



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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

The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Isaiah 2:1-5

"Messianic Salvation in the Last Days"

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for this opportunity and we are so thankful for the way in which Thou hast inspired the Prophet Isaiah to write this magnificent prophetic treatise. And we thank Thee, Lord, for the things concerning it that Thou hast made plain to us. And we pray that there may be other things made plain to us and we ask especially Lord that our studies may lead to a deeper appreciation and work of our Lord Jesus Christ as well as a deeper understanding of the plans and purposes that Thou hast for this world of which we are a part, and the plans and purposes for the church of Jesus Christ of which at least most of here, if not all, are a part also. Guide and give direction to us as we reflect each one of us, upon the passages that we are to look at tonight. And we commit the time to Thee in Jesus' name. Amen.

[Message] One thing that we can say about prophecies is that it provides us not simply satisfaction for our curiosity concerning the future, but it is designed ultimately to give us consolation and edification through the knowledge of the future. In fact, when you read in the New Testament some of the great prophetic sections such as 1 Thessalonians chapter 4 and verse 18 where the apostle speaks of the coming of our Lord

Jesus Christ and the fact that the whole church is to be caught up to meet the Lord. And he concludes that section by saying, "Wherefore comfort one another with these words." So that the prophetic word is designed to have as one of its function the creation of comfort and consolation for the believers.

And then in the very next chapter when he again speaks of the second coming he concludes the section there by saying, "Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do." One of the things that we want to be sure to take place in our lives as we study the prophetic word is that we not simply have our curiosity satisfied, although that's important, no doubt. But may the prophetic word have its consoling and comforting force as well. Because that seems to be the primary type of influence that the Holy Spirit desired that we have.

It is an encouragement to have some understanding of the prophetic word. Some years ago I read an article written by Dr. E. Skylar English who was a well known Christian of the recent generation. And Dr. English, I believe I read, died just a few years ago as a man well up into his eighties. He was for many years the editor of *Our Hope* magazine which many evangelicals read and studied. And he was speaking in a Bible conference on prophetic themes about fifteen years ago and he began a message by telling about an account of a friend of his. He said he had a friend who lived and died with one book on his mind and in his heart, and that book was the Bible. But he also read other literature, and he became quite a good scholar of Shakespeare. In fact, he said he know Shakespeare just as almost as well as he did the Scriptures. And on one occasion he told Dr. English that if he were to visit a Shakespearean theater on Stratford on Avon one time and if he were permitted to go back behind the curtain about fifteen minutes before the play began he could be sure just from observation what play was going to be held that night.

And Dr, English said he asked him how he could do this. And then he said, "As nearly as I can recall what he said, this was his reply. He said, 'Let us suppose that I go

behind the curtain and observe scene shifters setting the stage for the play. The backdrop represents a medieval castle with gray stone walls. Immediately I would eliminate *Macbeth* because its opening scene is a desert place. *Romeo and Juliet* begins in a public square. So that's not the play. Neither can it be the *Merchant of Venice* or *Othello* since nothing of Venice is suggested in the backdrop. There is no ship so *The Tempest* must be excluded. The opening scene of *Antony and Cleopatra* is a palace room, not a wall. And now only a few great Shakespeare plays are left.' He said, 'I turn and see some of the actors getting ready to go on stage. None of them wears a Roman toga, so I know that *Julius Caesar* is not to be played. But then I observe a couple dressed in royal apparel. Another actor appears in a costume that simulates a ghost. I'm about to make my decision when it's clinched for me. For leaning against the wall adjacent to the stage entrance are some shields embossed with the arms of Denmark. I know what I'm going to see this evening is *Hamlet*."

Well, in a sense this is the kind of thing that the study of the prophetic word does for us. We don't know what the future holds, of course. But we do know from the prophetic word certain tendencies and movements that the prophetic word has made rather clear. And therefore, we are much better able to understand what is happening in our world if we have some understanding of what God is doing in this age. Now, there are many things, of course, that have to do with our curiosity and these things are not necessary for our understanding and appreciating what is happening in the world. But there are some of the great themes of the word of God are necessary for us to understand where we are and at what part of God's program we may actually be in.

You know if the Dallas Cowboys were to play again with the clock covered over with some material I'm quite sure that Tom Landry would not be very happy about, because, of course, his coaching of the team depends a great deal upon the progress of the game itself. And it means a whole lot whether he knows that they have ten minutes left to play or fifty seconds left to play. And consequently the Bible and its prophetic

teaching serves a great purpose for us in that it does enable us to understand our own experience as Christians to a much greater degree.

Well, we're studying the Messianic prophecy of Isaiah. It's too big a subject for me, but nevertheless we want to make an attempt to find out something about it. Isaiah is the universal prophet of Israel according to one great Old Testament scholar. And he prophesied, fortunately, in times very much like ours, and so we can appreciate Isaiah, I think, that much more. On the international scene, as we mentioned last week, he lived to see the rise of world rule of Assyria, one of the cruelest and most terrible of the nations of history. And on the national scene on Judah and Jerusalem he lived through good, well I should say in Israel, he lived through good and evil kings with the disease of apostasy gnawing at the nation's heart. We know that from the first chapter that one of the kings that loomed large in Israel's ministry was Uzziah.

Uzziah was politically a great king. The Scriptures say that he was "marvelously helped by the Lord God. But then in the latter part of his life, his life went into something of a tail spin. We read in 2 Chronicles chapter 26 and verse 15, "And his name spread far abroad; for he was marvelously helped, till he was strong. But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the LORD his God, and went into the temple of the LORD to burn incense upon the altar of incense." We needn't go over the remainder of the story. The result was that God judged Uzziah, this great king, because he was disobedient and rebelled against the Law of Moses, which had set out very specifically that only the priests could enter into the temple or the tabernacle, into the temple in order to burn incense. So he was marvelously helped, but after his life went into a tailspin he finished his life as a leper.

Jotham his son continued his political strengthening of the nation but also the apostasy continued as well. As far as Jotham himself was concerned he was a relatively good king, but he allowed the apostasy to continue. It is said about him that he prepared his ways before the Lord. That was the good thing. But the bad thing was that he did

not go out of his way to destroy the high places and to prevent the spread of idolatry. So Isaiah writes against the background of these two kings, as well as some other kings. And these two particularly in his earlier work, which we are looking at in this earlier part of the book; outward prosperity but inward apostasy. That's very much like our day isn't it?

He puts Israel's life in the epigram of wickedness and worship. There was a whole lot of worship, a whole lot of activity, a whole of treading of the courts of the temple. But at the same time the people's heart was far from the Lord. Now, that happens to us individually, of course, and it has its application for each of us, because it is so easy for us to lose the joy that we had when we first became believers and to allow our love for the Lord to wane or cool. And we become indifferent or lethargic, and the result often is that we become unfruitful in the work of God. So there is a whole lot of practical application of these passages to us individually.

And there is a whole lot of practical application of these passages to us as a body of believers, as a local church, to Believers Chapel specifically. Now, of course, I know that we tend as human beings to think that this is a great message for Scofield Church, or this is a great message for Northwest Bible Church. Really the first application of the word of God is always for us. And it's good for us to take our eyes off of others and look well at ourselves, because the chances are that if we have attitudes like that it really belongs to us first and not to them at all.

Well now, we are looking at "Messianic Salvation in the Last Days" for that's the title of this brief section that I want to read now. Let's turn to Isaiah chapter 2, verse 1 through verse 5, which is probably the first section of the prophecy of Isaiah that might be called a Messianic section. Now, Isaiah writes,

"The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in

the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation; neither shall they learn war any more. O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD."

This is really the beginning of a prophecy that continues through the 4th chapter and in it the prophet, in a sense, gives us a summary of two Jerusalems. One Jerusalem we could call prophetic Jerusalem, that is Jerusalem of the future. And the Jerusalem of the future is seen before the world. And then the other Jerusalem is the present Jerusalem of which Isaiah was a part. For remember he lived in the city of Jerusalem in the land of Judah. And here he looks at the present Jerusalem before the Lord God. So if you can think of the prophetic Jerusalem, or future Jerusalem, as Jerusalem is the light of world history. And then if you can think of Jerusalem before the Lord God, present Jerusalem as before the Lord God, then you have the flow through of chapter 2, and chapter 3, and chapter 4. Because in chapter 2 he will speak about prophetic Jerusalem and he will look at prophetic Jerusalem before the world. And then after the 5th verse of chapter 2 he will discuss conditions in the present Jerusalem of which he was a part in that 7th century or so before the time of Christ. And then in chapter 4 he will again look toward the future and look at prophetic Jerusalem before the world again.

What we have here, as Isaiah pictures the nations coming to the city of Jerusalem, may be a photographic enlargement of pilgrims coming to the city of Jerusalem for festive worship. Or perhaps what he is suggesting is here is a vivid picture of the fulfillment of one of the lines of the prophecy that God gave to Abraham. Because remember, when

the covenant was made with Abraham God said, with reference to Abraham, "I'm going to make your name great, Abraham. I'm going to give you a land. And then furthermore, all of the families of the earth are going to be blessed in you."

Now, that great promise of Messianic blessing, through Abraham, is the story of the Bible spiritually, because the story of Abraham's blessing in his seed is ultimately the story of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, the sacrifice of the cross, and then the spread of the gospel, and the ultimate consummation in the future. And so in a sense what we have here in chapter 2, verse 1 through verse 5 is a kind of prophecy and detailing of the fulfillment of "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." And we see the nations of the earth coming to Jerusalem in order to be taught the Law of the Lord.

Now, in the first two verses let's notice just a few things that are said here. Isaiah begins by saying, "The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem." Now, he's going to speak of the exaltation of Yahweh's city of Zion. And one might ask right at the beginning is the rebuilding of a temple presupposed here in verses 2 and 3, because twice he mentions the Lord's house. Many commentators feel that that is to be understood here. "And that when the mountain of the Lord's house is stabled," that ultimately this is a reference to the establishment of a temple.

Unfortunately, there is no sure way to be certain of that, but that is the opinion not only of premillennialists, but others who hold other views as well. So it may be the point.

But I'd like for you to notice what he says in verse 1 first. He says, "The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem." Now, that seems a little strange if you reflect upon it. You don't ordinarily see a word. Now sometimes if you're watching a football game and some football player has intercepted a pass or scored a touchdown and the camera is flashed on him you can see a word, because he will say "Hi, mom." [Laughter] He never says, "Hi, Dad" of course, but "Hi, Mom." But that, so far as I know, is about the only time that I ever see a word. But what Isaiah is speaking about is not that. He's saying this is not a reasoned argument that I'm giving you.

Something that I've thought through, this is not an ecstatic dream that I had. But this is prophetic vision. In other words, I have been by the Holy Spirit given this message and prophetic vision is something, of course, I can only say exists because I'm not a prophet. And so I've never had any prophetic vision. And so I don't know anything more than that there is such a thing as prophetic vision. The divine capacity for seeing into the future with accuracy and with truth, and so that is, it seems to me, what he's talking about. He is saying, "I have had a vision of what is going to happen, and I have had this put into words. And I'm communicating them to you." So it is a vision in words. That's why he says, "The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem."

Now remember, the prophets were not simply individuals who possessed foresight. That is, they were not simply individuals who looked into the future and saw things that were going to happen then and made predictions. They did do that. But they were men who also had insight. That is, they were given insight by God to see present conditions as they really were. So when you read the prophecies you should not think simply of the future, but you should recognize that the prophet had both foresight and insight, or as it has been said, he not only foretold things, he told forth things. That is, he gave important analysis of present conditions. That's what a biblical prophet was. And the biblical prophets were accurate in their prophesying. So Isaiah then had received a prophetic vision and he had received it in such a way that he could express it in words and it is something that came from the Lord God.

In chapter 3, verse 8 when he's talking about present Jerusalem he says, "For Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen: because their tongue and their doings are against the LORD, to provoke the eyes of his glory." Now that expression "the eyes of his glory" suggests the almighty God as a kind of almighty searcher who's burning through man's pretense through the prophetic message that comes from God. God is just, in a sense, opening up the heart of man, very much as a doctor might open up the heart of an

individual in order to complete an operation today. So Isaiah is given an insight into the heart of Jerusalem at present and he's enabled also to see the future.

This prophecy is a prophecy that concerns Judah and Jerusalem. As you read through Isaiah Jerusalem takes the prominent place and not Judah. Judah is looked at simply as a kind of fringe, a little metropolitan area around the city of Jerusalem. So his Jerusalem citizenship seems to color his prophecy. It's almost as if, as one interpreter has said, the city of Jerusalem is his tower on which he stands and surveys the world. He says, "And it shall come to pass in the last days," now this particular expression *'achariyth youm* is an expression that occurs a number of times in the Old Testament and in almost every case it clearly is a reference to the end times, Messianic times. And so we are to look at it in that way. It refers to Messianic times. But now Messianic times may consume a lengthy period of time. In the New Testament we read that the beginning of our Lord's ministry is part of the last days, so the last days lasts a rather lengthy period of time. But his particular expression in the Old Testament is an expression that looks forward to events, generally speaking, that surround the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus Christ. So it is Messianic times that he has in mind when he says, "and it shall come to pass in the last days."

Now, he speaks further and says "That the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains." One would like to ask the question, do you mean, Isaiah, this literally. In other words, will there be a temple, first of all. Or if there is no temple are you speaking about the fact that the worship of Yahweh in the last days will be on a mountain that is higher than the mountains of the earth. In other words, is there going to be some kind of topographical change in the area of Jerusalem that could permit this to come to pass. Well, it's possible to answer it that way, because in Zechariah chapter 14, when it is stated that our Lord comes in his Second Advent and stands on the Mount of Olives as, remember, that the angel said that he would when he ascended to heaven, in harmony with Zechariah 14. Zechariah says that there is going to

be significant topographical change in the land. So it is possible; it's one of those things, it seems to me, that we cannot be absolutely certain about.

On the other hand it may be, incidentally I should have said that many modern commentators, generally not very orthodox say that Isaiah here relies upon a myth of a cosmic mountain at the center of the earth. There is some evidence that in certain heathen lands there was a few there would be a mountain at the center of the earth which would be higher than anything else. Some have said that Isaiah leans upon that, but most orthodox people do not think that he did.

This could be figuratively high for an expression of the supremacy of the worship of Jehovah in the last days. And again, and remember in the prophetic teaching of the word of God there is a greater deal of figurative language and sometimes commentators are not absolutely certain that the author is speaking literally or figuratively. We should not be disturbed by that. Figures, as a general rule, are perfectly clear. If I should say the Crimson Tide on the, what is it December 29 or whenever this comes to pass, that the Crimson Tide overflowed the Mustangs and drowned them. That'd make an interesting headline wouldn't it? You would understand, of course, that that meant no more than the fact that the University of Alabama had defeated Southern Methodist University in the Sun Bowl football game. The literal event we would understand, but it would be put in figurative language.

Well, the top of the mountain then we are not absolutely sure about. But at any rate he says, "The mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it." Now, there doesn't seem to be any question about this being the exaltation of Yahweh's Zion and the aspiration of the nations to be taught by the Lord God. "Many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths." So Jerusalem is going to be the Mecca of the future age, Isaiah prophesies. And instead of all

roads leading to Rome in this time, all roads will lead to Jerusalem. And regardless of how this is going to be fulfilled. It certainly will be a glad day when men seek the Lord, and without any hindrances from false teachers as well. So " many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways."

Now in the latter part of the 3rd verse and the 4th verse the prophet goes on to speak of Jerusalem as the city of peace. He says, "For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation; neither shall they learn war any more." There is an exhortation from Psalm 122 and verse 6 which seems to find its consummation here. Remember the Psalmist, David, in this instance says, "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee." And this prayer is answered at this time.

Now, one other practical thing that appears here is it's very evident, is it not, that what Isaiah is saying is that truth lies in God. That's the first lesson of the section. And the second lesson is that the peoples of the earth need biblical doctrine. So "Out of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem." And God is going to judge among the nations. He is going to rebuke many peoples. And there is going to be a universal kind of peace. So Jerusalem will become a city of peace.

Everything up to this point has been centripetal in human history and the sense that chaos characterizes the movement of world history. But now everything is oriented toward God and there is a centrifugal force of such great extent that the nations of the earth actually are converging on the city of Jerusalem. Yahweh is no local deity, Isaiah would have said. He's not like Kemosh of the Moabites, but he is a universal deity and the time is coming when all of the nations of the earth are going to worship the one true

God. Isaiah would certainly say, incidentally, that the nation needs biblical doctrine concerning the true God.

Now, he says in this 4th verse that God is the arbiter of peace. That is an interesting thing. In other words, at this time it is the Lord who is going to judge among the nations and he shall rebuke many people. I must confess that I would be inclined to think that when it says that he shall judge among the nations that this means simply that he will rule among the nations. But Hebrew parallelism would tend to affirm that that is no the correct interpretation, because the next clause is parallel with that, and the word translated in my Authorized Version, which I'm reading tonight, "shall rebuke" is a word that really means "to decide" or "to arbitrate." And so what we seem to have here is the judge of the universe judging among nations and arbitrating disputes that might arise. So that is the picture that we are given here by this text. He shall judge among the nations. He shall rebuke many peoples. So perhaps this is preparatory to the kingdom of God, the settling of disputes, the settling of questions that have arisen in the past. And it is the Lord God who is going to do that.

The result will be a peace. Now this metaphor of beating swords into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks is reversed, as probably you know, in Joel, where the exact opposite is stated. But here, it's obviously a metaphor of peace. And even their pruning hooks, incidentally the pruning hooks were the things that they used to cut their grape vines, their pruning tools, their pruning hooks. So we come back again to viticulture. Remember some of you have heard me speak of viticulture, or the culture of grape vines. Because I've got three vines, you know. I was very humbled when I went to Europe and saw how many vines those people had, thousands of vines, beautiful vines. I'm sure magnificent grapes appearing on them.

But those pruning hooks are going to be beaten. Their spears are going to become pruning hooks, and nations shall not lift up sword against nation. Neither shall they learn war anymore. So this is biblical disarmament. This is an assault Zion kind of

treaty, which God himself signs and doesn't require any signatures from any other nation in the earth. He is going to establish peace. Isn't it surprising that men can really think that we will have peace on the earth. Isn't it amazing when you think about it?

I mentioned last year when we were going through the prophecy of Micah in the parallel passage here, that Stringfellow Barr, who was president of a university, died just last year. He was well known because he was the man who originated the idea of having a college education built around the one hundred great books. And when he died the *New York Times* had a rather lengthy article about his life and about his death. And in it it had one or two significant things that Mr. Barr had said. And of the things that he said I thought was very interesting for a man who a college president and who I didn't expect would understand human nature so well. But he certainly did. He said, "To trust any league, alliance, association, or treaty among sovereign nations to outlaw the production or use of atomic bombs is to trust swamps to cease producing mosquitoes." That's pretty good. It's only God, of course, who will bring peace. And here Isaiah speaks of that day.

And finally he concludes, because we want to have time for a question or so, with an appeal for submission to Yahweh. We read, "O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD." Now, you may have noticed from your reading of the Bible that Micah prophesies a prophecy that is almost identical with Isaiah's. And so scholars, Old Testament scholars, have had a field day trying to decide who wrote the prophecy first, which one of these prophets borrowed from the other. Or perhaps, what was the source of both of the prophecies. Let me quickly read Micah's prophecy. It's in chapter 4.

"But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will

teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation; neither shall they learn war any more. (And then Micah adds this,) But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken it. For all people will walk every one in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of the LORD our God for ever and ever."

Now, Isaiah concludes, "O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD." Notice this, doctrine and ethics go together. This great doctrine which he has given them of the future is designed to lead to a certain kind of walk. One must be instructed before he can walk aright. Doctrine is pragmatic. It is not speculative and theoretical. It produces righteousness. And it is God who instructs. You'll notice that they are urged to come and submit to the Lord and thus walk in the light of the Lord. Well, that's the beginning of Isaiah's Messianic prophecy. It's a very simple little prophecy of the future. And we have a few moments and perhaps we have a couple of questions. So feel free to raise your hand and express your question. Incidentally, we will study the 4th chapter next week. Yes, Nancy.

[Question from the audience]

[Johnson] To whom were they given first? Well, as he says they were prophecies that were given, of course, concerning Judah and Jerusalem, and we would presume from the historical books that they were spoken, many of them spoken publicly. Some of them, of course, were no doubt written down and published. Jeremiah refers to certain that he gave publicly and some of the others as well. Amos said that men were out to take his

life because of the things that he had said. So they both wrote and spoke their prophecies.

Now the second question you had was?

[Question from the same audience member]

[Johnson] That's a very good question. Most students of the prophecy of Isaiah believe that Isaiah represents a collection of prophecies that Isaiah gave at different times in his life. For example, chapter 1 seems to be an introduction to the book, which may have been given at a certain time in his life, not necessarily the first of his prophecies. The prophecy we're looking at, which we will study chapters 2, 3, and 4 is obviously a unity. So generally speaking these prophecies were given at different times and were collected later on and there is a great deal of debate over who did the collecting, whether the prophet did or someone after the prophet, were collected into what we call The Book. Isaiah's call to the prophetic ministry is given in the 6th chapter, for example.

So the prophecies are not all, they are not given as if it was one long consecutive prophecy. They were evidently given at different times and then were collected later on into the book as we know it today. Does that?

[Question from the same audience member]

[Johnson] Yes, they were given for the edification and consolation of the people at that time as well for us. Now in the New Testament the Apostle Paul in Romans chapter 15 and verse 4 says that the prophetic word was for us, but it also was given first of all for them. And we should never lose that emphasis in the study of the prophecies. They are generally related to the historic situation. And in fact, that is one of the necessary points for understanding the prophecies. That's why it's important to understand the days of

Uzziah and Jotham and Ahaz, and Hezekiah, because many of the things in the prophecy that are puzzling simply because we are not as familiar as we might be with Isaiah's background. Yes sir.

[Question from the audience]

[Johnson] This is the beginning of the freeze movement. The question he has asked is a very good question. And maybe some of you didn't hear it in the back. That's one thing we'll have to do. Maybe they heard you, and maybe they didn't but let me repeat it. His question is, are we to look at this essentially as literal or symbolic. As I mentioned in the message itself, the prophetic messages of the Old Testament contain a great deal of figurative language. Some of them contain symbolic language such as Ezekiel particularly and Daniel in the Book of Daniel.

Generally speaking, the prophets did not use symbol so much as figure. And I'm distinguishing symbol from figure. So yes, I would consider this to be figurative language. And it's very much like we might use today. What do we want, do we want guns or do we want butter. Well, a politician might say something like that. And he doesn't mean guns really, but what he means is armaments of all kinds, or food and welfare. I think that is the kind of thing this is. And the fact that the same figure is repeated in Joel chapter 3, verse 10 in reverse would indicate that it came to be something of a, what shall I say, an epigram or something like that, a common figure of speech anyway, in the day.

Well, our time is up and next time we'll try to give you an opportunity to ask further questions. Well, we've had a number of questions, but Larry I give you one, providing I can answer it one minute.

[Question from the audience]

[Johnson] Yes, I think, of course, something like that is a matter of perception. If we should, if it should be true that we are going to have a thousand years of peace, and a brief rebellion, incidentally. It's not a great rebellion in the sense of a lengthy period of time. But it's a rather short time, remember. It's spoken of in that way. I don't think that that would be contrary to the intent of this prophecy. But that of course is a matter of judgment.

[Question from the same audience member]

[Johnson] Well, I would that if he says "The nation shall not lift up sword against nation neither shall they, the nations, learn war anymore," that that would not necessarily violate Revelation chapter 20, because if you remember Revelation chapter 20 is something devised by satanic deception. And so that is a different kind of war from that that is spoken of here. But nevertheless I think that's something to ponder that he has written. He's talking about a book called *The Bible in the Future* in which a professor, a former professor at Calvin Seminary has specifically set out a number of passages including this one as perhaps passages that refer to the new earth rather than to a millennial earth. And there may be some passages that individuals have interpreted of the millennial earth that really do belong to the new earth. But Professor Hoekema has to prove that all of them refer to the new earth, which is more difficult question. In other words, he might be right about this, but he might not be necessarily right about all.

Well, let's approach controversy in a spirit of good Christian appreciation of one another. Let me close in a brief word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for the privilege of the study of the word and we ask Thy blessing upon us as we think about the great things that Isaiah wrote may they have a pragmatic spiritual effect upon our lives. And enable us ...