



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Isaiah 46 – 47:15

“Babylon Again!: Its Gods and Its Fall”

TRANSCRIPT

Now we want to turn to Isaiah Chapter 46, but before we do, let's have a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee that Thou has given us this great Book of Isaiah written so many hundreds of years before the time of Jesus Christ and before our time and yet which so wonderfully speaks to us in the 20th Century. We realized that history changes, situations are modified, but the principles of the word of God abide forever and ever. And we pray now tonight as we look again at two of the chapters, which the prophet wrote that our thoughts may be lifted up to Thee, and that we may live with a deeper sense of the greatness of our God and of the wonderful grace that Thou hast shown to us through the righteousness of God Jesus Christ. May Thy hand be upon us in this meeting.

For Christ's sake. Amen.

[Message] Let's turn now to the 46th chapter of the Prophecy of Isaiah. And will you listen as I read this entire chapter, Isaiah chapter 46, verse 1 through verse 13,

“Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth, their idols were upon the beasts, and upon the cattle: your carriages were heavy laden; they are a burden to the weary beast. They stoop, they bow down together; they could not deliver the burden, but themselves are gone into captivity. Harken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, who have been borne by me from their birth, who are carried from the womb: And even to your old age I am he; and even to gray hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you. To whom will ye liken me, and make me equal, and compare me, that we may be like? They lavish gold out of the bag, and weigh silver in the balance, and hire a goldsmith; and he maketh it a God: they fall down, yea, they worship. They bear him upon the shoulder, they carry it, and set it in its place, and it standeth; from its place shall it not move: yea, one shall cry unto it, yet can it not answer, nor save him out of his trouble. Remember this, and show yourselves men: bring it again to mind, O ye transgressors. Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me. Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: Calling a ravenous bird from the East, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it. Harken unto me, ye stubborn in heart, that are far from righteousness: I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry: and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory.”

We have two distinct and definite prophecies to consider tonight. The second concerns the ever-interesting city of Babylon, one of the great themes of the word of God. The first of the prophecies however, is one of Isaiah's most telling and vivid revelations. I think of all the chapters in the Book of Isaiah that I have read and studied up to this point, and there are many of them that I really treasure from our studies together on these

Monday nights, I think of all of those chapters and I think this 46th chapter is one that has impressed me just about as much as any of them. And it has impressed me really because of one simple statement that is made in verse 3 and verse 4: "Israel's God is not a God to be carried, but he is one who carries."

Now that's an amazing statement. Israel's God is not a God to be carried about like the idols of the Gods of the heathen, but he is a God who carries us about. Moses wrote in Deuteronomy chapter 33 in verse 27, "Thou art the eternal God and underneath are the ever-lasting arms." Our God is a God who carries us. He is not one that we have to carry about like an idol, but he is one who carries us. You see, it was the day of the making of idols, the day of the worship of the work of men's hands, the day of the practice of the forms of religion, but the absence of power; that was a day like today. It was a day in which as we read from Paul in his day, men had a form of godliness, but they denied the power thereof.

The Babylonians had all the religion in the world. As a matter of fact, they had all the gods that anyone would need, but their gods were idols, they were gods that were made from wood and stone, they were gods that were made by the goldsmith. They were gods without birth, they were gods before whom the Babylonians and others fell down to worship, but they were gods who could not answer, could not speak, could not help them. As a matter of fact, they couldn't carry them anywhere; they had to be carried about. I think the church of Jesus Christ today, and I am speaking of it in its professing characteristic. I think the church of Jesus Christ today is very much like the Babylonian religion in the time of Isaiah or that is in the time of which Isaiah writes, for remember he is looking into the future, a 150 years, when Israel shall be in captivity in Babylon.

What do we have in the Christian church today? Do we have proclaimed from the pulpits of God who can carry us? No, we don't have proclaimed from our pulpits a God who can do anything for us today. It's just the opposite. The one impression that you

get from the Christian preachers today is that they're God is dead. He is not alive, he is not doing anything anymore. He died in Christ.

Some of you may have seen the article that appeared in *The Dallas Morning News* about clergymen who have found a *shtick* for a new time religion. I never knew what that term *shtick* meant. But according to Martin Gross that is Yiddishism for a gimmick or a theatrical piece of business -- that's a *shtick*. In other words, when you are looking around for something with which to impress the world, and you arrive upon a gimmick that does impress the world, that's your shtick. And the Christian church, Martin Gross went on to say, has found its shtick, and its shtick is the religion of protest and rebellion. And what we have is not men who proclaim a God who can do something for us, but we have men who are themselves guerillas for God. Actually their Christianity is dead. They have a form of religion, but there is no power and I think they recognize that. That's why so many today say the church is impotent, the church is out of it, the church has no message, it has no contact with the world; why? Because they have forgotten the foundations of the faith, they think no longer are proclaimed. All that you have in the average church, if you have anything is a religion that has become nothing more than an idol. It's dead; it cannot do anything for you. It's something you have to do for and so the message that is proclaimed is a message of works. And, the religion of today is a burden, ask anyone. If you have contact with people today, they will tell you when their hearts really become open, that my church and my religion, whatever it has been, has been a burden to me.

Now, Isaiah proclaims a God who doesn't need to be carried, a God who carries us. I think you can put all religions into the two categories. One is the kind of religion that is a burden, legalism, asceticism, all the forms and the ritual and the ceremony. And then on the other, the true Christian religion, which speaks of a God who has been active through Jesus Christ and who when we come to know him, binds himself by everlasting

covenant of those who have believed in him to do for them, all the promises of the word of God, a God who carries us, who doesn't need to be carried by us.

The historical context is the advent of Cyrus the Persian to Babylon, when Israel is in exile. The busy idol factories are cast into agitation by the coming of Cyrus the Persian, for you see, when Cyrus was about to come to Babylon, the gods of Babylon shook because it was the custom for men in ancient times to overthrow the idols of the particular city or territory and set up his own.

Now history proved otherwise in the case of Cyrus, he was an unusual man. He came in as a representative of Marduk, who was the god of the Babylonians and set himself up in this way. But they thought that when Cyrus came, that was the end of the gods and there was a great agitation among the idol makers to get out as many gods as possible before the Persian came. And so, that's the picture. We have a picture here of the people who are busy turning out gods, the idol makers, gods who have to be carried about. And so, against this background, Isaiah writes of the burdensome gods, verses 1 and 2.

Notice what he says. Now it's the eve of the capture of Babylon; Isaiah is looking forward into the future 550 years, I mean 150 years to the year 539 B.C. when Cyrus the Persian shall come into Babylon and take the city. He did that on October 12th, 539 B.C. and he sees the Persian who is called the bird from the east in verse 11. He sees the Persian carrying off the gods of his defeated foes as trophies to restore them to the cities to which they belong. Babylonians had stolen those gods and had brought them to Babylon. He says, "Bel boweth down."

Now Bel or Baal is the title of Marduk. Marduk was the god of the Babylonians, but Bel was his title and Nebo was his son. You see, even in ancient times there is an anticipation of a god who has a son. Satan is a very wise person. He is the Ape of God. That's why in ancient Babylonian religion, you will have a god and you will have a

mother god and also you will have a god who has a son, anticipations of the God who does have a son, who is born of a virgin, Mary.

Now we read on. Their idols were upon the beasts, and upon the cattle: your carriages were heavy laden; they are a burden. See they are full of idols. They are a burden to the heavy beast. So many Bels for beasts' backs such are your gods, O Babylonians. Now I'll tell you there is a lot of humor, irony in this. What kind of gods do you have Babylonians? Will you have the kind of gods that make a heavy burden for a wagon? That's right, that's the kind of gods that you have, and I think the gods of 20th Century are man. We don't go around worshipping in the western world, idols today i.e. idols that weigh something. But we have our idols nevertheless.

Everybody has his idol who does not worship the true God and if we could put them all in a wagon and have a beast attached to it to carry it off, we would have the picture that Isaiah presents to us here and you see the weary beasts carrying off these weighty Gods, just as so much poundage. You know it's the saddest thing in the world to have a religion that exhausts you. I heard of a woman who has converted. I think I've told you about this before, but I heard of a woman who has converted and a friend went up to her and said, "Well, what are you going to become, now that you've been converted?" She said, "Well, to tell you the truth, I'd like to be a Baptist, but I'm afraid my health won't stand it." She was thinking about the fact that in many of our Baptist Churches the doors are open all the time. We may get that whim in Believers Chapel too. But seriously, it's a terrible thing to have a God who is a burden and not a burden bearer.

Now let's read on, verse 2. They stoop, they bow down together; they could not deliver the burden, but themselves are gone into captivity. Not only were the gods worthless, but they themselves have gone into captivity. They couldn't deliver you from the Persian, they had to go into captivity themselves.

Now, "Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, who have been borne by me" has the key word, borne by me. The gods of the

Babylonians must be borne by them, but the God of Israel bears Israel. The Babylonians bear their heavy gods, the Israelites are borne by their God, their mighty God. I will tell you, a religion that can be reduced to so many pounds of avoirdupois, so much weight, that's the religion that is opposed to the truth of the word of God.

Notice now, who have been borne by me from their birth, who are carried from the womb: a wagon versus a mother. A wagon who carries off the gods as over against a mother who has borne people from her womb. You see the picture of Jehovah, is the picture of a mother. Most of the time in the Old Testament, God is presented as a father. But there are some characteristics that a mother has that belong to God too. And so, in the Old Testament in a few places, you will find that God is looked at as a mother, one who nurses, one who nurtures, one who bears from the womb, and so that's the picture here. Borne by me, carried from the womb. Israel's God is a mother, they have Gods who can be carried away in a wagon.

Now, verse 4, and even to your old age, I am he. Isn't this amazing, when God is really saying, you noted what he is saying to the Israelites, "Look, I have borne you from your birth, from your conception. I have actually borne you from the womb." Now what is he saying in theology by saying this, "It was I who called you, it was I who elected Abraham. It was I who has set forth in his eternal councils all of the plans for Abraham and his seed. I have borne you from the beginning, I am your mother. Not only that, but I will be with you until you reach old age." This is the human way of saying, I am with you from the beginning and to the end and to illustrate it even more, he says, "And even to your old age I am He."

Now, remember what we've said about "I am", that means "I am the eternal one." I have bound myself to you Israel by an eternal covenant and all of the attributes of deity are yours for the asking forever." A God who bears us. Now in verse 4 he concludes, he says, "I have made, and I will bear." You know there is a lot of play on words there. I wish that everybody in this room knew Hebrew and you would catch the play on words

here. Notice that last clause, "I have made and I will bear" and God wants to draw attention to it. This is what he really said and this is the way it sounds, listen, [Hebrew indistinct] I have born, I have made, and I will bear. In other words, this is just a kind of a short way of saying, I brought you into existence and I am going to take care of you. I have made you, I will carry you.

Not only that, he says even I will carry and he uses a different word, and this is a word that was used of carrying a burden. In fact, in Isaiah chapter 53, verses 4 and 11, it's used of the carrying of sins. And many think, it has the redemptive force here too. I have made and I will carry, even I will bear, even I will carry and will deliver you. I have made you, I will carry you, and furthermore, I will bear your sins and deliver you. Just as I have made you physically, and therefore, may be counted upon to preserve you, so I have redeemed you and I will deliver you. What I have done in Jesus Christ we say today, head is the evidence that God will do everything else for us. He that spared not his only Son for us, but delivered him up for his own; how shall he not with him also freely give us a few things, all things?

So, this is -- I will tell you this is one of Isaiah's great affirmations. I've been studying this chapter for about a month and these words have just been ringing over and over in my mind. When I was up in Iowa, I sat on the front porch of that little house in which I was staying and I just read Isaiah 46 verse 3 and verse 4 over and over again, looking at the Hebrew text and it really has come home to me. This is one of his great affirmations, which meant historically for Israel, bursts the historical bounds and leaps the centuries to our day. And the truth of it is simply this. There are two ways of conceiving of God as one to be carried or as one who carries. What kind of a God do you have? One who needs to be carried around or is he one who carries you around?

Now, let me develop that for just a moment. He is a God who creates and preserves, must make that spiritual. He is a God who redeems and keeps. Freud was a great historian. He was speaking once with Carlyle. Carlyle was really not a believer and

Freud spoke to Carlyle and he said, "I am interested in a God who does something." And Carlyle replied, "That's just it" and Freud said, he said it with a pain, with a pained expression, "That's just it, he does nothing." You see, he had the other kind of God, a God who needed to be carried, not a God who carries.

The other night in one of our meetings here at Believers Chapel in our Sunday night meeting around the Lord's table. I referred to an expression that frequently is used with regard to the Methodists and Presbyterians. I made reference to this that a Methodist knows he has got religion, but he is afraid he may lose it, whereas a Presbyterian knows he can't lose it, but he is afraid he hasn't got it. But the characteristic thing about both of those statements is the word fear. Did you notice it? A Methodist knows he has got religion, but he is afraid he may lose it. A Presbyterian knows he cannot lose it, but he is afraid he hasn't got it. There is a lot of truth in that. It's not the truth of the word of God, of course, for he wants us to know that we have it and to know that we cannot lose it, for he is a God who bears us, he is a God who creates and preserves, he is a God who forgives.

You know, if you were a paralytic, it wouldn't be necessary simply for you to have good ground to walk upon. The fact that you had good ground to walk upon is an essential for walking, but you don't have the apparatus with which to walk. Why is it that I can at the close of this hour of Study of Isaiah, I can put my Bible -- I can close my Bible, put my notes inside of it and walk down this hour with every confidence that I shall be able to walk satisfactorily. Well, it's because I know the ground is stable, I know the laws of gravity are in operation, and I'm able by those means to be sure that I can make my way on to my car. But I wouldn't be in that same state if within me, I had something wrong with me.

Well, you see men have something wrong within them. Suppose you say to all of my statements that this God is a God who doesn't need to be carried around. He is one

who carries us. Now, suppose you were to say, "Oh! but what can he do for someone who has unmade himself." He says he has made us, and he will carry us.

But what about us who have fallen into such sin, that is difficult for us to understand how God can really care for us. But let me assure you that the Bible states that he will bear us in the sense that he will forgive our sins. He will make us again, if we have unmade ourselves by sin, and all of us have unmade ourselves and that's the glory of the gospel of Jesus Christ that not only has God created man, but he has made a way for man who has in a sense unmade himself by sin to come back and be restored to him.

He is a God who then keeps. He is one who actually from the New Testament's standpoint, he carries from within. In the Old Testament, he spoke to Israel without the full revelation of that which we have in the New Testament. In the New Testament, we read something like this, something we never read in the Old Testament. I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live; yet Christ liveth in me. Isn't that amazing? Israel had all of these wonderful promises of the God who carried them. A living and lifting God, but listen, we in the New Testament, since the cross, we have the assurance of a God who has come through Jesus Christ to indwell us individually, each one of us.

Each one of us has a God who carries us, the same God. Isn't that amazing, the Christian revelation? What a difference between the kind of God presented in so many of our pulpits. A God that we must busy ourselves in things in order to please and a God who by Jesus Christ has come to be pleased to indwell us and to carry us from within, that's Christianity, a God who carries us. It's wonderful having an inspiring leader.

My goodness, I think, if war had come and if I had been a soldier, I think I would have been the most cowardly of soldiers. I see these movies and I read of men who get out in the midst of a battle field and charge an enemy, and I say what in the world, what kind of a spirit is a man like that God, because I'm afraid that I would turn tail and run. It would help to have a man like Stonewall Jackson around. I think I could maybe stand

the ground for a little while if Stonewall were there, or General Robert E. Lee, I think I could fight for him a little bit too. But how much more wonderful to have the spirit of Thomas Jonathan Jackson within or Robert E. Lee within.

Now in the spiritual sphere, we do not just have a God who carries us from some distant place, but we have a God who has come to live within us and who carries us from within, a living and lifting god. And you know how we like to counteract the work of God? Well, by legalism in one way. We say this God is not pleased except we do this and do this and do this and do this and don't do this, and don't do this and don't do this, and pretty soon we are all tied up in ways by which we think we please God, which becomes for us little burdens that our God instead of carrying us becomes a God whom we carry. Or, if it's not legalism, it's asceticism: touch not, taste not, have a lot. All of these things diametrically oppose to the grace of God, the God who carries us. Well, that's a great section, but we must taste alone.

Now, in verse 5, we had the burdensome gods and the burden-bearing God. Now, in verse 5 through verse 13, we have the bird from the east. Notice verse 10, -- verse 11, calling a ravenous bird from the east. Now, that is Cyrus the Persian. He is the one whom God is going to call. Remember in the 45th chapter, in the 44th chapter he is called the Messiah because he is the one who is going to deliver Israel from Babylonian captivity in the future. And so, here we are referred to the fact that it is feudal to expect salvation by the idols. A ravenous bird from the east shall come and execute the counsel of God and then in the end of that chapter, he speaks about the certainty and finality of God's salvation of Israel. "Hearken unto me, ye stubborn in heart, that are afar from righteousness: I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry: and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory."

It seems to me that what Isaiah has done here by the spirit of God is to tell us in effect that the burdensome gods cannot help us, the burden-bearing God alone can. And that the time is coming in the distant future because it did not happen in Cyrus's day, the

time is coming in the distant future, when God's righteousness shall come to the earth. And as he says, he will play salvation in Zion for Israel his glory and that is ultimately the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ. Jeremiah called him *Jehovah Tsidkenu*, the Lord our righteousness. That is Jesus Christ.

In Isaiah, when you read of the righteousness of God being brought by God, ultimately it is a reference to Jesus Christ, why? Well, because you see it is through the cross of the Lord Jesus that righteousness comes, and when we speak of the righteousness of God, we are speaking ultimately of the work of Jesus Christ. For as he hung on that cross and took our sins under the judgment of God, in his obedience to the will of God, since he is our representative and we in the mind of God stand in him as our representative, we by the grace of God are given the righteousness of God. We are in Christ and we are reckoned to stand before God as Jesus Christ does in righteousness.

That's with the Epistle to the Romans is all about. He begins by saying that it is righteousness of God that is found in the Gospel, the just shall live by faith. And then he says we are declared righteous freely, by the grace of God through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. And because he has taken away our sins and because he has positively obeyed the will of God, for us it is possible for God to give us righteousness. It's not something we earn, it's something that has given us, that's the heart of Christianity. It's the God who carries us. It's the God who bears us. It's the God who is gracious to us. That's why he says, "I will bring my righteousness near." It's what he is going to do, not what we do. That's what he does. And he will play salvation in Zion for Israel his glory.

And when Israel responds, that will be the glory of God for men shall see what God has done in Israel. But his righteousness is Jesus Christ and his work. It is through him that we have that righteousness. Jesus Christ is our righteousness. He is our standing before God, he is our representative, he has borne our sins, he is our representative, he has ascended to the right hand of the father. We have died in him, we have been resurrected in him, we stand at the right hand of the throne of God in him. What is that

him we are saying? Near, so very near to God, nearer I could not be, for in the person of his son, and just as near as he. I have his righteousness. He is my righteousness. He is brought near by God.

Now quickly let's just summarize the 47th chapter. This is the last chapter we shall have on Babylon in the Book of Isaiah. That's why I entitled this message Babylon Again for we come to it again. Let me read the chapter through,

"Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground: there is no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate. Take the millstones, and grind meal: uncover Thy locks, make bare the leg, uncover the thigh, pass over the rivers. Thy nakedness shall be uncovered, yea, thy shame shall be seen: I will take vengeance, and I will not meet Thee as a man. As for our redeemer, the LORD of hosts is his name, the Holy One of Israel. Sit Thou silent, and get Thee into the darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for Thou shalt no more be called, the Lady of the Kingdoms."

Babylon in the Bible is the symbol of collective rebellion against God. The reason for that is that, it was in Genesis chapter 11 that at Babylon the first collective rebellion against God took place. Now the first rebellion against God took place in the Garden of Eden. But the first collective rebellion against God took place at Babylon. And that's why all throughout the Bible, Babylon is opposed to what city, Jerusalem. And even to the Book of Revelation in the New Testament that haven't let their Jerusalem that comes down out of heaven, adorned as a bride for her husband is opposed to what city, Babylon. Babylon the Great is fallen, is fallen at the conclusion of the 7th bowl judgment, that is the final outpouring of the wrath of God, the destruction of Babylon, the great city that stands as the symbol of collective rebellion against God as over against the city of Jerusalem, God's City, which reflects his own glory.

In chapter 11 of the Book of Genesis, we read in the whole earth was of one language and of one speech; And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there. And they said one to another, come and let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. And they said, "Come, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name." I read these verses Genesis 11 in order that you might remember that text and let us make us a name. What do they mean by that? Well, they really meant let us gather around ourselves and use ourselves as the measuring stick for humanity. Let us make ourselves a name. Other men called on the name of Jehovah, they said lets make us a name.

So, Babylon is the great city which reflects the collective rebellion against God. It is the atheist city, it is the autotheist city. The city that would make itself the city of God of the Old Testament and it's the city in which there is always division. By the way, we never have to worry about the opponents of the truth gathering together and overcoming the truth of God. As I've said so often to you, man is united in only one thing, that's because there are as many wills in the universe as they are individuals. Satan thought that he might conquer man and control men, but he discovered that all he had done was to unloose upon the earth, the millions of wills represented by the individuals. Now when we talk about the will of man, we are talking about that which divides us. The one thing that unites us is our sin and that is the thing that keeps us from uniting. Have you have been following the SDS in Chicago? Did you think they would all get together and they would have one great revolutionary party, which would take over the United States? Well, they cannot even get together among themselves.

Did you think all the Communists would get together at one time? Well, if you know the history of the communistic movement, you will discover that there was division right in the beginning. Workers of the world unite, Marxists cry out and, that was the one thing they could never do because they couldn't even unite themselves. That is

characteristic of evil. It is disunited. So, Babylon is the symbol of collective rebellion.

In Babylon, man said we will make us a name but he shall never succeed. By the way, we've got to read now in verse 6, well really verse 7 through 10, the kind of name that he would make, but let's notice the pitilessness of Babylon in verse 6. I was angry with my people, I have polluted my inheritance, and have given them into Thy hand. In other words, I gave Israel into your hand Babylon because I was angry with them. Thou didst show them no mercy. Babylon was pitiless in its judgment upon God's people. And even though God had used them, nevertheless they did not obey God. And so he says, "Thou didst show them no mercy upon the ancient has thou very heavily laid Thy yoke."

Now notice what Babylon says of itself, what kind of a name do you think Babylon would make for itself? If Babylon has to make a name for itself, let's make a name for ourselves. What kind of name do you think it would make? We shall be called second in authority under God. Is that what you would expect? It's characteristic of sin to not wish to be second or third. What does man want to do? He really wants to be God, doesn't he? Well listen, as Thou saidst I shall be a lady forever, so that Thou does not lay these things to Thou heart neither didst remember the latter end of it. Therefore, hear now this, Thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest securely, that sayest in Thine heart, what did they say, I am, and there is none else beside me."

Can you imagine the flattery of the Babylonians who say, I am? They select the very word that is used of Jehovah, the covenant keeping God to express his eternity, and his deity. And then they add those blasphemous words. None else beside me, notice verse 10, "Thou hast trusted in Thy wickedness: Thou hast said, none seeth me. Thy wisdom and Thy knowledge, it hath perverted Thee; and Thou hast said in Thine heart: I am, and none else beside me, all the pride of Babylon." Babylon is characterized by pride always.

Now we come to the conclusion, verses 11 through 15, the powerlessness. The Infirmary and Decrepitude of the Lady of the Kingdom is now spelled out and you will notice that Isaiah expatiates on the wearisomeness and futility of the sorceress and enchantments in other forms of satanic religion that are there. If Isaiah were here today, he would say a great deal about the sorceress that are in existence today. He would say a great deal about ESP I think. He would say a lot about Jean Dixon and the false prophets and prophetesses of the day. He would say a great deal about the astrologers, and the sooth-sayers and all of the others from Madam Queen on down and have a great deal to say about all of these things. He would even talk about the Ouija board perhaps, because all of those things are attempts to usurp the place of God. He is and there is none else.

While our time is up, but before we do, I just want to come back once again to verse 4 of chapter 46. Even to your old age, I am he, and even to gray hairs will I carry you? I have made, and I will bear; Even I will carry, and will deliver you. You know there is an old story about a Devon sailor. He sailed with Sir Francis Drake and when he came back to Devon, one of his friends said, "Well, you haven't made a great deal have you?" His friend had grown rich and prosperous and was liked by all of the community, had lots of friends and the sailor replied "It's true, said, I haven't made a thing."

And he said, "You know I have been out on the sea, and I've been in shipwreck, and I've been in storm, and I've been in fear to such an extent that at times I wished often that I was back on land, but nevertheless I'd like to tell you this that though I've been in the midst of storm where I was afraid and when I've been in the midst of shipwreck and I wondered about my life and trembled for it, I will tell you this; I've been with the greatest captain who ever sailed the seas."

And one of the great things about the Christian faith is that regardless of all the troubles that we have and we do have our troubles, we have a God, who is the greatest captain that a man could ever have. He is greater than T. J. Jackson and R. E. Lee because he deals in the spiritual realm and he is one who said, "I have made you and I

will bear you, I will carry you and I will deliver you.” He is not a God who has to be carried about, he is not a burden; he carries out us about. He is a blessing. Let's bow in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for these great passages from the Word of God and we pray Lord that we may realize that Thou art a gracious God, not a legalistic God, not a God who desires us to work for merit, but a God who graciously conveys merit to us through Jesus Christ, now at a God who carries us.

And Lord, we do pray that we may recognize Thee for what Thou art and deliver ourselves by faith and trust into Thy hands, keep us from trying and struggling and enable us to rest in belief.

For Jesus' sake. Amen.