



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Zechariah 2:1-13

“Zechariah - Vision: The Man With the Measuring Line”

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] The Scripture reading this morning is again the Book of Zechariah, so will you turn to the 2nd chapter of the prophecy. And we read this morning the thirteen verses of the 2nd chapter. Zechariah chapter 2, verses 1 through 13.

“I lifted up mine eyes again, and looked, and behold a man with a measuring line in his hand. Then said I, Where goest thou? And he said unto me, To measure Jerusalem, to see what is the breadth of it, and what is its length. And, behold, the angel who talked with me went forth, and another angel went out to meet him, and said unto him, Run, and speak to this young man, (this young man is most likely the prophet Zechariah who is seeing this vision.) Run, speak to this young man, saying, Jerusalem shall be inhabited like towns without walls for the multitude of men and cattle in it: For I, saith the LORD, will be unto it a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of it. (That article is not in the original text and will be, ‘For glory in the midst of it,’ or simply ‘glory’.) 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 glory, (again, no article,) after 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: and 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 as his portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again. Be silent, O all flesh, before the LORD: for he is raised up out of his holy habitation.”

May God bless this reading of his word.

For some years we have had in our midst Mr. Daryl Smith who's been a student at Dallas Seminary and now this past spring graduated. He has been remaining in Dallas because of, well, this same nursery problem. He's just become a father. And as soon as his wife and he are able they plan to go back to Kentucky as missionaries in a little place in that state.

Now we have enjoyed very much the fellowship of Daryl and Joanne Smith. He has been a kind of model young man in our midst. We appreciate his faith in the Lord Jesus, and especially his desire to simply follow the Scriptures. A moment ago as I was standing over at the door speaking with him he said, “We're leaving on August the 1st. And we're going up to Hazard, Kentucky.” And Daryl was a school teacher for a year or so before he came to the seminary and he's going back and he's going to teach school in that community. But his real aim is to establish Bible classes and ultimately a church, perhaps like or better than Believers Chapel, and that is his aim.

And as he stood at the door a minute ago he said something that was quite different from most missionaries. He says, “You know, the other night in the evening meeting you were speaking about money and you said that the Apostle Paul never asked for money for his missionary work.” He said, “I'm not asking for money, but I am asking

for the prayers of Believers Chapel as I go back to establish a work for the Lord in that community.” The place is a well known place in Kentucky, I’m sure you know it, it’s Hazard, Kentucky. And it’s spelled with one Z. And it’s not far from a well known place in Virginia. He told me it was not far from Pound, Virginia. It’s down in the southeastern corner of the state of Kentucky and I know that you will follow Daryl with your prayers as he teaches school, makes contact in the community, establishes Bible classes, and seeks to establish a work for Jesus Christ. It’s been a pleasure to have Daryl with us and so I’ve asked him if he will not come forward this morning and lead us in our morning prayer. So Daryl would you come forward and lead us in your prayer. And we want to assure you that we will pray for you, and know that God will bless you.

[Prayer removed from audio]

[Message] Today we continue our series of studies in the prophecy of Zechariah in the light of current events. And the subject for today is The Man with the Measuring Line. And our Scripture is Zechariah chapter 2, verses 1 through 13.

The survival of the Jew and of Jerusalem is both a riddle and an offense to the natural man. It is, of course, the teaching of Scripture. In Jeremiah chapter 30, and verse 10, the prophet says,

“Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the LORD; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid. For I am with thee, saith the LORD, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations to which I have scattered thee, yet I will not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished.”

And in the 17th verse, “For I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith the LORD; because they called thee an Outcast, saying, This is Zion, whom no man seeketh after.”

Even though the word of God has plainly stated that the Jew should survive and that Jerusalem should be one day the crown of the Lord in the earth, still it is a riddle to the natural man and also an offense to him. Lord Beaconsfield said some years ago, “The attempt to extirpate the Jew has been made under the most favorable auspices, and on the largest scale. And for the longest period of time Egyptian pharaohs, Assyrian kings, Roman emperors, Scandinavian crusaders, Gothic princes, and holy inquisitors have alike devoted their energies to the fulfillment of this common purpose, expatriation, exile, captivity, confiscation, torture on the most ingenious, and massacre on the most extensive scale have been tried in vain. The Jew, however, remains.”

Renan the French philosopher said, “The philosophy of history fails utterly to account for the Jew.” Mark Twain said, “All things are mortal but the Jew. All other forces pass but he remains.” It is a riddle. It is an enigma unless we recognize the teaching of the word of God. It is not only an enigma, it is also an offense to the natural man, to the man who does not look at this in the light of holy Scripture.

One of England’s great prime minister’s, Benjamin Disraeli, was a Jew. One day, an Irishman in Parliament made the very, very sad mistake of saying something about his origin as a Jew. And Mr. Disraeli stood up immediately and said, “Yes, I am a Jew. And when the ancestors of the right, honorable gentlemen were brutal savages in an unknown island, mine were priests in the temple of Solomon.” And he was effectively squelched.

Now today we are living in 1967 and marvel not in the forefront of the news today is the Jew and, believe it or not, the city of Jerusalem. Moshe Dayan, the Jewish Minister of Defense, said when the battle was over, “Now that the war is over the trouble begins.” And it has begun. The Arabs and Russia are at the Wailing Wall of the United Nations and they are proving that Moshe Dion is a new Moses, a prophet. Everyone has a

solution for Jerusalem. The Arabs: give it back to us, that's their solution. The Pope, internationalize it. I noticed, however, that he does not command the assent of all Roman Catholics. The Jesuit Magazine America has said that that's not necessary. We are living in the days when men are able to speak back to the Pope. But his solution is internationalize it. The Israeli solution is we'll keep it. And LBJ's solution: let's forget all about it [Laughter].

But God's solution is it belongs to him and he is going to have it. And one day since he has chosen Jerusalem it shall be his. Now we today are not seeing that time. But we are seeing it is, I think, clear to most of us at least, we are seeing the beginnings of the working of God in which, and from which, shall come the ultimate inhabitation of that city by God's people and by the glory of God himself.

Zechariah wrote almost twenty-five hundred years ago and he spoke of Jerusalem's future. He spoke in a prophecy that contains four divisions. No one has come up and asked me what the last two divisions of this book are. I have said the first two are the first six verses of the 1st chapter in which the prophet calls for repentance on the part of those who have returned from the Babylonian exile. And that the second part beginning in the 1st chapter and ending at the end of the 6th contains a series of eight visions and a coronation scene which concludes it. No one has come and has said, “What are the last two divisions of the book.”

Now I am led to reason from this that first, you all know what the other two divisions of the book are. Consequently I should never even say anything about the first two divisions. Or secondly, you're not reading the book and you're not really interested in the last two divisions of the prophecy of Zechariah. Now I prefer to believe the first. But if the latter is true I do urge you to read this Book of Zechariah for yourself. Study it. It is a book that is written for us in the Christian church, believe it or not.

Now, of course, its prophecies have to do primarily with Israel and they were directed, first of all, to the remnant who had come back to the city after that captivity.

But the prophecies of this book range far beyond that little remnant that came back. And all Scripture is for our prophet, and for our value, for our edification, and I urge you to read it and study it.

So Zechariah now has begun to give us his visions. The first two divisions were relatively simple. After all, the first one gave us a picture of a man among some myrtle trees and we pointed out as we went through that vision that this was a visualized portrait of Israel's present condition and their future blessing. In other words, the Abrahamic promises have been guaranteed to the Nation Israel and the man among the myrtles, who we saw was our pre-incarnate Lord Jesus Christ, is the one who guarantees the fulfillment of these prophecies.

And then in the second vision which was not the year of the horns but last Sunday was the Sunday of the horns, the four horns and the four smiths, we saw that the times of the Gentiles will grant dominion to the Gentiles but their ultimate demise and the ultimate coming of the kingdom of God through our Lord Jesus Christ. So words “good” and words “comfortable” have been given by Zechariah to the people. They are words that pertain to the nations, they shall have dominion over Israel and over the earth for a long period of time. But the promises of Israel are inviolable, they are unconditional, they shall be fulfilled, and ultimately the words that Abraham heard from the mouth of God shall find their fulfillment in the nation Israel and in the city of Jerusalem.

The vision today is a very simple vision. It is a vision that arises out of words that have been stated in the preceding visions. You'll notice in the 13th verse of the 1st chapter that Zechariah said, “And the LORD answered the angel that talked with me with good words and comforting words.”

Now these good words and comforting words were of a two-fold character. First of all, “I am jealous with a great jealousy, for Jerusalem and for Zion.” Now that is stated in the 14th verse. In other words, they are words of love, divine love, for Israel, his desire that they receive the blessing which he has conferred upon them in word. But at

the same time although there is pleasure for Israel there is displeasure for the nations. And he has stated in verse 15, “I am very much displeased with the nations that are at ease: for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction.” In other words, “I have used the nations to judge Israel but they have gone beyond my desire and as a result of that I am going to have to punish them.”

Now in the midst of the words that follow he states in the 16th verse, “A line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem.” This vision of Zechariah chapter 2 and the words that are given in this vision are an expansion of that statement in verse 16, “A line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem.” So what we have, then, in the 2nd chapter is a prophecy given to the Prophet Zechariah which has particular reference to the city of Jerusalem and its ultimate future together with the other events that gather around the future of that nation.

Looking at the vision itself I say it is very simple, there is a man in it again. Zechariah has these visions at night time, he tells us, and he looked up and he saw a man with a measuring line. Now he saw a man, not a woman, that’s the force of the Hebrew word. Not a woman, nor a beast, but a male man. And he saw in the hand of this man a measuring line. If we were putting it in English today, “We saw a man with some surveyor’s instruments in his hand.” Now I don’t know, I don’t want to speak for the weekly Bible translators, some of whom are in the room. Perhaps if they were translating the Book of Zechariah they might say, “And behold a man with surveyor’s instruments in his hand, for that’s exactly what is meant.

Zechariah looks up, he sees a man with surveying instruments, and this man is apparently measuring the city of Jerusalem in order to appropriate it for someone. Zechariah is puzzled. He wants to know the obvious thing, what is he doing it for, where is he going?

So he says in the 2nd verse, “Then said I, Where goest thou? And he said unto me, To measure Jerusalem, to see what is the breadth of it, and what is its length.” In other

words, this is the preparation of a city plan, a divine city plan. But it's a city plan for the Jerusalem of the future. And that is what the man with the measuring line is doing.

Now at this point Zechariah says, “And, behold, the angel who talked with me,” and remember throughout all of these visions he has an interpreting angel standing at his side. Now this interpreting angel is giving him the interpretation of many of the things that he sees. And so he is a very necessary person for the prophet Zechariah. He would be lost without this angel who stands by his side to tell him the meaning of so many of the things that he sees. You know, this is a good illustration of the fact that when you and I read the Bible we need an interpreter too. We could not possibly understand the holy Scriptures if we did not have someone who was available to interpret them for us. That means that though you had the finest of academic degrees and though you had the finest of cultural background you could not possibly understand the Bible unless you also have that unknowable to the natural man factor, the presence of God the Holy Spirit.

Now the third person of the trinity, God the Holy Spirit, has as his task the interpretation of the word of God to those who have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. If you are sitting in this audience this morning and you have not yet believed on Jesus Christ you do not have the Holy Spirit dwelling within your heart, and consequently you cannot understand the word of God. You cannot understand the Old Testament, you cannot understand the New Testament. Even though you are able to read Greek and Hebrew and Aramaic, still you cannot understand the spiritual meaning of the word of God if you do not have the interpreter, the Holy Spirit, as your helper.

That is why it is very, very important that you be born again if you are to understand Scripture. The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, they are foolishness unto him. Neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned. So if you find it very confusing, this Bible, it may be that you have not yet become a Christian. It may be that you have not yet been born again. It may be that you do not have the Holy Spirit, and consequently you do not have the teacher who having

written the word through the prophets and apostles is able to explain it to us, so it is important.

Now it is important, of course, as Christians that we be rightly related to this spirit too. Some of us sit in the audience and hear words just as I have heard and kind of sit back and say, “Well I have believed in Christ and I have the Holy Spirit and therefore I have the teacher and I’m sitting pretty.” But we also learn in the Bible that we, even though we possess the Holy Spirit, cannot understand anything more than the milk of the word if we are not obedient to that spirit, if we are not in fellowship with God. And so we may be a genuine Christian, possessed of the Holy Spirit. But if we are out of the will of God, if we are living out of fellowship with God, some sin that is hindering fellowship is in our life then we, too, cannot understand anything more than the simple things of the word of God. The milk of the word, the strong meat of the word, that builds us up in our Christian faith and enables us to face the problems of life is beyond us because we do not, we have not, established that relationship with God and have been subject to that teaching of the Holy Spirit. Sad to say, many Christians today are weak Christians. Consequently they are out of fellowship with God. Consequently when the problems of life come, when the tragedies of life come, when the difficulties of life come, they flounder because they have not been taught holy Scripture. They do not have the truths of Bible doctrine that enable them to stand in the stresses of life because they have not responded to that Holy Spirit who has become ours.

Now that was a digression but yet it is an important digression, I think. Zechariah has an interpreting angel by his side. And so the angel goes out and we read another angel went out to meet him. Now at this point I’m going to engage in just a little bit of imagination. That is, I want to warn you that what I’m going to say may not be definitely the teaching of the word of God. I hope it is. But nevertheless there are times in the word of God when we have to acknowledge that our information is not complete at this point.

Most interpreters feel that the man with the measuring line in his hand is the same man among the myrtles. If that is so then it is our Lord Jesus Christ in his pre-incarnate state which Zechariah sees in the vision, the angel of Jehovah. Now there is no question but that it is our Lord Jesus in Zechariah chapter 1. There is some question about this in chapter 2. Others have said because of the words that this other angel gives to Zechariah's interpreting angel that this other angel, this another angel of verse 3, is the Lord Jesus Christ in Zechariah chapter 2. On the other hand, still others say it is the man with the measuring line who is our Lord.

If the man with the measuring line is our Lord then the other angel of verse 3 is an angel who speaks his, that is our Lord's, words in his name. And possibly the result is very much the same. It's not very important so we pass on to the prophecies themselves.

Now from verse 4 through verse 13 we don't have girl talk and we don't have boy talk, but we do have angel talk. And you'll notice that what follows is that. And he said, “Run.” Now the angel that came out from the man with the measuring line is speaking to the interpreting angel and so he says, “Run, and speak to this young man.” Now ordinarily when you have a word like run in the text the running is because someone is chasing you or else it's because you want to get to a certain place in a hurry. And that is obviously the force of this. In other words, this is good news. This is thrilling good news. And it's so thrilling and so wonderful for Zechariah, the Jew in the city of Jerusalem again after that long captivity, that the interpreting angel is told by the other angel who apparently is a superior being or at least acts in a superior being's authority, tells him to run and speak to Zechariah these words.

So here are thrilling words, what are these thrilling words? Why are they so important? Well let's analyze them. Number one, you'll notice that he states first of all that Jerusalem shall be enlarged, it shall become prosperous, and furthermore it shall be very secure. “Run, and speak to this young man,” Zechariah, apparently, was just a young man. The word na'ar, which is used here in the Hebrew text, is a word that refers to a

child from the time it's just a little child to the time that it is almost a man. So he is probably in his late teens, a teenager, the prophet Zechariah.

“Run, and speak to this young prophet and say, Jerusalem shall be inhabited like towns without walls for the multitude of men and cattle in it.” In other words, Jerusalem shall be spread out beyond the place of the walls and shall be bustling, burgeoning suburbia, so to speak. Here is to be a city that is so expansive that it has gotten out beyond its walls. And it shall be inhabited like towns without walls because of the multitude of men and cattle in it. It shall be greatly prosperous, “For I,” as for me, great emphasis in the Hebrew text, “As for me, saith the LORD, I will be unto it a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of it.”

So Jerusalem shall be enlarged. Jerusalem shall become very prosperous. And Jerusalem shall be extremely secure. The prosperity of Jerusalem shall not be the prosperity of inflation in which there is very little security, especially for those who are poor. Jerusalem shall have the prosperity and the security that comes from the presence of God himself. And God says that he is going to be a fire, a wall of fire, round about to protect Jerusalem and in the center of the city he is going to be for glory.

Now it doesn't take much imagination to think of Israel's past history and to think of that which the prophet may have had in mind as he heard these words. For you remember the great thing that characterized Israel when they came out of Egypt was the presence of the pillar of cloud and pillar of fire. In the daytime the pillar of cloud was a comfort to Israel because it kept the hot sun rays off of them. At night the pillar of fire like the fire that any hunter out in the woods makes was that which kept the enemies of the people away from them. And so God is going to be a wall of fire round about Jerusalem and he is going to be the glory in the midst. Furthermore, you remember the pillar of cloud and pillar of fire were designed to guide Israel in their journeys through the wilderness and ultimately into the promised land. And so God says he's going to be in the midst of Jerusalem, he is going to be a protection to them, he is going to be for glory

in the sense that glory, which is the expression of the attributes of God, God himself is going to be seen in the city of Jerusalem and as a God who protects and keeps them and blesses them.

Now I think also involved in this, “I will be glory in the midst of this city,” is the fact that in the presence of God in the city of Jerusalem we shall see the glory of a God who keeps his promises. Now this is very important to me. Today, you know, it is almost incredible for any 20th Century man to believe that in the word of God we have a chart of the future. It is incredible because we have been so under the dominance of the philosophy of anti-supernaturalism that we cannot possibly believe that anything can possibly happen which is unexplainable according to the principles of modern science of philosophy. And therefore it is almost incredible for us to hear words like this; we could not possibly believe them. But nevertheless, if we acknowledge the fact that it is conceivable that there is a God and that he has revealed himself in the word of God and he has made certain promises in the Bible which he says are conditioned upon his own character, upon his own power and if there is this God who is this and he has done this, then we can expect him to fulfill his promises. And one of the great glories of the kingdom that is to come is the glory of a God who keeps his promises. In other words, we shall see that God is faithful and the characteristics of his faithfulness to his promises shall shine out in the city of Jerusalem as perhaps they have never shown in all the history of the human race.

We have seen this in the case of individuals who have believed in the word of God. You know, if we cannot believe these promises regarding the future, we cannot believe the promise concerning John 3:16. It is impossible for us to believe that God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. We cannot believe that if we cannot believe these promises, for these promises are set in the same word of God, spoken by the same mouth of God, dependent ultimately upon the same person and upon his power.

Now I'm not speaking about possibilities of interpretation, I'm speaking about the simple statements of holy Scripture. And so consequently if it is true that when I believe in the Lord Jesus according to the gospel I become a Christian, I am born again, I have everlasting life, I am set on a new path to glorify God, I can believe the promises regarding the future of the nation and the future of the city of Jerusalem. And great glory is to be obtained by God in the future when the promises concerning the city of Jerusalem are fulfilled and God himself is in their midst. That's the first thing. And that is thrilling, good news to an Israelite.

Now the second thing is Israel's deliverance in verses 6 and 7, “Ho, ho, come forth.” Now I don't know exactly how to translate this, actually the Hebrew is the word, “Hoi, hoi,” and it's kind of emphatic and I have a good friend who preaches the Bible in another city in the state of Texas and he thought that this was so emphatic that he kind of likened it to the word that of an officer spoke to his company, “Attention!” And that's the way in which he would like to translate this.

Now I think that's probably intruding the military metaphor into the word a little too much, but it is important, “Ho, ho,” and that doesn't mean, “Ho, ho, ho,” either. “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.”

Now we might wonder from reading this text and understanding the historical background about whether this passage has to do simply with the captivity from Babylon or whether it has to do with the ultimate dispersion of the Jews to the four corners of the earth which we see today. But it seems to me from the statement in verse 6, “For I have spread you abroad as the four winds of the heavens,” leads us to see while there is of course a local scope to most of the prophetic word that this ultimately goes beyond that to the ultimate dispersion and the ultimate appeal for those of the last days to come out of Babylon which is repeated in the Book of Revelation and the 18th chapter.

So I look on beyond the local scope to the ultimate here and take this as a call from God for Zion to deliver themselves from the captivity and dispersion of the future. And consequently this is an appeal on the part of God which is to lead to Israel's deliverance. Now this is then the concomitant, that which goes along with the future of the city of Jerusalem. For in the city of Jerusalem there shall not only be the city of Jerusalem restored and the presence of God, but also the presence of the nation Israel.

Thomas Brightman, an exegete of the word of God, wrote a commentary on the Book of Revelation in the year 1641 and in it referring to the promises concerning the Jews he said, “What, shall they return to Jerusalem again? There is nothing more certain, the prophets do everywhere confirm it. Deep down in the hearts of men there is also a conviction that that's where they belong, too.”

Our second president of the United States, John Adams, said in a letter to Major Mordecai Manuel, “I really wish the Jews again in Judea an independent nation.” And the Jews themselves have thought of this down through the years. Today our secular Jew in the United States does not think very much about it unless the Zionists make him think about it because he's quite happy here with the material prosperity in the United States of America. But deep down in the hearts of many of them there is a sense of a vacuum. And that vacuum is because they really belong in the state of Israel or in the land and shall ultimately find their way there.

In the 5th Century Moses of Crete promised to lead the Jews back to the promised land, dryshod through the Mediterranean Sea. And he gathered a number of followers and they started out, they marched down into the Mediterranean and that movement was finally stopped when a number of them drowned. But the time is coming when a number are going to go back to the land and finally, by the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus the nation is to be born again in a day, and not only is Jerusalem to be rebuilt and glorified by the presence of God but Israel itself is to be there. So Jerusalem is to be

enlarged and prosperous and secure, and Israel is to be delivered. But that's not all that Zechariah hears. He also hears of the nation's judgment.

Now notice these words because here we notice something rather significant, verse 8, “For thus saith the LORD of hosts; After glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye,” the people 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.”

Now notice verse 8 said, “For thus saith the LORD of hosts.” And then we read, “Ye shall know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me.” Now here is a strange thing, Jehovah of hosts says, “You shall know that Jehovah of hosts hath sent me.” Jehovah sends Jehovah.

Now this is an amazing thing. We could not understand this in its fullness if we did not have the New Testament revelation and know that there is a trinity. That the God who exists above is a triune God. There is Jehovah the Father, there is Jehovah the Son, there is Jehovah the Holy Spirit. And so in the Old Testament we have some indications of plurality in the Godhead. We do not have the clear and full expression of the trinity but we have some indications of what we learn when the Scripture is finally completed. So Jehovah of hosts sends Jehovah of hosts. And Jehovah as hosts is going to come after glory to the nations and he is going to execute judgment upon the nations.

Now it is possible to understand verse 8 to simply mean that the Son of God, or Jehovah of hosts, is going to come down into this human scene and he is going to obtain glory to himself by judging the disobedient nations. It is also possible to understand this glory to be the glory of the Second Advent and to take the after, not in the sense of purpose, but in the temporal sense. “After glory, then after the time of glory he has sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye.” In other words, he says, “Then after the glory of the Second Advent I shall deal

with the nations, and since they have touched you and they have mistreated you I am going to judge them for, after all, you are the apple of Jehovah’s eye.”

Now I’m more inclined to take that as the interpretation because in the New Testament we do read that when the Lord Jesus comes in the 19th chapter of the Book of Revelation to the earth the thing that he deals with first of all as he reaches the earth is the nations. And so we have the great supper of Revelation chapter 19, in verse 17 and following. So I’m inclined, with some hesitation, to understand this to mean after the glory of the Second Advent, “Hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye.”

Now that’s a wonderful expression. To think of Israel as the apple or the pupil of the eye of God is a very precious thing. Now last night I went over to my World Book Encyclopedia, you see I’m very erudite and I wouldn’t use an Encyclopedia Britannica because that’s way over my head, and so I took out my Children’s Encyclopedia, the World Book, and looked up the “eye”. I was just kind of curious to discover something about the eye. The eye is an amazing organism, of course, as almost all of the parts of the human body are, ask any doctor.

Have you ever really wondered why your eye has water in it? Oh yes, well that acts as a cleansing agent, doesn’t it. Have you ever wondered about your eyelashes? I’ve wondered about eyelashes a lot as I look at ladies in the last few years. Eyelashes, of course, are designed to keep dust and dirt from coming into the eyes and some women seem to have a fixation about this. They’re really worried about things getting in their eye. And of course the eyelid acts like a kind of shade. As you go over and pull down the shade in order to keep the light from coming in, so your eyelid acts that way. And so you have the shade and you have the shutters, and have you ever wondered about the eyebrow? Well that, of course, is designed for protection like the eaves of a house. I learned this in the World Book Encyclopedia, you see. In other words, it’s designed to

keep you from suffering blows on the eye that might be not only hurtful and not only painful but harmful as well.

The eye is a very, very sensitive organism as you know. And Jehovah has said concerning Israel, “He that toucheth you toucheth the apple (the pupil) of my eye.” Jehovah and his relationship to Israel is that wonderful. Now of course to us, who have believed in our Lord Jesus Christ, we are in Christ. We, too, are not only as precious to him as the apple of his eye but we even are his eye. We are the members of his body, the Apostle Paul says. And so this wonderful picture of the tenderness of Jehovah is one of the tremendous things in this chapter to me.

Now over in Isaiah chapter 49, and verse 15 Isaiah said, “Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.” Can a woman forget her sucking child? Yesterday morning we opened up our newspapers and what did we discover? A woman had forgotten her sucking child. Oh, she had an excuse. She said she was afraid that her husband was going to kill the child and so she abandoned the infant. This morning I opened up the newspaper again and on the first page, a mother has abandoned her sucking child.

Shall a woman abandon her sucking child and not have compassion upon it? “Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget,” saith the Lord. A mother may abandon her child but Jehovah shall never abandon his. And Israel is the pupil of his eye and the church of Jesus Christ is also a member of his body. He will never forget us. He will be more of a mother than a mother herself to us.

Now that’s not all. In the 10th verse Zechariah says, “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: and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me.” And again we notice this unusual thing, “Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come,

and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the LORD.” And then in the next verse, “You shall know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto thee.”

And so Jehovah speaks and Jehovah says that Jehovah of hosts has sent him and he’s going to come and he’s going to dwell in their midst. And so the fourth thing that Zechariah has told in this thrilling good news concerning the future is that the Messiah is coming and it’s not his first coming, but it’s his second coming and he’s going to come and he’s going to establish residence in the midst of the people of Israel in the city of Jerusalem.

Now the Jews were greatly puzzled by prophecies like this and you would be too if you did not have some of the New Testament and if you also did not have such great expositors as you hear in Believers Chapel. You would be puzzled, do you know why? Because in the Old Testament there is not a great deal of distinction apparent between the First and Second Advent of the Lord Jesus. The great period of time that has elapsed between the First and Second Advent is not set forth in detail. As a matter of fact the temporal distinction between the First and the Second Advent is only spelled out by history. The history of our Lord’s coming and then ultimately the parables of Matthew chapter 13 which tell us of things that have been kept secret from the foundation of the world. And the period of time between the First and Second Advent has stretched out over the years and the Jews did not understand that. And so they saw that Messiah was going to come in great power and glory as the great Son of Man who would take the kingdom to himself.

Then they read things that disturbed them. They read in Isaiah that he was going to come and he was going to suffer, and how can you put these two things together? So they decided that there must be two messiahs. Messiah ben Joseph, and he would come and suffer. And then there was Messiah ben David, messiah, the son of David. He would come as the great king. And as a result of this they tried to harmonize the word of God by two messiahs, whereas we know that there is just one messiah, he came once, he was

rejected, he shall come again and establish his kingdom. In the meantime God is being long suffering toward men, the word of God is being sowed, and the word is preached, and God's great heart desires that multitude shall come to faith in the one who loved us and gave himself for us.

That's not all. The 11th verse, “And many nations shall be joined unto the LORD in that day.” The fifth thing is that the nations shall be united to the Lord, finally, and they shall be saved. In being drawn to him they are drawn to Israel and they are united as a great company of redeemed people. The nation Israel as the evangelistic agency we learned from other parts of the word of God, and then the great multitude of the nations who come to God through the agency of Israel. The greatest missionary agency in the history of the plan of God is the nation Israel of the future. And the greatest gospel campaign shall be waged by them. [Unintelligible] campaign shall be like a drop in a bucket in comparison with the thousands of Apostle Paul's who shall proclaim the coming of the Messiah and gather the nations into the kingdom of God.

That's not all, the 11th verse states, “And thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto thee.” Men shall finally know why Jesus Christ came. He kept saying, while he was here, “The Father has sent me unto you, you don't know me because you don't know the Father. You don't know that he has sent me to you. I came forth from the Father and now I return to the Father. You do not respond to me because you do not know the Father who has sent me.” But then the nation shall know that Jesus Christ came from the Father to accomplish the work of salvation and also to lay the basis for the kingdom of God upon the earth.

And finally, “And the LORD shall inherit Judah as his portion in the holy land.” By the way, we often talk of Palestine as the holy land, this is the only time, I think, in the Bible where it is referred to as the holy land. Today it is the unholy land. If I were to take a trip to the land of Palestine I would say, “I'm going to the unholy land,” for that's what it is. It is only the holy land, the land set apart for God, when finally he takes it to

himself and establishes his kingdom upon it. Then it becomes the holy land. So don't talk about your trip to the holy land to me. If you want to talk about your trip to the unholy land, fine.

Now I'm not being too serious here, you understand. I just want you to understand what the Bible said. Sometimes great issues hinge upon what the text of Scripture says itself. It is the holy land then, not now. Very unholy. Just take a look at it. Just look at what's going on there. Look at what has been going on there. Look at what goes on in the name of religion there. It's the unholy land. He shall choose Jerusalem again.

Now isn't that strange that he should say, “He shall choose Jerusalem again”? I thought he chose Jerusalem once and for all? Was it William Ewer who wrote a little stanza, “How odd of God to choose the Jews,” and to choose them twice, how odd. The Lord shall choose Jerusalem. Notice the 2nd verse of the 3rd chapter, “The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem.” Can he not make up his mind?

Have you ever seen a woman buy a hat? That is a very trying experience, I assure you. I have been with my wife to purchase hats. I'll never go again if I can help it. If you have seen a woman sit down in front of those mirrors and try on the hats, that is most exasperating. Almost as bad as being with them when they buy shoes. No woman's shoes have ever fit, that is the greatest, that is the greatest - I don't know how to describe this, but this is the greatest act on the part of some shoe company to make women's shoes so they never fit and women expect to keep on buying them. Open a woman's closet, you will see shoe after shoe after shoe after shoe. None of them fit. And one of the reasons they keep buying is because they don't fit. They never will fit. They were not made to fit. You were not made to walk on your toes, women.

But buying a hat, let's just suppose that we go and buy a hat like this. We finally select one out of one hundred and fifty choices. And we finally select one but we open

our pocket books and we discover we don't have any money. So we take it over and say, "I'd like to have this, would you mind putting it aside for me?" And so the clerk is very nice to do this and you have really bought the hat but you haven't paid for it. The next day, which is Tuesday, you send your son down and he pays for the hat and the clerk says, "Would you like to take it?" "Oh no, mother's sending the chauffer to get it tomorrow." And so on Wednesday the chauffer comes in and he takes the hat, which has been bought on Monday, paid for on Tuesday, possessed on Wednesday. Now that's a very poor illustration but that's what is meant in the Bible when we read that the Lord has chosen Jerusalem and he shall yet choose Jerusalem.

In other words, he chose Jerusalem in eternity past. The time came when the Son of God came and paid the price for it. And now the Holy Spirit is sent forth in order to make sure and certain that which already belongs to God and he possesses that which he chose and which he paid for. That's what is meant when we read, "Be silent, O all flesh," or rather, "The LORD shall inherit Judah his portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again."

The prophecy ends, and I must end, with just a simple word of admonition. Now the admonition is simply this, "Hush, O all flesh, before the LORD: for he is raised up out of his holy habitation." The tumultuous nations are told by God to hush because God is going to be raised up out of his holy habitation and he is to accomplish his work. Men today wonder why God is solid. They wonder why miracles do not happen as they used to happen. They sometimes think that because God is not performing miracles, miracles ought to be happening and consequently it's our doctrine that's wrong.

No, God is absolutely right. He's carrying on his plan as he intended to carry it along. The reason miracles do not happen today is because God has already spoken. And the reason that he is solid today is because he is long suffering. When he speaks again it will be to swoop in judgment. And so we should be thankful for the intervening time in which the gospel goes forth.

“Vision: the Man with the Measuring Line” by S. Lewis Johnson
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If you are here this morning and you have not put your trust in Christ, God is silent because he loves you. The day is coming when he shall speak and then it shall be judgment before he establishes his kingdom. May God speak to your heart through the word. Shall we stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah of Israel and the Son of God who loved us and gave himself for us, be and abide with all who know him in sincerity, until he comes again. May the love of the Father and the presence of the Spirit encourage us in the days that are before us. For Jesus' sake. Amen.