



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

The Jewish People, Jesus Christ, and World History

Zechariah 9:10-17

"Judgment, Disarmament, and Universal Peace"

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for the privilege that is ours again on this evening to turn to the Scriptures and study them, consider the message that they have concerning the nation Israel, and Israel's Messiah, and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We thank Thee for the insights into the future that are given to us through these portions from Thy word. We thank Thee for this great prophet and the prophecy that Thou didst give to him and for the faithfulness that was manifested in the communication and preservation of it for us.

And we pray, Lord that we may be responsive to the message that we find in Thy word. Deliver us from lack of submission and lack of obedience to the truth and unresponsiveness and indifference to the things of our great God and Savior. We pray that Thou wilt be with us in this evening as we study in the 9th chapter now, and we commit the time to Thee and pray that Thou will enlighten each of us through the Spirit as we look into the word. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

[Message] The subject for tonight as we turn to Zechariah chapter 9, verse 10 through verse 17 is "Disarmament and Peace." Peace and disarmament, what hopes and

aspirations they stir in the heart of man. Arising from these basic drives have come the peace congresses of the last century and the disarmament conferences of this century, and so many of the hopes of people expressed in the political arena. The first peace conference took place in London in 1843. That led to the League of Nations and then ultimately to the United Nations. There were disarmament conferences in Washington, a naval conference in 1921 and 1922 following World War I. And then in London in 1930, in the famous Kellogg-Briand Pact was signed in 1928. From your study of history, of course you know people such as I, we were there. We read about this in the papers, but the rest of you, when you studied ancient history you were exposed to the Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928 signed by fifteen nations. What is striking about it, of course, is what is so true to Scripture, men are sinners. And so, here are fifteen great nations that sign a pact in 1928, Japan was a signatory to the pact, and Japan attacked Manchuria three years later. Italy a couple of years after that, also a signatory to the pact, attacked Ethiopia. Germany, not too long after that attacked Poland. And so, such is the history of pacts made among the nations.

What's so strange about this isn't it, that people in our society believe that nations will sign pacts and keep them. You know, we have to be the most gullible of all the beings in this universe. I doubt that the animals are that gullible. But people are extremely gullible. And we have very sensible people talking about signing peace treaties. The latest hope is some form of strategic arms limitation treaties. And of course, many really place a great deal of hope in that. The last one, the nuclear treaty that the USA signed with the USSR in 1966 set a preamble, seventeen hundred words, seventeen hundred articles. I wonder how many of those articles still stand now. We know that many of them, if not most of them, have been broken. They don't pay any attention to them.

But here we turn to Zechariah chapter 9, verse 10 through verse 17, and in one article of nineteen words in the Hebrew text, God says that he is going to accomplish the

futile dreams of man. He's going to bring peace upon the earth, and furthermore, it will be a peace that will be lasting. Luther once said, "Peace if possible, but truth at any rate," and what we shall have is a true peace. Listen to what we read in verse 10 of Zechariah chapter 9. "And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth." Well, that's the subject of this last section of Zechariah chapter 9, and what I'd like to look at is the prophecy of peace in verse 10, and then the prophecy of liberation that is given as a following prophecy in verse 11 through verse 16, and then the final verse, which has a disputed significance. It might be called praise from the Messiah of the people, and praise of them because of the joy that he has given to them. Or it might be taken as praise of the Messiah, because of what he's done.

Well, let's turn to verse 10, and remember the Lord Jesus has two great advents set forth in holy Scripture. There are some who think of three, but even those who think of three advents think that the Second Advent and the Third Advent are very closely related. And of course, I'm speaking of rapture and then a revelation, an advent to the earth. The first advent, we know has already come, and great things were accomplished by our Lord's ministry, in his sufferings, when he was here, now nineteen hundred years ago. Then he accomplished the prophecies of the Old Testament that pertained to the redemption of the people of God.

As he said, speaking to those disciples on the Emmaus Road, marveling at the way in which they had become familiar with holy Scripture, but yet had not understood it, and then expressing some anger over the fact that they had not, he said to them, "Oh fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Messiah to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory. And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." So, the prophecies of the Old Testament said very plainly that the Lord Jesus would come,

the Messiah would accomplish his saving work through his sufferings, and then he would enter into his glory.

Even when the Lord Jesus said, "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," he never intended that Israel should think that they would have a kingdom apart from sufferings. Some have read the New Testament in that way, but that's a false reading of the New Testament. Unfortunately, many people gained a great deal of credence among evangelicals by affirming that our Lord really offered a kingdom apart from a cross. He never offered a kingdom apart from a cross, but he did offer a kingdom. He offered the kingdom, however, through the cross. It's possible to make the other error, and that's to say he never offered an earthly kingdom at all. These are two errors, it seems to me, one one extreme, the other, the other. He did offer a kingdom, but it was through the sufferings. And so that's why he said to the disciples on the Emmaus Road, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have written." The Messiah had to suffer these things, and then to enter into his glory.

Now, we read last time Zechariah chapter 9, verse 1 through verse 9, and we notices the 9th verse particularly. "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." It's quite clear from this that this is a reference to the first coming of the Messiah, and the fact that the Lord Jesus, when he was here, and made his entry into Jerusalem, went to great detail to carry out this specific prophecy. Remember, he went to specific detail, having his disciples perform specific tasks, obtaining for him the animals upon which he would ride, and then he rode into the city, in a sense announcing to those who had some spiritual understanding, "I am fulfilling Zechariah 9:9. I am the Messiah." Well, of course, we know what happened. And we know that he was crucified, and we know that he was resurrected, and he has ascended to the right hand of the Father. So verse 9 is a prophecy that had to do with the first coming. In the first coming he came in order to be slain.

Now in verse 10, " And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth." This is a reference to his second coming. Now, the second coming is different than the first. In the first he came to suffer; in the second he comes to enter into his glories in a more specific way as it pertains, as we read here, from the sea to the sea, from the river to the ends of the earth. So, in the first coming he came to be slain. In the second, he comes to slay the enemies of the Lord God in heaven and establish his reign upon the earth. The intervening time is omitted. That's not unusual in the prophetic word. Verse 9, the first coming; verse 10, the second coming. What about all of the centuries in between? Well, it's not surprising for more than once this happens in the word of God. So, verse 10, then is a prophecy of peace, and the Lord God is going to accomplish it through his coming to the earth.

In verse 10, in the first part of the verse, he speaks of world disarmament. "And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem." Chariot and horse were instrumentalities of warfare, and the fact, of course, that he mentions Ephraim, the northern kingdom, and then Jerusalem, the capital of the southern kingdom is an implicit acknowledgment of the fact that the kingdoms, the north and the south, will be united in the future. So, he's going to cut off the chariot from Ephraim, the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off. This is the only time that disarmament is not really foolish, and that's of course, when it's accomplished by the Lord God. In Micah chapter 5 we have a prophecy that is very closely related to this, so if you'll turn back a few pages, Micah, I know you won't remember what was said in the exposition. I'm not sure I would have remembered if I hadn't looked it up, but verse 10 and verse 11 of Micah chapter 5, speaking of the same time, speaks in much the same language. "And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD, that I will cut off thy horses out of the midst of

thee, and I will destroy thy chariots: And I will cut off the cities of thy land, and throw down all thy strong holds."

Now, in the preceding verses remember, he had prophesied in verse 2 that Bethlehem would be the place of the Messiah's birth, and in verse 3 he had said, "Therefore will he give them up, until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth: then the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel." So there's a reference there to the virgin birth, and then of his Second Advent, "And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God; and they shall abide: for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth. And this man shall be the peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our land."

So in Zechariah chapter 9, in verse 10, the first part of the verse, we really have true disarmament. One wonders, when he reads the Bible, since the United States has become such a large and significant country, and since there may be some reference to the USSR in some of the statements of Old Testament prophecy concerning the north. Why is not this great country mentioned in the prophetic word? Now, of course, you can hear a lot of messages from people who will tell you he's going to speak on where the United States is in prophecy. That message is still being given by Bible student, because they've yet to find the United States in prophecy, but occasionally people will have some ideas and seek to force the text to tell us where a USA is in prophecy.

I have a good friend, he takes the view that the reason that the USA is not mentioned in the Scriptures is perhaps, because the USA will not be there at the end of the particular age of which we are a part. And he even suggests that perhaps histories will be written, assuming that we shall have two or three more centuries of human existence before the coming of our Lord, that maybe someone will right about this brilliant country that arose in the 15th century, became a nation in the 18th century, and then in the 20th century or the early 21st century vanished from the scene. Maybe that will be a subject of our history books. And in fact, the USA's history will be something

likened unto something like a sparkler, a Christmas sparkler. We flashed across human history and then we disappeared. Well, we know the time is coming when there is going to be disarmament. We may wonder about the United States; I know I do. I haven't found the USA yet in the Scriptures. It's a rather interesting thing, but I cannot solve it at this point. I know it's terrible for a Bible teacher to admit there's something about the Bible he doesn't know. So, don't tell any of my friends that I made an admission that I didn't know that. [Laughter]

Now, notice the next part of that verse, because here world peace is spoken of. "And he shall speak peace unto the nations." Peace among the nations, peace among men, peace between men and God, characteristic of the ministry of the Lord is that word, peace. Remember, he made peace by the blood of the cross, and so we talk about peace with God as being the peace that we have when we recognize our lost condition, when we recognize the Lord Jesus as offered an atoning sacrifice for sinners, and that that salvation is ours as the Holy Spirit brings us to renounce trust in everything else, and lean upon him for our salvation. And there is a relationship established between an individual and the Lord God, called in Scripture, peace. That is, the alienation that existed between those of us who were lost and enemies of God, for we all are that, because that enmity has been taken away by the Lord Jesus Christ, we have now become his friends. So peace, we have peace with God.

The Lord Jesus spoke a lot about peace, and he spoke about peace to people who already had peace with God. He spoke to the apostles, for example, in the upper room. And remember, he has said of them in the upper room, "Now ye are clean on account of the word which I have spoken to you." But nevertheless he talked to them about peace. He said in John chapter 14 and verse 27 some very significant words that I know you have heard before, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." And then in chapter 16, in verse 33 he says, "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye

might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." So, there is peace with God, and then there is what Bible teachers like to call the peace of God. And that's what our Lord is speaking of. It is a gift from him to those who are his believers. He gives us peace. And there is a since in which this is to have its outworking in our own Christian lives. We should not only have a peace with God and enjoy the peace of God, but there should be peace between the saints also. It has its practical application.

One might ask the question, "From what source does peace come?" Well, let me just make a couple of suggestions. In the first place, peace comes from a sense of adequate resources. A person, who feels that he has adequate resources for the experiences of life, has peace. It's the person who doesn't have adequate resources that is full of anxiety and who worries. But the person who feels that he has adequate resources is at peace. The things that face him, he copes with. Now, we know from the Scriptures that we do not have any adequate resources of ourselves. The adequate resources to face and to cope with the experiences of life come from our Lord. When he said that he left them peace he also said in that same message, remember, "Without me you can do nothing." So, peace comes from the sense of adequate resources.

One senses that in our Lord's life. He had a sense of adequate resources. Perhaps you think that his sense of his adequate resources lay in the fact that he knew he was the divine Son. Well, I suggest to you that of course our Lord knew that, but that wasn't really the source of his peace when he was walking upon this earth. When he was walking upon this earth he lived as a Son of God, as the perfect Son, and he lived in perfect trust. He said he did his miracles, not by the power of his divine nature, but he said he did his miracles by the power of the Holy Spirit. In other words, he lived the perfectly obedient human life, apart from sin. He relied upon his Father. He said, the things that he said are "not the things that I have originated, they come from my Father. The things that I do, I have not originated them, they come from my Father. My meat is

to do the will of him that sent me." He had a sense of adequate resources, because the source was the Father.

Now, we have, of course, as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, we have a peace that comes from God, and we have adequate resources for the experience of life. Listen to what the Apostle Paul says in Philippians chapter 4, verse 6 and verse 7, another very familiar text. "Be anxious for nothing;" Paul asked of the Philippians, "but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall garrison your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." That's the source of true peace, the sense of adequate resources, the sense of fellowship with the Lord. Think of our Lord, for example, in the boar on the Sea of Galilee when the storm came up. Who is concerned? Well, an apostle is concerned, all the apostles for that matter, our Lord is asleep in the bow of the boat. And they come to him, and they awaken him in the midst of the thunder and the lightening, and they say, "Master, carest Thou not that we perish?" And so our Lord is aroused and he speaks the word, he said actually to the nature about him, it's one of those nature miracles that liberals have a difficult time understanding by psychosomatic theories, he said, "Peace be still,." As we have often talked about that, it was a word that was used of a dog that was muzzled, "Peace be muzzled." It's almost like, "Back to your kennels." And of course there was a great calm.

Well, that was the Lord you might say, but think of Peter. Peter was a very disturbed person beforehand and manifested, on a number of occasions that he didn't really have the peace of God until afterwards. But when the day of Pentecost came, and the Holy Spirit came and baptized those believers into one body, and began to indwell them permanently, what a difference it seemed to make in Peter. He was taken prisoner in the preaching of the word of God. One of the apostles was put to death, and Peter was in prison, and he didn't have any reason to expect anything other than that, so what was he doing? In prison biting his fingernails? No, he was asleep. In fact, Peter was

sleeping so soundly that when an angel came into his cell, and angels are rather bright, you know. Do you sleep with your windows closed in your bedroom or the shades closed? Some people do, they find it impossible to sleep when the sun comes up in their rooms, so they close their shades and the room is dark, so they can stay asleep.

Now, when the angel with the brightness of the angelic being came into the cell with Peter, he slept right on. And in fact, Acts chapter 12 said the angel had to reach down and shake Peter in order to awaken him. Now, that is the peace of God when you are facing death. I don't know what he was meditating upon. It's possible he was meditating on John chapter 21, in verse 17 and verse 18, because Peter had been concerned about what was going to happen to John, and Jesus said to him, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not." Peter may have been thinking, "Well, this is the fulfillment of that word the Lord gave to me, I'll just go to sleep, because it looks like I'm going to be with the Lord tomorrow." That's a sense of adequate resources. He knew he had everything for that particular situation and a great hope in addition. World peace is great, and this kind of peace is just as great.

Now, the end of that 10th verse speaks of world dominion. "And his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth." Remember the prophecy in Daniel chapter 2, the stone cut out without hands that smites the image of Nebuchadnezzar, and then the image collapses, becomes like the dust of the chaff of a threshing floor, is blown away. And the stone gets larger and larger, and finally it fills the whole of the earth. That's God's way of expressing to Nebuchadnezzar how the Lord Jesus is going to come as the stone, overthrow human dominion, and establish the kingdom that will fill the whole of the earth. So, world dominion, and in fact this is expressed in the language of one of the songs.

I'm a firm believer in the fact that the prophets were individuals who studied the Scriptures. That is, they didn't get everything that they got purely from the Lord as if they were secretaries taking dictation. That is not the way they got some of their messages. They were filled with holy Scripture. One can read the Old Testament, and as the Old Testament progresses in the history of redemption you can see the later writers of Scripture leaning on the terminology of earlier writings of Scripture. In Psalm 72, and in verse 18 and verse 20, listen to these words, "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth." And in verse 20, or rather, yes it's verse 20, that's the end of it expressing the fact that this is the prayer of David the son of Jesse. What I wanted to point out was that this prophecy was really an ancient prophecy, and we find it again here in "His dominion shall be from sea to sea, even unto the ends of the earth."

Now, the remaining words, verses 11 through 16 are written against the background of a later struggle; a struggle that existed in the 2nd century before the time of our Lord, the background of the Macabian struggle at the dissolution of the Grecian Empire between the testaments. You remember, I know, that when Alexander's kingdom was overthrown, his kingdom was divided into four parts. Ptolemy Lagus assumed authority over Egypt, southern Syria, and Palestine. Seleucus Nicator, northern Syria and eastern Asia Minor; Lysimachus, Thrace and Western Asia Minor; and then finally Cassander assumed authority over Macedonia and Greece. Well, for a long time after Alexander's defeat Israel was under the Ptolemies of Egypt, but then finally the Ptolemies of Egypt were overthrown by Antiochus the Third of Syria, he took Palestine in 198 BC, and the result was that Palestine came under the dominion of Antiochus Epiphanes, and his successors. There ensued a struggle, and finally at a particular time due to the arrogance of those who had overthrown the Ptolemies, the Jews revolted. And they revolted under the leadership, I'm just going to sum up a lot of years of history, and they revolted under the leadership of Judas Maccabeus, Maccabeus means "the hammer." And

shortly after Judas Maccabeus, who was "the hammer," Israel gained some independence, in fact, from 143 to 135 BC, under Simon, Israel gained independence.

Now, it's possible that this prophecy is written against the background of that struggle, but you will see as you look at it, that the language goes beyond that. For we read in verse 16, "And the LORD their God shall save them in that day as the flock of his people: for they shall be as the stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign upon his land." That expression "in that day" is one of the expressions that generally refers to the Messianic kingdom. So, here is a prophecy of liberation, which has ultimate reference to the time of the great tribulation, and the future of God upon the earth, future from our time. Beginning at verse 11, just a few comments as we go through these verses, "As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners."

Now, you might be troubled by that past tense there, because you might think, "Well, evidently this was past time from the time of Zechariah, so how can this be a reference to the future?" Hebrew had an interesting use of the perfect state or tense. When something was very certain and sure to take place, often it was described in what we would call past time. Sometimes when something was so certain to take place, it would be written as if it had already taken place, just to get over the idea that it is certain. We have it in the New Testament. In fact, in Romans chapter 8, the Apostle Paul, speaking about the great things that are true of all of us, remember, says, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also will glorify." But no, the text says, "them also he glorified." Now, we haven't been glorified yet. No one has been glorified yet, except for the Lord Jesus himself. He's the only one who has been resurrected from the dead and given a glorified body. That's why Paul says the resurrection is future, first, the first fruits Christ, then those who are at Christ's at his

coming. So, Paul, however, in describing what is going to happen to us, puts it in the past tense, because it's so certain.

Now, Hebrew grammarians call this in prophetic speech, the prophetic perfect. So, it will be translated often by a future tense, and so here, in my opinion, this should be rendered by a future tense. Now, evangelicals can disagree, you know, even those who believe in Christ. The New American Standard Bible, I think, has this as a past tense. Now, if I could talk with those men, some of whom were my students in theological seminary, a good many of them, I would probably say, "What do you mean by this? Do you mean this is something in the past or something in the future?" And I have a hunch that most of them would say, "Well, it's written as if it's past, but it is a reference to the future." The New International Version, however, you see, there's not English version you can completely trust. The only one you can completely trust has never been done, so we have to rely upon the original text. We believe the original text is the inspired text.

Now, we don't have the original text. Isn't that strange? We believe in the inspiration of the original text, we don't have the original text. But we have so many copies, particularly in the New Testament of the New Testament and the Old Testament, and we're reasonably certain that the edited texts that we do have are very, very close to what the apostles and the prophets wrote. We practice textual criticism, but the editors have done a lot of that for us well. So I think here, since this is a prophetic perfect, in my opinion we should render this as a future. "As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant I will send forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water." It is a promise of the Lord God that in the last days, in the days of the establishment of the kingdom of God upon the earth, he will deliver the nation Israel, and he will bring them into the possession of the ancient Messianic promises given to them.

That expression, by the way, "I will," literally in the Hebrew text the verb that is used is the verb shalach, which means "to send." And the form is shalachti, which is an intensive form of shalach, and this "I will send them, thy prisoners forth out of the pit," is

very reminiscent of an Old Testament incident. Can you remember any Old Testament in which some individuals were in a pit? Well, it wouldn't take you long to think of Joseph. Joseph was thrown into the pit. Well, this is reminiscent of that. The language is obviously designed to suggest that. So, just as Joseph was in the pit and in the forlorn condition of the pit, so Israel will have a very forlorn condition before the Lord. But he is going to deliver them from the pit, and send them forth in freedom by "the blood of Thy covenant."

What covenant is referred to? Well, he doesn't identify it, so we have to do a little speculating, but since the major covenant of the Old Testament promising blessing to the nation is the Abrahamic, the chances are that this is what is in mind. The Abrahamic covenant, as expanded by the Davidic covenant, and ultimately as expanded still further and given a redemptive basis in the new covenant, so "By the blood of the covenant I will send forth thy prisoners out of the pit, wherein is no water." The pit, of course, can be the pit of ignorance, the pit of depravity, the pit of unbelief, the pit of belief and false ways of salvation. Many of these things are true of the nation Israel, they are true of us Gentiles also, but the specific reference is to the nations. Israel today still abides under the judgment of God, the disciplinary judgment of God as a nation, scattered to the four corners of the earth. And when the word of God is read, blindness covers them. Not every one, there is a remnant according to the election of grace; of course, we've talked about that a lot. But the nation as a nation is blind. They have been cast off for a time. They have been severed from the olive tree, the natural branches, but they have the glorious future of regrafting into the olive tree, and the nation as a whole to be saved. So, "As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant I will send forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water. Turn you to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope: even to day do I declare that I will render double for thee."

This is, incidentally, double blessing for them. Why? Why should Israel have double blessing? Well, because Israel is God's firstborn son. And being God's firstborn

son, they have a double blessing. And so, we look forward to the day when Israel shall have a special place. They're going to be the head of the nations. Some Gentiles find that hard to take. Some Gentile Christians find that very hard to take, but listen. Israel in the future is not going to be like Israel today, any more than you poor Gentiles are going to be exactly like you are today. Even you believing Christians who are so different from the world. There is going to be a little improvement in your condition. And maybe you don't realize it, but we do, and I know there is going to be a great one in my condition. Martha tells me about it all the time. [Laughter] So, this is going to be a glorious day. He is going to render double for them. "When I have bent Judah for me, filled the bowl for Ephraim, raised up my sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece."

One might wonder why is Greece the object of attack here? Well the word Javan is the word for Greece, but Javan is also used in other senses in the Old Testament. In the 10th chapter of Genesis, of example, it is used for unknown nations far away from the centers of civilization. And many of the commentators, in fact, George Baldwin who has written a recent commentary in the Tyndall Series, insists or at least thinks that this is the force here. And that makes very good sense. Others have had the same view point. And so, Javan, probably it should be rendered, "and made thee as the sword of a might man. And the Lord shall be seen over them." That is, the Lord will be the defense of Israel in the days when the enemies face the nation. This is the language of a theophany, as you will notice. "He will defend them, and they shall devour and subdue the slaying stones." I'm going to translate this as the Hebrew, and we don't have time to talk about it. "And they shall talk and they shall make a noise, as through wine, and they shall be filled like bowl and as the corners of an altar. And they Lord shall save them in that day as the flock of his people." The defeat of the enemies, the exaltation of the nation is set forth. Vikki Baum once said, "To be a Jew is a destiny." That is true in the sense that they have a tremendous destiny.

And then finally, in the 17 verse, and here we have some disagreement, because it is possible to make this a reference to the Lord God as the King James Version does. "For how great is his goodness and how great is his beauty." Except the rest of the verse seems to have a slightly different force, "Corn shall make the young men cheerful, and new wine the maids." Now, it's possible to render that pronoun as a reference to they or them, and if that is done, then of course, "How great is their goodness, and how great is their beauty. Corn shall make the young men cheerful, and new wine the maids." In that case it's the praise of the Lord God and the Messiah of the people whom he has redeemed and brought into the promised blessing, magnificent future then that Israel has. When we look out on world history today and realize that Israel seems so far from the center of things, we have a good idea of what lies before the Lord God in the accomplishment of the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus Christ. We look forward to it. We look forward to when these things shall transpire for the glory of God and the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

About fifteen years ago, I went out to visit a man in Garland. He was an employee of Texas Instruments, a very interesting fella. I went in to talk to him. He told me he was a Unitarian. We had a three hour argument. We left friends, but he didn't have any points to stand on, and I had some brilliant points, [Laughter] but he didn't respond at all. He said that as far as he was concerned Christianity was not unique at all. He said Hinduism has everything that Christianity has, and he made the outrageous comment that Hinduism even had a virgin birth, which was just a statement made out of ignorance. But nevertheless he made it, and I remember leaving very frustrated thinking, "How can a person who is an intelligent man, had graduated from a university somewhere, and was an engineer at Texas Instruments, how could he make such an outrageous statement as that?" And finally I realized that he was just trying to upset me, and he succeeded. So, anyway I left and shortly afterwards I ran across this little story about Hinduism in India.

Years ago in Northern India, Bishop Warner was preaching to a congregation seated on the ground. He told how the very people that Jesus came to save seized him, mocked him, spat upon him. He told how they led him to Calvary. Very vividly he described the sufferings of our Lord Jesus upon the cross, and the fact that he gave himself an atonement for human sin, and had even cried out "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." And when the bishop reached this point, an old Hindu priest rushed forward, threw himself at the bishop's feet, and cried out, "You must leave India." And the bishop said, "Why?" And the Hindu replied, "Because we have no story like this. We have no Savior who lived a sinless life, died for his enemies, prayed for the forgiveness of those who took his life. If you keep on telling this story to our people, they'll forsake our temples and follow your Savior." Well, that of course, is not true, because men are sinners in India just as they are here. And when they hear the message they don't always respond, but at least it indicated that this Hindu priest didn't know anything about the fact of Christianity.

That gave me a better comfort, though I did win my argument. It is true. Christianity is absolutely unique. We have such a Savior. We have such a first coming as ought to rejoice the heart of any believer. We look forward, with tremendous hope, to the second coming and the consummation of some of his most magnificent work. And one thing will stand out so beautifully in the future, and that is not simply the salvation of Israel but what is seen in it, the faithfulness of God in the fulfillment of his word. And my dear Christians, the New Testament is full of similar promises for you. You can be sure, when you reply up him, he will keep his word to you just as he has and will for Israel in the future. May God help us to trust him. Like one of the Kazakh preachers used to say, "Now go out and have yourself a good believing time." [Laughter]

Let's bow in a word of prayer.

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[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for these magnificent promises. What a thrill it is to read them, and through the help of the Holy Spirit to try to picture in our minds the glorious future days when our Lord shall be seen to be what he is, the Messianic King. We praise Thee for the faithfulness shown us. Enable us Lord to be witnesses who are useful in Thy service. For Jesus' sake. Amen.