



**BELIEVERS CHAPEL**

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Divine Purpose #30

“The Consummation of the Covenantal Program (1): The National Future of Israel”

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee and thankful to Thee for the privilege of the study of the Scriptures; and we thank Thee for the privilege of tonight. We thank Thee for the word of God and for the way in which it ministers to us. We acknowledge, Lord, there are many things in the Scriptures that are still difficult for us to understand. Give us motivation and give us enlightenment, we pray, each one of us. Enable us to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Help us never to stand still in our Christian life, which seems to be so easy for us who perhaps have been Christians for a number of years. We ask, Lord, that Thou wilt enable us to advance and to come to know Thee in a more significant and more fruitful way. Give us the kinds of deep desires that make us unhappy when we are not advancing in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and in our Christian lives as well. We commit the hour of tonight to Thee and pray Thy blessing upon us as we study in the Scriptures.

For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] Now, we have been for a long time studying the covenants and the ages, particularly as it relates to the divine purpose of the ages, and tonight we are turning homeward so to speak in our studies and the subject is “The Consummation of the

Covenantal Program” and we are looking at “The National Future of Israel” from the standpoint of the Old Testament, tonight. Now, we have looked at this from time to time as we have considered other topics; but tonight we are looking at it in a different way and turning to three passages, primarily in the Old Testament that have to do with the national future of the nation Israel. Let me begin with a few words by way of introductions.

This is, in a sense, the climax of the covenantal program. Now, some of you, I see, are probably here for perhaps the first time or possibly you’ve been here only just a few times and you may not understand exactly what we’ve been trying to do in this series of studies. We began by looking at covenantal theology from the historical standpoint. We looked at its history, we looked at its theological structure, and we then laid stress upon the three covenants that, generally speaking, make up its primary significance.

We looked at the covenant of works, we looked at the covenant of grace, we looked at the eternal covenant of redemption. And then, we turned to dispensationalism and we looked at the history of dispensationalism. And the reason we looked at dispensationalism is because these two systems of theology and evangelicalism probably are the two systems that contend for acceptance by evangelicals in our country. We looked at the history of dispensationalism. We looked at its primary structure and we, also, made some critique of dispensationalism as we made of covenant theology, as well.

And then, having done that as a kind of historical and theological background for our studies, we then began a study of the biblical, I could say biblical-historical, but I’m going to call them biblical of the biblical covenants. And we’ve centered attention upon the Abrahamic Covenant, the Davidic Covenant, and the New Covenant; because these are the primary and significant biblical covenants.

We’ve laid special stress upon the Abrahamic Covenant for the simple reason that we have regarded the Davidic Covenant as being an expansion of the Abrahamic Covenant. And we have looked at the New Covenant as being, as affording us, an insight into the redemptive ground of that covenantal program.

Then we, in a sense, came over to the New Testament, and we've been looking such things as the present age, as understood by New Testament writers. For example, we looked at Acts chapter 15, and we saw from Acts chapter 15, how James interpreted the present age. We looked also at the Apostle Paul and we saw in several of Paul's passages, Romans chapter 11, Ephesians chapter 2, and Ephesians chapter 3; for these are probably the three important passages in which the Apostle deals with the subject how he thinks about the present age; what he thinks is happening at the present time. We've laid stress upon the fact that James and the apostle agreed with reference to the nature of the present age and saw the present age as an age of Gentile ingathering.

Now, we did not take the viewpoint that this particular age does not have any connection with preceding ages. Nor, that it will have no connection with what follows. We've rather tried to show that what we see today in the present age of Jewish disavowal and Gentile acceptance is something found in Amos chapter 9, for example. Not as clearly as one would like to have it but, nevertheless, there. We saw that Paul plainly stated that that this is the age of Jewish disavowal; it's the age of Gentile acceptance on a limited scale. In fact, the apostle says in Romans chapter 11, that blindness, in part, has happened to Israel until the full number of the Gentiles be come in. And then, we pointed out that in Romans chapter 11, the apostle says quite plainly that Israel has ethnic future, as a nation. And, following that, in Romans 11, 11 through 15, we can anticipate worldwide Gentile salvation, something far beyond present Gentile salvation, which is an elected or elective salvation in a more limited sense. All salvation is elective, of course, but this is a more limited sense.

Now, in the closing parts of our study, we're going to be looking at the national future of Israel and then we're going to be looking at the kingdom of God, and, ultimately, at the eternal state. So we'll kind of wind up our study, and this is the first of the final seven studies that we will do, and those of you, who have persisted, have

demonstrated the doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints, I know that you will be happy that this series is coming to an end. That is, if I survive, it will come to an end.

So we are coming now, in our studies, to the climax of the covenantal program, which began with Abraham and the promises that were given to him, and that ultimately lead on to a New Eden of a New Heavens and a New Earth.

The history of the salvation is lengthy and the whole Bible is the story of the history of salvation. And in Romans 11:28 through 32, remember, the apostle deals with the flow of national salvation; that is, the salvation of the nation and the salvation of the nations, and the way in which they are related to one another. And from Paul’s teaching, it’s obvious that he considers this to be essential to the program of God, and it’s been going on for centuries, the centuries of the Old Testament and its times as well as the centuries of New Testament times to the present day.

Well, we’re going to single out a few of the many prophecies that anticipate the end as it pertains to the nation Israel. And the first of these prophecies, tonight, to which we are turning, is Micah chapter 7, verse 18 through verse 20.

Now, in my outline, which I’ll try to remember to give you as we go along, but we’ll have it next week so that next week at least you’ll have a copy of the outline and you’ll see what I thought I was telling you. In the outline, this is Roman I “God’s Unchanging Love of Israel.” And we’re turning to Micah chapter 7, and we’re going to look at verse 18 through verse 20. And, again, what I would like to do tonight is to read through these sections and make a few comments but try to let a little bit more than ordinarily, at least, the Scripture speak for itself to you.

Now, in verse 18 of chapter 7 of Micah, God’s unchanging love of Israel, and in the outline, the first point under that or capital “A” is “The incomparability of Yahweh.” The prophet begins as he concludes his book with, “Who is a God like unto thee.”

Now, that in itself is a striking statement. “Who is a God like unto thee.” One thing you notice as you read through the Book of Micah, that Micah is no moderate-ist, as

someone might put it. He's not an individual who you could call a middle-of-the-road man. He's not a person who is worldly, six days of the week, and unworldly on the seventh day. He's not a person who has a cheap familiarity with God, as so many of us Evangelicals seem to have today. He's not an Erasmus kind of man. It was said of Erasmus, that he could take a “no” and when he got through explaining his “no” it sounded like a “yes.” And he could take a “yes” and when he got through explaining his “yes” it sounded like a “no.” Well, he was not that kind of man.

He was not like the olive branch men, in the history of the United States of America, who in the early days of this particular federal government, of which we are a part, who opposed the signing of the Declaration of Independence by the fifty-six men who did, called in our history the Olive Branch Men. He was not one of that kind of men.

There was a well-known preacher in London, one of the best known of his day, and Dr. Parker said, with reference to Mr. Spurgeon that “Mr. Spurgeon was a black-and-white man. That whatever he had an opinion on, it was definite.”

Well, when you read through Micah, I think, you will find he was that kind of man, when he talked about the courts, when he talked about the king, when he talked about the political life of the country. Well, you can pretty well see exactly where Micah stood. And he stood, as best he could, on the side of the Lord God.

So he asks, “Who is a God like unto thee.” Now, one might ask, well, what kind of theology under girds a statement like that? Well, what follows explains why he has said what he's saying. And the words that follow explain why he can say that there is no God like Yahweh, why he says, “That pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage, He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.” You'll notice that he lays great stress upon the ability and power and desire of the Lord God to

pardon sin. And if you look carefully at the words, he’s used all three of the great Hebrew words that describe human sin.

He says, “That pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage.” In a moment, in verse 19, he will say, “Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.” We don’t have time to talk about the nuances of these three Hebrew words, but the very fact that he lays stress upon these three important Hebrew words in turn lays stress upon the redeeming power of the Lord Jesus Christ because he saves from iniquities, he saves from transgression, and he saves from sin.

So the explanatory justification of this incomparability of Yahweh is explained for us then, in verse 18 and verse 19. And the way he describes this, incidentally, in verse 19, “Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea,” suggests the Exodus and very properly so because, as a matter of fact, he’s just mentioned this up in verse 15. He said, “According to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt, will I show unto him marvelous things.” “And Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea,” may be a reflection of that. In other words, the Exodus power of the Lord God lies behind the removal of the sins of the people of God.

There is a very interesting custom in Orthodox Judaism that touches upon the last clause of verse 19. “Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.” During the observance of the Day of Atonement, at a particular point in the observance of it, it is or was customary for those who were Orthodox, to make a trip to a body of water after the reading of the particular ceremony that they read on the second day of the observance of the Day of Atonement. And they would go down to the water and they would go through actions that were designed to symbolizing casting their sins into the sea. One of the things that they did was to take their pockets and pull them out and empty out everything that was trash into the water. Crumbs or what ever might be in their pockets, they would empty it out into the water and that service was called a *tashlikh* service because the word *shalak* is a word in Hebrew that means to cast, and that’s the exact

form in which it's found here in this particular text. *Tasblikh*, “Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.”

Now, capital “C” in our outline, the patriarchal bedrock of everything that Micah is talking about, and that's the important thing I want you to notice is described in verse 20. So this is capital “C” under Roman I, “Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old.”

Now, you can see from this that the ground of all of Micah's expectation of the blessing of God upon the nation Israel is the ground of the unconditional covenants. And, so far as Micah is concerned, he considers those covenants, those promises, made to Abraham and to Jacob to be still valid promises, even after Israel has in many ways turned away from the Lord God. So he is persuaded that the God of the covenants is a sovereign, unfrustratable deity, who will unconditionally carry out his promises. And that's the ground on which he rests his case. “Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old.”

And when you go back to the Abrahamic Covenant and remember that God promised that Abraham would be great. He promised that he would have a seed. He promised to give him a land. You can see, that what he is talking about are those promises made to Abraham encompassing those particular things. And, we will see, if we read Micah or if we read Isaiah or if we read any of the prophets that those are the things that keep recurring in the language of the prophets. That is, there is a seed who has come now, but who will come, who will be the ground of redemptive blessing and that the redemptive blessing will, ultimately, extend to the nation Israel itself. I mean to the land of the nation Israel itself. So Micah chapter 7, verse 18 through verse 20, expresses God's unchanging love to Israel.

I, to my mind, that's one of the greatest passages in the Old Testament. And a lot of people when they read Micah, like to several other passages in the book, which are

outstanding, and I grant that they are outstanding, but so far as I’m concerned, this is, to my mind, one of the greatest climaxes in any of the writings of the prophets.

Well, now, let’s turn second to the Book of Zachariah chapter 3, verse 1 through verse 10, and this in our outline is Roman II, “God’s Blessing of the Nation in the Land.”

So turn over a few pages to the prophecy of Zachariah, and we’ll take a look at chapter 3, verse 1 through verse 10. But since we have a few moments and since I have given chapter 2 as part of our Scripture reading as well, I’d like to begin reading at chapter 2, and read on.

Now, Zachariah writes, in Zachariah chapter 2, in verse 1.

“I lifted up mine eyes again, and looked, and behold a man with a measuring line in his hand. Then said I, Whither goest thou? And he said unto me, To measure Jerusalem, to see what is the breadth thereof, and what is the length thereof. And, behold, the angel that talked with me went forth, and another angel went out to meet him, and said unto him, Run, speak to this young man, saying, Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls for the multitude of men and cattle therein: For I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her. Ho, ho, come forth, and flee from the land of the north, saith the Lord: for I have spread you abroad as the four winds of the heaven, saith the Lord. Deliver thyself, O Zion, that dwellest with the daughter of Babylon. For thus saith the Lord of hosts; After the glory.”

That’s a very difficult expression to understand. In the Hebrew text, it’s possible to understand it in two, three ways. Fortunately, for us tonight, we don’t have to deal with it because it doesn’t bear particularly on our subject.

“For thus saith the Lord of hosts; after the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye.”



This is a remarkable passage because when he says, “For thus saith the Lord of hosts.” He’s talking about Yahweh. But, nevertheless, it’s Yahweh who has been sent. “For thus saith the Lord of hosts; after the glory hath he sent me.” Have you ever heard of anyone sending Yahweh? Well, yes. If you understand that Yahweh is a term that may be used of Yahweh the Father, Yahweh the Son, Yahweh the Holy Spirit. In other words, if you understand the doctrine of the Christian Trinity, then, of course, you will understand this.

In Isaiah 48, the same kind of thing is stated by the Prophet Isaiah. And there, he mentions the Spirit, as well. So while the Old Testament does not plainly teach us the doctrine of the Trinity, we have some reason for believing the Old Testament teaches rather plainly the plurality of persons within the godhead. Still there are some slight indications of what comes to be the plain teaching of the word of God, when the Lord Jesus Christ appears on the scene.

“For thus saith the Lord of hosts; after the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye. For, behold, I will shake mine hand upon them, and they shall be a spoil to their servants: and ye shall know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me. Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord. And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people.”

In other words, there is coming a day of Gentile salvation in the future.

“But I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto thee. And the Lord shall inherit Judah his portion in the holy land, and shall

choose Jerusalem again.”

We often speak of the land of Palestine today as the Holy Land, but, strictly speaking, it's quite an un-holy land. But there is coming a day when it will be a Holy Land.

“Be silent, O all flesh, before the Lord: for he is raised up out of his holy habitation.”

Now, coming to chapter 3, this is Roman II, “God’s Blessing of the Nation and the Land,” and first the vision of foul or filthy Joshua and Satan. Verses 1 through 3.

“And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel.”

You can see that the great problem that Zachariah would have had in this revelation that was being given to him as a series of night visions is simply this: How can a Holy God give a filthy, sinful people these great promises, and carry them out? This filthy people has a glorious future; and that would have raised some moral questions. How is it possible? And so Zachariah is going to give us a description of a vision that contains an answer to that. And he says that the Lord showed him Joshua the high priest. It's important to notice the title that is given to Joshua. In other words, Joshua is not standing there as a man; but he's standing there as the representative of the children of Israel. He is the high priest. So he's the representative of a foul, priestly nation. As Joshua is, so Israel is; is the point of this vision.

Now, notice, he says, “The Lord said unto Satan,” Satan is standing there too, at his right hand, to oppose Him. He says, the Lord does to Satan, “The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?” But when you look at Joshua in this vision, he stood before the angel clothed in filthy garments.

Now, I wish I could describe these garments for you. In a moment, well, I’ll just save it for a moment. But I want you to notice the thought that is prominent here. He says, “Even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?” So important in this vision is the expression that the Lord has chosen Jerusalem. Why? We would never know. As a matter of fact, you might look at Joshua, who is the representative person and stands for the nation, and say, How is it possible for God to choose such a nation? Obviously represented by a high priest who’s in filthy garments and maybe I should say something about those garments at this point. But those garments, the expression that is used to describe them is used of excrement. In other words, the clothes that Joshua had on are like clothes that might have been dredged up out of an outhouse. That’s precisely the significance of the Hebrew expression that is used here.

So what we are talking about is the prophet’s stress upon the fact that the high priest stands in this vision in clothes that suggest the filthiness of his moral status before the Lord God. And, yet, he stands for Israel; he stands there for Jerusalem that the Lord has chosen. It raises, of course, the question, why did God choose us because Joshua’s standing and status at this time is only a faint picture of the moral status of all of us, before a holy God. And the only answer is the answer that is given by those who’ve studied the word of God; was given first by Moses, and by others since that time. That is, he chose us because he loved us. And if you say, why did he love us? Why, he loved us because he loved us and that’s all that you can say. It’s the sovereign elective love of God.

Now, in verse 4 through verse 7, we have the vision of the cleansing clothing. The excrement covered clothing is going to give place to the garments of glory and beauty. And we read, in verse 4.

“And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, ‘take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him,’ he said, ‘behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with a change of raiment.’ And I said, ‘Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the Lord stood by. And the angel of the Lord protested unto Joshua, saying, ‘Thus saith the Lord of hosts; if thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my charge, then thou shalt also judge my house, and shalt also keep my courts, and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by.’”

The vision of the cleansing clothing. So the clothing that Joshua had on, which was so filthy, is taken away and he is given a change of raiment. Now, what is striking about this is the statement in verse 5, “So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments.” That statement is a statement in which words for garments are used that express garments of, well, like the high priest’s garments, garments of glory and beauty. Well, we would say, someone’s Sunday-best garments. So the filthy garments are taken away and they are replaced by the garments of glory and beauty.

The garments of glory and beauty were the garments, of course, that the high priest wore when he was carrying out his ministry ordinarily, except on the Day of Atonement, when he changed them and he wore the all-white garments. But they were garments of glory and beauty, and they represented the priestly office. That’s not specifically what is said here, but the Hebrew term is a term that suggests one’s best garments.

You know, there come to your mind many things in the history of Christianity, when you think of this, and one of the things that comes to my mind is the experience of

Luther at the Wartburg. And there, when he was at the Wartburg Castle, you remember, there was a legend about one of his dreams. That he was there and had this dream of Satan standing before him and accusing him. And Satan pulled out a lengthy list of Luther's sins and began to go down them; and when he went down the sins, Luther, of course, was terribly disturbed over his sins, anyway; a man who naturally was extremely disturbed over his sins. And as he spoke about it afterwards, he was very much disturbed that Satan went right down his list of sins and saying, “How can you expect the Lord God to accept you, when you have done this, and you have done this, and you have done this, and your heart is like this.” You know, I was thinking about that this afternoon as I sat at my desk. And I said, well, now, what kind of list could he draw up for me? And he could draw up a very impressive list. And, probably, would draw up and even more impressive one because he would know things that I may not have been able to see in their true light.

But, at any rate, when he got down near the bottom of them, according to the legend of Luther, Luther finally stood up and said, “It's all true. It's all true, every one of them. I've sinned all of those sins. But the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth me from sin.” And with that, he reached down and picked up his inkbottle and he threw the inkbottle at Satan, in his vision. And today, when you visit the Wartburg, they show you a little ink spot on the wall, which is supposed to have been where his bottle of ink landed.

Well, it is legend, of course, but it does express something of the moral truth of the man's conversion. And Luther's was very deep and very significant, as anyone who has read the life of Luther will certainly see.

Now, here, then we have this tremendous change and in the latter part now of chapter 3, this is the third point of the second major division, capital “C” the explanatory predictions.

Now, one might ask, who will do all of this blessing and when? And listen to what Zachariah says in verse 8 through verse 10. Who’s going to be the one to bring out this transformation in Israel? And, when is he going to do it?

“Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at: [Or, men of wonder, like signs.] for, behold, I will bring forth my servant the Branch.”

Now, that is a Messianic title; a Messianic title found more than once in Zachariah. Found again in the 6<sup>th</sup> chapter. Found also in the Book of Jeremiah. And, found also in the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter of the prophecy in Isaiah. A Branch is the Lord Jesus Christ.

“I will bring forth my servant the Branch.”

You know, what’s so interesting about this to me is that when you read the prophecy of Isaiah, and we’re going to look at chapter 61, in a moment, when you read the prophecy of Isaiah, some of the greatest of those chapters are the chapters I’ve referred to a number of times in this series. Isaiah 42, Isaiah 49, Isaiah 50, Isaiah 52:13 through 53:12, and perhaps, chapter 16. But all students of Isaiah agree that those four great sections are sections that have to do with “The servant of Jehovah,” a reference, ultimately, to the Lord Jesus Christ as the Messiah. But here, we have the same kind of thing referred to by Zachariah. He refers to the Lord as the “servant.” Now, we know Zachariah was a student of Isaiah. Anyone who reads these two discovers that. And if you read Zachariah, after having read Isaiah, you’ll understand exactly what I’m talking about.

I usually tell my students on the use of the Old Testament in the New Testament that people look at a study like that and say, we should look at the Old Testament and

then we should look at the New Testament, and we should interpret the Old Testament by what we see in the New Testament. And, of course, there is legitimacy in that. That's not the whole story, but there is legitimacy in that. But we also should interpret the Old Testament by the Old Testament.

Now, what I mean by that is that we should interpret older sections of the Old Testament by later sections of the Old Testament. And, in fact, we can learn a great deal about the interpretive principles of the prophets, by the way in which they handle earlier Scripture. And it's obvious that this Book of Zachariah is one that we can learn a lot about hermeneutics from. And, I think, we will see that when Zachariah interpreted previous Scripture, he interpreted it according to the grammatical, historical, theological method of interpretation. That is, he did not give it spiritualized force. He interpreted it generally in the grammatical, historical fashion. And here, he is using a term given to him, of course, in this vision by the Lord, which Isaiah had used and clearly a reference to the Lord Jesus Christ.

“I will bring forth my servant the Branch. For behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone shall be seven eyes: behold, I will engrave the graving thereof.”

Now, I must confess, I have studied that particular section of this verse since nineteen hundred and forty-four, that's forty-two years. A person ought to be able to discover the meaning of a passage in the Bible, having studied it off and on for forty-two years. But, I confess, I still don't know certainly the meaning of those expressions. So I will do the scientific thing. I will pass on to something else that I think I do understand.

You know, Mr. Lindsay once said, “If you don't know something, it's the scientific thing to say so.” So I want to be scientific, at least once in my life.

“Saith the Lord of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.”

Now, he’s going to bring forth his servant, the Branch, and, I think, it’s reasonable to assume, all commentators agree in this who have Christian viewpoints, that it’s through the servant that he will remove the iniquity of the land. And, notice, he’s going to do it in one day. It’s going to be a climactic removal of the guilt of the land.

If you turn over to chapter 2 in verse 12, this text should be put alongside it. And we read, “And the Lord shall inherit Judah his portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again.” So we can look forward to the day when Israel, as a nation, turns to the Lord and the iniquity of that land is removed in one day. We don’t have any specific indication right here as to when that will take place, in this chapter, but let me ask you to turn over at this point to Zachariah chapter 12 in verse 10 through verse 14.

The prophets wrote magnificent books, and their books are magnificent because they are beautifully done. The reason that the prophecies have persevered until the present time, have lasted until today and we’re looking at something written in the 6<sup>th</sup> century before Christ, and pondering it is because it’s such a great book. And in chapter 12 in verse 10, the prophet adds further detail about the future. He says.

“And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications. [That’s Old Testament effectual grace.] I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced.”

And it could hardly be any clearer indication of the fact that what we have here is a prophecy of the work of God, the Holy Spirit, in the hearts of the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the House of David. And they will actually look upon the person whom they have pierced, the Lord Jesus Christ, and, of course, as a result of that.



“They shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.”

If you'll turn back to Isaiah chapter 53, for a moment, I'd like to make a suggestion to you. In Isaiah chapter 53, this great passage that if we've read the Bible at all are familiar with. We read.

“Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our grieves, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.”

Now, you know the passage, I want to make one comment. The tenses of those verbs are in the past, in past time, there are Hebrew tenses that refer to things that have taken place. They're not saying, for example, “He is despised and rejected of men.” Isaiah wrote, “He was despised and rejected of men.” In fact, these first, I don't have time to look at my Hebrew text which I have here right now, it would delay us, but through about verse 9, the tenses are past.

That raises an interesting question, because what you see that signifies is that the prophet has thrown himself into the future because this hasn't taken place yet, but by prophetic inspiration he's thrown himself into the future and he's looking back at the experience of the nation Israel when this individual described here was there. And he's reflecting upon it. And he's saying, “He was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was

despised, and we esteemed him not.” In other words, they’re making a confession of their sin. Their making a confession of their mistreatment of our Lord.

Now, if that is true, then it’s conceivable, I wouldn’t want to say that this has to be this way, because I don’t know of anything that makes it absolutely essential to be this way. But when we read here, “That they shall look upon him whom they have pierced and they shall mourn for him,” it’s certainly conceivable that what the prophet Isaiah says in Isaiah 53, is a description or perhaps even an accounting of what they will say to our Lord about our Lord, at his second advent, described here in Zachariah chapter 12 in verse 10. It’s certainly conceivable. It’s true to the Hebrew grammar of Isaiah chapter 53. And it certainly seems the kind of thing that Israel would do. They enlightened as they see the one whom they’ve pierced, will surely make confession of their sins. And no better confession could be made than the lament of Isaiah chapter 52, verse 13 through chapter 53, verse 12. I do not know of anything that specifically prevents that from being true. But time will tell.

Now, let’s turn to Isaiah chapter 61, and this is the third of our divisions, “The Glory of the Servant, His People and the Land. Roman III, “The Glory of the Servant, His People and the Land.”

When one thinks about the prophecy of Isaiah, there are so many chapters in the prophecy of Isaiah that we could choose to deal with the subject of the national future of Israel that you feel like you’re not giving an accurate picture by selecting one of them. But we have to select one. In Isaiah chapter 61 and chapter 62, taken together we have the history of Israel. And it’s a history of from ashes to beauty. And in chapter 61 in verses 1 through 3, the servant will speak of his mission.

This, incidentally, is a passage that has special significance for us, because this is the passage that the Lord Jesus read in the synagogue in Nazareth when he began his ministry. So it has special significance for us because it’s the statement that our Lord

applied to himself, these things. For you remember, when he finished his reading he said, “This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears.” So he stood up and he read.

And, as you know, in the synagogue in those days, individuals who had spiritual gifts, that is, they had abilities to expound the Scriptures could expound the Scriptures. The synagogue did not have any ordained men. They had elders who were responsible for the oversight of the children of Israel gathered around the synagogue. They had no “The Pastor” or any thing like that. They had elders who were responsible for the carrying on of the meetings. They had individuals who stood at particular times in their ceremony and read. Their ceremonies, incidentally, in a synagogue were made up of prayers, the reading of Scripture, reading from the Law, reading from the prophets, and individuals were chosen by the elders to read and they read. But the exposition was open to those who had, well, really, the language of our New Testament; those who had spiritual gift. As we have often said, that’s how Paul was able in the synagogue in Antioch and Presidia to stand up and preach because he was a man who was addressed. Obviously, some word must have come to the people in Antioch, that here was a man who had some ability to expound. And so they called to him and they said, “If you have a word to say to us, say on.” So Paul stood up and gave that magnificent sermon. No one could give a magnificent sermon like that in so many of our churches today because the preaching is absolutely regulated and one man alone is one who preaches. That’s why we have the Lord’s Supper here on Sunday night and men are free who have spiritual gift to stand up.

Now, individuals who don’t have spiritual gift should not stand up and attempt to expound from a gift which they don’t have. One must remember that. Everybody is free to exercise his priestly office and pray and read a passage of Scripture or something like that. But that’s different from ministry.

But, at any rate, the Lord Jesus, because of that, is able to stand up in the synagogue and minister the word of God. And so they handed him, after the reading of

the Law, they handed him the prophets. He turned to this particular passage. He read this Scripture and he, as was the custom, they stood to read, they sat down to teach. And he sat down and he taught. And this is the passage. And it surely is a passage that expresses the glory of the “servant of Jehovah.” And here is Isaiah’s pre-recounting of the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. But we’re immediately faces with a question, when we look at the Old Testament text. We know in the New Testament, the Lord Jesus said, “This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears.” And so he applied it to himself.

But when you read Old Testament scholars, they, naturally, and it’s perfectly all right to do this, they question, is this really a passage of Scripture that should be interpreted in that way? And when you come to Isaiah 61, there is ancient opinion that the Messiah is not the speaker but the Prophet is the speaker.

In fact, in the Jewish Targum there is a statement in the Jewish Targum like this; and Aramaic word for speaking, Aramaic is very closely related to the Hebrew word *‘amar* and *nabiy* the Hebrew word for prophet is, “And the prophet said.” And that’s added by the Jewish Targum. Of course, we don’t know exactly the date of that addition. It was, most of those are dated after the time of the New Testament. And so that doesn’t really bear on the interpretation. It only, critically, tells us that that’s the way Jewish scholars interpreted it some time later. But there is everything in the context to indicate that the Messiah, himself, is the speaker, and that the Lord Jesus Christ interpreted it correctly when he said this Scripture has to do with me.

“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach the good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.”

The eunuch, you remember, when Philip drew up alongside the chariot said, “Of whom speaketh the prophet this? Of himself? Or of some other man?” Well, we answer

the question, with reference to this that our Lord was speaking of himself, and the prophet was speaking of some other person than the prophet. He was speaking of the Lord.

Now, notice the expression, “The Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek.” When Jesus used this particular passage in the synagogue in Nazareth, as he began his public ministry, what had just previously happened? Well, he had just been baptized, had he not? What was his baptism? Well, at his baptism, when he went down into the water and came up out of the water, there was associated with his baptism the coming of the Holy Spirit upon him in visible form in order to portray that. When the Holy Spirit came upon him he was anointed by the Holy Spirit that was heaven’s way of saying, “This is the Messiah.” And, if you’ll remember, also, then the word from heaven came, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Now, the expression, “This is my Son,” comes from Psalm 2, and has to do with the Psalm that has to do with his kingly ministry and how he will, ultimately, overcome the forces of evil arrayed against the Messiah and heaven.

But “In whom I am well pleased,” is a reference back to Isaiah chapter 42, in verse 1, the first of the suffering servant of Jehovah songs. And there we read, “Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth.” So when the voice from heaven came and said, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,” it was the Father’s way of saying to the Son, “You are the Messianic king, and it is your task to do the work of the suffering servant of Jehovah. So the Lord Jesus says, “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek.” He has Messiah’d me to preach good tidings to the meek. So the servant, through Isaiah, speaks of his mission as the Messianic mission. And the object of his mission is to cure heart disease. [Chuckles] Well, heart disease is curable. But we’re talking about spiritual heart disease, of course. “He hath sent me to bind up the

brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.”

One of the marvelous things about our Lord’s work is that he cures heart disease and he does it personally. He makes house calls, so to speak, which some of us are old enough to remember that doctors used to do. Now, we make office calls. But we still can have personal contact with our doctors, very fortunately. In the Lord’s case, he cures spiritual heart disease. That’s a personal service, which he performs and he prophesied here that that’s what he will do. He will bring liberty to the captives, he will open the prison to them that are bound, he will proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God. He has a two-fold ministry; a ministry of redemption and forgiveness of sins, and a ministry of judgment. And, to comfort all that mourn.

“To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified.”

There’s some marvelous expressions there. We don’t have time to talk about them. He talks about the day of jubilee, for example, and the liberty to the captives. And how in the day of jubilee, you remember, all of the children of Israel who owed money and who had become slaves were freed. Wouldn’t it be nice to have all of your debts pass away? Well, it only happened every fifty years, but it was an important ceremony in Israel and marked freedom. And that’s the background of his statement.

In capital “B” the servant speaks of the effects of his coming, and this is what we want to look at a little more carefully. Verse 4 through verse 9.

“And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations. And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers. 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. For your shame ye shall have double; and for confusion they shall rejoice in their portion: therefore in their land they shall possess the double: everlasting joy shall be unto them. For I the Lord love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt offering; and I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. And their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people: all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed, which the Lord hath blessed.”

So he talks about the rebuilding of the old wastes. The city is going to be rebuilt. The land is going to be recovered. They are going to have the respect of the Gentile nations verses 5 and 6, “Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers. You shall be named the priests of the Lord.” They will recognize Israel has a certain kind of pre-dominance. And there shall be restoration of the land in verse 7 through verse 9, “Therefore in their land they shall possess the double: everlasting joy shall be unto them.” Verse 9, “their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people.” And, finally, in verses 10 and 11, the servant exalts in salvation, for he is the representative person and deliverance is from him. I think there is some question about who speaks here. I am taking the viewpoint that the servant is still speaking.

“I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, [That doesn’t mean, of course, that the servant has been saved but it means that he is the representative, and he has one salvation for those whom he represents.] he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels. For as the earth bringeth

forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.”

And so, again, he speaks as the ideal and representative Israelite who has won for Israel the benefits of his saving work.

Let me close by just mentioning two things, real quickly. One can see from the prophecy in Zachariah, particularly, that there is a remarkable stress on the divine initiative and the love of God. Remember, Zachariah said that Israel was the chosen of the Lord. He said that he was going to take away Joshua’s filthy garments. He speaks about the fact that he has caused them to be clothed with “fresh” garments. Over and over, he says, I’m doing this, I’m doing that. There is a tremendous stress in that context, and in so many of these contexts, over a sovereign initiative of the Lord God. In fact, the 9<sup>th</sup> verse of that 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter of Zachariah, three times uses the personal pronoun about what God is doing. And so there’s a singular stress, I think, on the divine initiative.

James Denney once said with reference to a passage in 1 John, “So far from finding any kind of contrast between love and propitiation,” he’s talking about the fact that Christ came to provide a propitiation for our sins, “The Apostle can convey no idea of love to anyone except by pointing to the propitiation. Love is what is manifested there. And he can give no account of propitiation but by saying, ‘Behold what manner of love.’ For him to say “God is love,” is exactly the same as to say, “God has in his Son made atonement for the sins of the world.” If the propitiatory death of Jesus is eliminated from the love of God, it might be unfair to say that the love of God is robbed of all meaning. But, it’s certainly robbed of its apostolic meaning.” There are people who like to talk about the love of God, who at the same deny the propitiatory death of the Lord Jesus. That cannot be done and remain apostolic.

There is so much stress in our day, on sentimental love, rather than the love of the word of God. I love that expression that Chief Justice Hale, of our United States Supreme



Court, said so many years ago. He said, “When I feel myself swayed by the impulses of mercy toward an offender, let me remember that there is a mercy due unto my country.”

That is certainly true in our society today. We have the tendency to be merciful, to exercise mercy, to plead with people to be merciful to an offender, but we forget we have an obligation to our constitution and to the laws of the land and also to the justice of the laws of our land, as well.

Well, I think, you can see that there is a singular stress on the land in all of these prophecies. If you go back and read Micah again, you’ll find in the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter as well as in the 7<sup>th</sup> chapter, the same stress upon the fulfillment of the Abrahamic promises and those fulfillments, ultimately, include God’s blessing upon the land.

These are just some of the passages that stress the national future of Israel. And, I’m sorry, I’ve kept you about three minutes overtime.

Let’s close with a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for the word of God and for its great stress upon a sovereign, immutable loving God, who is true to His word and true to His law. We thank Thee, Lord. We thank Thee and praise Thee, for we know that Thou art faithful to the promises that have been made to us. And we pray, Lord, that we may be responsive to the appeals of the Holy Spirit, as He seeks to guide us in righteousness and true holiness. Enable us to be the kinds of believing Christians result in through our lives in the praise and honor and glory of our Triune God. Go with us, as we part tonight.

In Jesus’ name. Amen.