, but if I could speak, I would want to have a few words of explanation. And he's interested in these cavalry troops that appear with the man among the myrtles. And so he makes a request in the 9th verse, he says, "Then said I, O my lord, what are these?" Incidentally, that word "lord" is a Hebrew expression adone, which while it may in certain contexts refer to the Lord God, frequently does not. And in this case, that latter is probably true. This is a reference to the interpreting angel who is by his side. "Oh my lord, what are these?" And the reply follows, "And the angel that talked with me said unto me," now this is the

interpreting angel. He said to me, "I will shew thee what these be." And evidently he points him away. And the man who stood among the myrtle answered, in the vision, he is evidently so close that he is part of what is going on, "These are they whom the LORD hath sent to walk to and fro through the earth. And they answered the angel of the LORD that stood among the myrtle trees, and said, we have walked to and fro through the earth, and, behold, all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest." And so the angel of the Lord answers and says, "These are those whom Yahweh has sent to walk to and fro on the earth." And then they spoke up for themselves and reported to the angel of the Lord that stood among the myrtle trees, the man among the myrtles, and they said, "We have walked to and fro through the earth, and, behold, all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest."

Now, if you were acquainted with the prophecies that were made with reference to the nation Israel, you would know that that was a disturbing report. You might say, "Well, that was a good report. Everything is fine. Everything is quiet." But no, that's a disturbing report. It's a disturbing report for the simple reason that Israel has been told, in the context of this very book that before they will return to the possession of their promises there is going to be a great shaking of heavens and the earth. If you turn back just a page or two to the book of Haggai and read verse 7 of the 2nd chapter of Haggai, this is what you read. "And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come," that may be desirable things or the precious things. That is, that the Gentiles will bring into the possession of the Israelites in Jerusalem. Or one of the ancient interpretations has been that the desire of all nations was the Lord Jesus himself. That's a problem of Hebrew exegesis; we need not enter into now. Notice, "I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts." Now, this house, of course, is a reference to the temple.

"The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the LORD of hosts." Now, that will tell you simply this that before Israel is to enter into the possession of the ancient

promises, there is going to be a shaking of the heavens and the earth. Now, look also at chapter 2, verse 21 through verse 23, the final prophecy that Haggai gives,

"Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, I will shake the heavens and the earth; And I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen; and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them; and the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother. In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith the LORD, and will make thee as a signet: for I have chosen thee, saith the LORD of hosts."

Evidently a reference to the Davidic throne for which Zerubbabel had rite, and a reference to the fulfillment of the Davidic covenant. So you can see that since they had already been told that before they entered into their blessings, promised them by the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants, there would be a great upheaval among the nations. When the report comes from these men who are one the horses, the red horses, the speckled horses, and the white horses, that all the world is at rest, that would be a disturbing thing. That would mean that there is some time to elapse before they enter into the blessings that have been promised to them.

Now, in the 12th verse, the Lord replies to this report. "Then the angel of the LORD answered and said." Now, they've replied, and they've said, "The whole earth sits still and is at rest." And so the angel of the Lord answers, and his answer is a prayer, "O LORD of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, against which thou hast had indignation these threescore and ten years?" Someone has called this the Lord's Prayer of the Old Testament. And so, the prayer of this angel of the Lord is, "Lord when are you going to bring Israel into the possession of the ancient covenantal promises?" And the Lord answers, and so in verse 13 through verse 17, the

prophet is given a commission and his commission is to cry. Not to be a crybaby, but to preach. But to preach, and the term is "cry," that is, it is something that is to be spoken with a great deal of emotion and a great deal of feeling, and a great deal of noise probably. "And the LORD answered the angel that talked with me with good words and comfortable words." In a sense, that's the text of the Book of Zechariah, because that's what it is. It's composed of good words and comforting words for the remnant that has returned from the captivity. And they are told, in effect, that their return is not the fulfillment of the ancient prophecies. That still lies in the future.

So, let's read of the special character of the commission of the prophet Zechariah. He answered him "with good words and comfortable words. So the angel that communed with me said unto me, Cry thou, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy." That is very strong language, and if you will look at that in the Hebrew text, you will find that it is very emphatically set out. "I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy," not simply jealous, that term itself is a very strong word. But in addition, "I am jealous not simply with jealousy," which adds a little bit of emphasis, "but with a great jealousy for Zion and for Jerusalem." Of course, this is what we call theologically, anthropopathism. That is, it is human language, human language of human feeling but applied to God. And of course, the purpose of it is emphasis. We are jealous when something is of interest to us, something close to us may be mistreated, taken advantage of, and someone may seek to obtain him or her for himself or for herself. And so, the Lord God is saying, "I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion. I am not only jealous of them," they are being mistreated by the nations, you see, but "I am jealous for them with a great jealousy." And so, that's strong feeling expressed by God.

Now, this is divine discipline of the nation, but the nations are being used as instruments, and when the nations overstep themselves, that's disturbing to the Lord God. That of course, is a manifestation of their sin, and a special manifestation of their

judgment. We have many illustrations of this in the history of the nation Israel. One, incidentally, can look at the divine discipline of the nation Israel over these past centuries, now scattered to the four corners of the earth. That's part of the prophecy of the Old Testament. One reads Leviticus 26, Deuteronomy 28, all that has been set out in significant detail as certain to happen to them, but when the nations do what God said they were going to do, they are not blameless. In other words, to be an instrument of God does not mean that we are without blame. We may be actually an instrument of God, but be responsible for our actions. Judas is the preeminent example. He was an instrument of the Lord God. "The Son of man goes as it is written concerning him," Jesus said, "but woe to that man through whom." The Son of man is betrayed. So, the nations of the earth are the hammers in the hand of God, but they are responsible for their wickedness. When Babylon, for example, is used by God to discipline the nation Israel, Babylon may go too far, and come under the judgment of God. That's what we read about here. He says, "I'm jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with great jealousy, and I am very sore displeased with the nations that are at ease." It's a temporary chastening for Israel, but it's a final, fatal judgment that the nations face. Because God is faithful to his word, and the unbelief of the nation Israel does not cancel the promises made to them. Paul makes that so plain in Romans 3, verse 1 through verse 45, "Shall their unbelief make void the faithfulness of God? God forbid." And so, here the promises are promises that are going to be fulfilled, and they are going to be fulfilled for the nation. But the nations who have overstepped themselves, they are going to discover that judgment is their lot.

Now, notice what he says, "For I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction." Or, they made matters worse. I was displeased with Israel, but they've gone overboard in the exercise of their will in the various ways in which they have persecuted the nation. Now, the particular character, incidentally, one could speak at this point rather lengthily about anti-Semitism, because this is one of the expressions of it. Anti-Semitism has existed from the days of the earliest chosen ones of God; from the

days of Abraham and Jacob and Moses all the way down to the Josephs of the 20th century, like Joseph Goebbels who said, "A Jew is for me an object of physical disgust. I vomit when I see one. I treasure an ordinary prostitute above a married Jewess." Goebbels said simply what was in his heart. Others feel the same way, but are fearful of saying it.

What are the reasons for anti-Semitism? Well, ultimately it is rejection of the divine election of the nation Israel. Ultimately, it goes back to that. But the hatred of the God of Israel, the penal judgment of God, the national discipline of God, the pride and self-righteousness of the nation; a contributing factor, as in those chapters that describe Israel's discipline point out. Moses speaks about the pride of your power. And so, Israel is partially to blame for the anti-Semitism. Think of what chief Rabbi Adler, a rabbi in the earlier part of this century said, "We require no mediator to save us from the effects of our guilt. Our own sincere repentance suffices to achieve for us, divine forgiveness." Well, that's why no Jew sings the songs of Moses, nor does he sing the songs of the Christian church, "I Need Thee Every Hour." And that's why, of course, Mohammedans don't ever sing, "Mohammed Lover of my Soul." They don't know anything about the grace of God in salvation. Gentile jealousy of Jewish excellencies in economics, manifested by hatred of the Rothschilds, the Morganthals, and others down through the years; their skill in science, with their discipline, with their magnificent geniuses like Albert Einstein, in art and music with a Mendelssohn, and others. One reason the Jews were forced into money lending and commerce by medieval laws was that they were not permitted to own any property. So the only way they could earn a living was in these things, and they became outstanding in them. In fact, in many lands they were the only middle class, and practically the only intelligent class as a whole.

I don't know whether you know this or not; I don't know what the figures are right now, but just a few years back, the general figure of men and women attending college is twenty-seven percent of our population. Among the Jews, it has been eighty

percent of Jewish men and women. No wonder they excel, but they are forced to by their experiences. Jewish separatists and xenophobia is brought about, often, by the experiences that they have among others. But God has said it is a people who dwell alone, and they will be alone. And other things, of course, have caused it. Some things that are not so good, such as their general political liberalism, and their philosophical rationalism, for which they have also been known. But part of that is the result of the way that they have been treated. So, we should bear that in mind.

Notice that things that are said now. I'll just go through them, for our time is just about up. In verse 16, we read, "Therefore thus saith the LORD; I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies." Incidentally, the Septuagint has "I will return to Jerusalem with mercies." It has the Greek word *epistrepho*, "I will return." And I think that's the sense of the Hebrew text at this point. In other words, the glory of the Shekinah is to return to Jerusalem. That would make it harmonious with other prophecies of this great book. "My house shall be built in it," a reference to the rebuilding of the temple, and then the rebuilding of the city. "I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies." And the enriching of the cities in verse 17, I should have mentioned the rebuilding of the city in "a line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem." And then the enriching of the cities in verse 17, "Cry yet, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; my cities through prosperity shall yet be spread abroad." As one looks at the other prophecies of the prophets of Israel, and others, what he is speaking about is the richness in the city of the last days, when the nations shall bring their riches into the city, spoken of in such great detail in prophecies like Israel, in the sixties of that particular prophecy.

Notice the four yets of verse 17, "Cry yet, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; my cities through prosperity shall yet be spread abroad; and the LORD shall yet comfort Zion." In other words, Zion shall be restored, the idea of deliverance is found there. And finally, "and shall yet choose Jerusalem." In other words, the covenant is not forgotten. That's the important thing to remember, the unconditional covenants are covenants that

God guarantees by the faithfulness of himself to his word. The covenant that he made with Abraham, the covenant that he made with David, and the expansion in the new covenant in its redemptive basis, these are things that God does not forget. And he will bring them to pass. So, he will yet choose Jerusalem.

So, what we have here really is a summary in a nut shell of the book. Israel's humiliation, the judgment of the nations, and Israel's certain future but the faithfulness of the Lord God. Our time is up. We'll have to stop at this point. We'll pick it up there next Tuesday night, Lord willing. Let's bow in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for the privilege of studying these ancient prophecies. We thank Thee for the way in which they reveal the faithfulness of our triune God to the ancient promises. The promise that was given before the law, as Paul points out in Galatians chapter 3, and therefore rests upon the divine grace and mercy. We are grateful; we are thankful. And we look forward to the consummation of the program, which Thou hast set out in Scripture. For Jesus' sake. Amen.