



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Isaiah 59:1-21

“Jehovah's Coming and Covenant”

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for the word of God and for the prophet Isaiah and the message that thou didst give him to give. We thank Thee for the marvelous way in which he expressed the message that Thou didst give him. And we know, Lord, that Thou didst guide his lips and his pen as he wrote the things that comprise the message to him. And we thank Thee for their lasting character. And, so many hundreds of years later, we read and we marvel, we are instructed, we are blessed and challenged and convicted by the things that Thy servant, the prophet Isaiah, wrote. And we ask Lord, again, as we look at one of the magnificent chapters in this very significant book, that our minds may be opened to Thy truth, that we may be responsive to it and that we may leave with the sense of the sovereign grace of our God and also with motivation to represent him in all of our daily life. We thank Thee for the contacts we have with the world and those outside of Christ, and enable us, Lord, to take advantage of them for the glory of Jesus' name. Give us now ears to hear Thy word and eyes to see. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] We're turning tonight to Isaiah chapter 59, and our subject is "Jehovah's Coming and Covenant." And we will seek to lay a little bit more stress on the last few verses of the chapter than the opening verses.

One reads Isaiah chapter 59 and one of the fundamental things that stands out immediately is the prophet's stress upon the things that are hindering fellowship between the Lord and his people. The doctrine of sin in Christianity is not a new doctrine. And it comes from the Old Testament. In fact, the Apostle Paul in his great Book of Romans, perhaps his greatest epistle, after he has set out the sin of the Gentiles and then the sin of the Jews that he has accused these two groups of being under sin, in order to prove it, he cites a series of passages from the Old Testament. In other words, it's as if his audience listened very intently to the things that he said with reference to the sin of the Gentiles and the sin of the Jews, but when it comes to proving it, one must turn to the Scriptures and say what the Scriptures say. So his audience evidently was an audience that had an extremely high regard for the word of God.

And if we had time, and we were to turn to Romans chapter 3 and read verse 9 through verse 20, you would notice that there are a number of influences in that section from this chapter that we are looking at tonight. In fact, as any of you know who have studied theology, the doctrine of sin is the fundamental doctrine of the soteriology of the Bible. If we understand the doctrine of sin as it is taught in the Bible, then almost all of the other doctrines related to our salvation flow out of that naturally.

If, for example, we do not believe that man is as sinful as the Scriptures set him forth, then of course we will have less regard for the saving work of Jesus Christ. We will also, as a general rule, confuse the things that God does in our salvation and add to them often some little things and then ultimately some big things, depending upon our doctrine of sin, that we are to do in our salvation too.

About thirty years ago, one of the best known of the professors in our country, Professor Arthur Schlesinger, a well-known liberal but a very influential man whose

articles still appear on the editorial page of *The Wall Street Journal*, for example, from time to time, he's one of their official editors, writing in the *Partisan Review*, he said these words, "There seems no inherent obstacle to the gradual advance of socialism in the United States through a series of new deals. Official liberalism was the product of the enlightenment cross-fertilized with such things as science, bourgeois complacency and a belief in progress." Now, notice these sentences. This gives you an insight into Professor Schlesinger. "It dispensed with the absurd Christian myth of sin and damnation and belief that what shortcomings man might have were to be redeemed not by Jesus on the cross, but by the benevolent unfolding of history." Can you imagine being redeemed by the benevolent unfolding of history? The professor continues, "Tolerance, free inquiry and technology, operating in the framework of human perfectibility, would in the end create a heaven on earth, a goal accounted much more sensible and wholesome than a heaven in heaven."

Well, that is a striking comment. And if one knows Professor Schlesinger, then of course, it's not surprising to you. But what is surprising is that this viewpoint still has such a hold upon the American mind. It is really striking.

When we think of what the world in the west thinks of Jesus, it really is amazing that over the general mind of the western man is the conviction that the Lord Jesus Christ is just a good fellow, one of us, but maybe a little better than the rest of us, and furthermore, that he doesn't pose any threat to us nor does his father pose any threat to us.

T. R. Glover once said, "The picture of the gentle Jesus remains on one side of their minds for some people, and on the other side, nothing or very little. The adjectives swamp the substantive." I like that expression, "gentle Jesus." So, "The adjectives swamp the substantive. The historical Jesus was lost in the sentimentalist's half picture. The real features of Jesus' mind were not studied, and a vague notion of Christian charity, a still vaguer one of forgiveness prevailed, and the moral stamina was so far gone from popular

Christianity. 'He's a good fellow and twill all be well,' says one of the pots about the potter in Omar Khayyam's *Rubaiyat*. And it sums up only too adequately the common theology, sheer travesty as it is, of everything we find in the thought of Jesus."

Well, Glover was not a Calvinist. And he was not a man who believed in the kinds of things that those who believe in the sovereignty of God believed in, but you can see that even he sensed that the idea that God as just a real nice fellow in heaven who only exercises a general supervision over us and really is working all things out so that everybody will ultimately be in heaven is a far cry from what the Bible teaches.

The passage that we're looking at in Isaiah chapter 59 is one of the sources of New Testament hamartiology or the doctrine of sin. But it's also one of the sources of New Testament eschatology. And as you may know from the study of Paul's Epistle to the Romans, in Romans chapter 11 when he reaches the climax of that chapter and says that, "So all Israel shall be saved: (and then adds) as it stands written," that's Isaiah chapter 59 and verse 20 and 21 that he cites. And so, this chapter was important for the Apostle Paul.

There was a Jewish man by the name of Max Dimont, and he has written a book, which I have in my library, and I confess I've not read all of it, called "Jews, God, and History." And he stated in his book, "The Jewish history has entered its final phase ending with the coming of the Messiah two thousand years hence." He said, "Jewish history is really bound up in six thousand years: Two thousand years from the time of Abraham to Jesus (That's an interesting thing for a Jewish man to say.). Two thousand years from Abraham to Jesus, and then two thousand years from Jesus to Ben-Gurion and modern Israel, the state of Israel. And then the third act is also two thousand years long." And so we have that much longer in our history to look forward to according to Mr. Dimont.

Well, the prophet's standpoint as he writes chapter 59 is the last decade of the captivity. They are in the Babylonian captivity. He writes from that perspective. It's the

period of Cyrus' Lydian war. And Cyrus, the Persian, is making one prosperous stroke after another, but he is delaying his assault upon Babylon. And so, the hope of the exiles is dark. They were pining away in gloom looking, of course, for some deliverance from the captivity in which they now have been for a number of years.

Now mind you, the prophet did not write at that time, but his perspective is that - the time of the Babylonian captivity. So, these chapters were given to him as prophecy.

Now again, what I'd like to do in the time that we have is to read through the chapter, make just a few comments at some interesting points and perhaps some critical points, and then spend a few moments on the last few verses of the chapter because they have to do more definitely with Messianic prophecy.

The first two verses are something of a theme for the chapter. And one thing comes between God and man, and that one thing is sin. Listen to the prophet as he writes, "Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear."

Now he speaks here, then, of the effect of sin as he seeks to show that Israel's condition is due to her sin. It's not that he cannot hear. He's very real. In fact, the way in which he is presented here makes the reality of the person of God even more clear and definite because the prophet mentions his hand, "The LORD's hand is not shortened." He mentions his ear, "His ear is not heavy, that it cannot hear." And then further, he mentions his face. So, he writes in very anthropomorphic language, that is, he pictures God in human language as a person who has hands. He has an ear, and he also has a face. This, of course, is designed to give the sense of the reality of the presence of God.

Now, I don't usually listen to Archie Bunker, but I don't know whether you did last night or not. But Archie, was as customary, got in some difficulty, and his difficulty was that he saw a crime committed. But he didn't want to give testimony to it for various reasons. And so, he was trying his best to avoid giving proper testimony to the

authorities that he had seen this particular crime. And so finally, it was of course, it was a crime against an Italian. And Archie was trying to link it all up with the Mafia. And so finally, there is a confrontation in his living room. And the Italian fellow is there telling him he did see it. And Archie is saying he did not see it. And he said, "You did see it, and you should give testimony to it." And Archie said, "There's no proof that I saw it." And then finally the Italian fellow said, "But there was one person who saw you." And Archie said, "There was no person who saw me." And he said, "There was one person who saw you." And Archie said, "Why do you have to bring him into this?" [Laughter]

So, the prophet here speaks in very personal language of the Lord God. He has a hand. He has an ear. He has face. Of course, he doesn't have these things, but this is his way of presenting him as a living person.

But they are depraved, and of course, they will not hear. And then the prophet goes on to explain their sin. He says in verse 3 through verse 7,

"For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness. None calleth for justice, nor any pleadeth for truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies; they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity. They hatch cockatrice' eggs, and weave the spider's web: he that eateth of their eggs dieth, and that which is crushed breaketh out into a viper. Their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works: their works are works of iniquity, and the act of violence is in their hands. Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood: their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction are in their paths."

Now the prophet is not writing of a period of extraordinary violence and bloodshed. These words are meant to be taken figuratively. In other words, in the language of the figures, he's describing the conditions that exist in the nation at that time.

And the description of them is expected to give them a picture of the total depravity that characterizes them.

And in the 8th verse he says, "The way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace." Now you probably know that that is a statement that the Apostle Paul picks up on. This is about the second one that he picks up on in Romans chapter 3. In other words, their whole nature is in moral discord.

And now the prophet confesses the sin of the nation, but he does it as a representative. So, he speaks representatively. There is a passage over in Jeremiah chapter 14 I'd like to read. And the prophet there speaks in a similar fashion. In Jeremiah chapter 14 and verse 19, the prophet writes,

"Hast thou utterly rejected Judah? hath thy soul lothed Zion? why hast thou smitten us, and there is no healing for us? we looked for peace, and there is no good; and for the time of healing, and behold trouble! We acknowledge, O LORD, our wickedness, and the iniquity of our fathers: for we have sinned against thee."

There is a time in the life of the nation in which it is necessary and proper for individuals to confess the sin of the nation representatively. And this is what the prophet will do now. In verse 9, for example, he says,

"Therefore is judgment far from us, neither doth justice overtake us: we wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, but we walk in darkness. (He's talking about the effects of their sin.) We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes: we stumble at noon day as in the night; we are in desolate places as dead men. (So, he pictures the nation as looking for justice and salvation, but they grope like animals that roar and moan fruitlessly. And then in verse 11), We roar all like bears, and mourn sore

like doves: we look for judgment (or justice), but there is none; for salvation, but it is far from us."

Now, the prophet explains their sin in verse 12 and 13. Notice the little "for" that begins verse 12.

"For our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us: for our transgressions are with us; and as for our iniquities, we know them; In transgressing and lying against the LORD, and departing away from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood."

Personal sin, apostasy in thought and deed stands at the head of the description. Now we ought never to read these verses without recognizing that they're verses that apply to the Nation Israel in the day of the prophet. But they're also verses that apply to us in nineteen hundred and eighty-four. I dare say that if we in this room looked at these verses and thought about our lives, we would find ample reason to confess our sin, just like Isaiah was confessing the sin of the nation.

Well, perhaps we would be excused from some of these things. Like the fellow who went out having heard a sermon on the Ten Commandments and said, "At least, I've never made a graven image." It's amazing what we can take pride in, even though we admit the failure in every other way. I don't know about you, but when I look at something like this, I can think of many ways in which the prophet speaks to me in nineteen hundred and eighty-four. My transgressions are multiplied before me, and my sins testify against me. My transgressions are with me, and as for my iniquities, yes, I know some of them. I probably don't know all of them, but I know some of them.

Now the prophet speaks of the end of their sin in verse 14 and 15.

"And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter. Yea, truth faileth; and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey: and the LORD saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment."

Personal sin issues in societal sin. And both result in divine displeasure. Usually our personal sins will sooner or later affect someone else. And if we're in a local church, they will usually affect someone in the local church. And it's not long before the church is involved in the sins of its members. John Calvin said, "They vied with themselves in wickedness." And what a terrible thing it is for a body of believers to get to the place where sin is the constant experience of a local body.

Now, I'm not accusing Believers Chapel of that. I think that God has in wonderful grace preserved us from that for over twenty years. And we're grateful to him. I know you are grateful to him for that. But there are many churches that are literally torn apart because of the very thing that the prophet is writing here. Individuals who have departed from the word of God, departed from the Lord, and some personal departure from truth, some personal kind of apostasy, and pretty soon, others are involved, and then the whole body is torn up because sin spreads easily within the body of the faithful.

And now in verse 16 through verse 21, the prophet writes of Yahweh's coming and his covenant. The remedy for the difficulty is not in man. And so we read in verse 15,

"And the LORD saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment. (And then verse 16, obviously leaning upon that, says), And he saw (This is what he did see.) And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him."

So the thing that the prophet says is the remedy for the difficulties do not really lie in men. It's like Hosea says in the 13th chapter of his book. I do not want to anticipate what we want to say when I get there, but the text is a great text. "Thou hast destroyed thyself; and in me is thine help." So, the remedy for Israel is not in herself. The remedy is in the Lord God.

Some years ago in Believers Chapel, I gave a series of messages through the Book of Isaiah. And some of you in the audience were here when they were originally given. And some of the things that I said then, when I look at them now, they're very interesting, mainly the articles that I had collected for that series. And to be able to look at them now is rather interesting because it was fifteen years ago.

And I had this one with my notes on Isaiah chapter 59, and it's entitled "Tranquilizers." And it was an article in which the author of the article sought to make the point that everything in the future is going to be solved by the taking of a particular pill. It's very interesting to read it now in the light of conditions now.

For example, it begins, "It's 9:30 in the morning and the house is empty. The children have left for school, and the young mother now sits on a kitchen chair staring at her coffee cup trying to fight down an overwhelming feeling of despair." Can you imagine a woman feeling despair when she's put the children off to school? I might have thought it was more realistic to say she was dancing. But anyway, "Incessantly the thought bores into a mind – Now, do it now, when nobody is home. Open the gas jets. Put your head in the oven and die. Suddenly she rises, takes a pill from her purse and swallows it with coffee. In a few moments the urge to destroy herself recedes, and she goes about her housework."

"The boy now nineteen (This is a different instance.) has dropped out of school three years ago and is in almost constant trouble with the law. He's heading surely and swiftly toward a life of crime. This time after he's arrested, he's taken to a hospital where with his parent's permission and his, he undergoes a series of tests that confirm the

doctor's suspicion. The chemical makeup of his brain is responsible for his criminal tendencies. He stays at the hospital to receive injections that alter his brain chemistry. In several months he returns home and gets a job. His mind is channeled away from the thoughts of crime and antisocial behavior."

And then the article begins with, "As a new phase of the tranquilizer era opens in America, distinguished scientific investigators are predicting dazzling accomplishments such as the pill that stops the suicidal impulse and the chemical that can transform a potential criminal into a law-abiding citizen."

And so, Rich, all that our policemen need now is just the proper supply of the pills, and everything is going to be nice. Well, I imagine that I read that fifteen years ago and thought, well, it doesn't sound right to me, but I don't have any evidence of it. But now fifteen years later, we have some empirical evidence that it does not work.

It's rather striking that this week while I was in Chicago, I received two letters that came to my desk in which individuals, Christian people, are having problems with suicidal tendencies. And it's not a case of never having sought professional help. They both have sought professional help for a lengthy period of time. And the problems still persist. And it's not, I'm sure, because the doctors don't know the proper pill to give. It's just the fact that there is no such thing as a happy little solution from a pill for the sin nature which is ours as a result of the fall of man in the Garden of Eden. There may be many things that we do not know about how we should treat certain people, but one thing is sure. We're not going to solve the problem of human sin with a pill.

The Scriptures are true, and they do say that in the Lord God alone is help. The ultimate solution is only in him. And the ultimate solution is in that vivid lonely figure whose heart throbs for the individuals and whose will strikes for them.

Now, notice the reference to the coming of Yahweh in verse 16 through verse 19. Well, I read verse 16, let's read verse 17,

"For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak. (And then in verse 18) According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay, fury to his adversaries, recompence to his enemies; to the islands he will repay recompence."

There is no such thing as a gentle Jesus in which the adjective swamps the noun, because the God who is the God in heaven is, it is true, a loving God, a merciful God, full of loving kindness and truth, but he is also a righteous God.

Now he says that "He saw there was no man, and he wondered that there was no intercessor." This is Isaiah's vivid way of saying that there is no hope in man, no hope for personal salvation. We cannot be saved by our good works. We cannot be saved by the church. We cannot be saved by the preacher. We cannot be saved by our education or our culture or by any kind of turning over a new leaf, or reformation or anything like that. We can only be saved by the Lord God. "For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast." Salvation is from the Lord.

Job, in the 9th chapter and the 32nd and 33rd verses of his book says, "For he is not a man, as I am, that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgment. Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both." Job 9, verse 32 and 33.

In other words, the Lord God is not the kind of man that men are. He is a holy God, and there is no one, so Job says, who can lay his hand upon us both, that is, who can put his hand upon God and at the same time put his hand upon man and mediate between them. Job knew well the truth of "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God."

Of course, Job goes on to say later on, "I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall one day stand upon this earth." And the implications are very strong that as a

result of the redeemer, there is one who can put his hand upon God because he is the divine son, and he can put his hand upon man because he is truly man, and he by his saving work can bring the two into fellowship. So the intercessor that God dramatically looks for is the Lord God himself. He's the intercessor. And as he says, "Therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him."

Now, we don't have time to read the passages that might emphasize this, but it's clear that he is thinking about the fact that the remedy lies only in the Lord God.

In verse 18 he mentions the adversaries. "According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay, fury to his adversaries, recompence to his enemies; to the islands he will repay recompence." The rebellious among the nations are undoubtedly included, but he hides his special judgment of Israel, now savorless salt, in the universal judgment upon all. And 19 says, "So they shall fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun (That's the east). When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him."

Paul says in Romans chapter 3 when he comes to near the end of his description of man in sin, he says, "There is no fear of God before their eyes." That's the ultimate nature of human sin. It is unbelief. "There is no fear of God before their eyes." It was unbelief that led Eve to partake of the fruit and give to Adam. And it was unbelief of the word of God, the spoken word of God, that brought him to disobey. And as we read in the Epistle to the Romans, "Whatsoever is not of faith, is sin."

So ultimately, it comes down to the way in which a person responds to the word of God. And of course, to respond to the word of God is to respond to God because the word of God is simply the means by which God himself is revealed. And when we read, "There is no fear of God before their eyes," then of course, we're talking about the ultimate cause of human condemnation. "When the enemy shall come in," probably "For he will come as a rushing stream which the breath of Jehovah driveth." His inexorable bursting wrath will judge and lead to universal fear of his name.

Now the last two verses, there's a surprising change. As we've seen in the Book of Hosea on Sunday in the first chapters, speaking of judgment, God's displeasure with Israel, and suddenly the last two verses we have marvelous promises of blessing. The same thing's true in the second chapter. And so here in this chapter, we've had a great stress on sin, a great stress on judgment. And the judgment leads to universal fear, but also it will bring personal salvation for the nation. And so, God has some promises for his people as well. And they are found in verse 20 and 21.

"And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD. As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever."

And so the Lord Jehovah is going to come, and he's going to come in judgment, and he will come in salvation as well. Here is the climax of Israel's sad history. This is what Professor Dimont was speaking about, except it's not two thousand years away probably. Of course, I cannot tell you when it's going to come to pass, but it's highly unlikely, it seems to me, that it's two thousand years away. But this is what he was speaking about. This is the final stage of Israel's earthly history. And the climax is in the coming of the redeemer who will come, and he will come upon the threshold of earth's golden age.

Now notice he is described as "the Redeemer." Now that is probably a reference to the Davidic promises given in the Davidic covenant. As one turns back and reads 2 Samuel 7 and 1 Chronicles 17 and Psalm 89, gathering all those passages together, what God promises to David is that David is to have from his seed a king. And he is going to rule. And further, he is going to have a realm over which he does rule.

Now David was a student of Scripture. And when David died, as he was just about to die in 2 Samuel 23, he looks out and he says, 'The Lord has given me all of these promises that of my seed he's going to have someone sit upon a throne, but those promises have not yet been fulfilled.' And David realizes that they are not going to be fulfilled to him. But nevertheless, he plants his feet on those promises as he leaves this earthly realm looking forward to the day when someone of his seed would sit upon the throne and rule over a group of people.

Now he was a student of Scripture, and so he knew about the Abrahamic promises. He knew that God had said, "From Abraham kings are going to come out of you." And so there was a connection between the Davidic covenant and the Abrahamic covenant. The Abrahamic covenant promised a land, promised a seed, promised universal blessing through the seed of Abraham. The Davidic covenant laid great stress upon the fact that from Abraham's seed would come one who would be a king as son of David of his line and would rule and reign on this earth over a people. And then of course, when the Lord Jesus Christ's birth is announced in the Book of Luke chapter 1 verse 30 through about verse 35, or 31 through 35, this is what we read, I think we've read this once before in this series.

"The angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: (This is verse 30 of Luke 1) for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

In other words, the Messianic kingdom is kingdom that is an eternal kingdom. And David's son shall rule and reign over it.

Now in the last book of the Bible, we have several references to this. One of the outstanding passages, it's in chapter 5. And in Revelation 5 we have John the apostle, who's been given the vision of the one sitting upon the throne and the book in his right hand written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. And John says that he saw "A strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?" And no man "was able to open the book," and he began to weep considerably over that.

He seemed to sense that his destiny was bound up in this. And he was weeping away, and one of elders said to John

"Weep not (or stop weeping): behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. And behold, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And he came and he took the book out of the right hand of him that sat on the throne. And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung (I always want to say they sang, they sang, but it used to be correct to say sung so they sung a new song. Now, they say they sung out in east Texas, but anyway.) They sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed to God by thy blood some out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made them unto our God kings and priests: and they shall reign upon the earth."

And then of course, all of the angelic beings in heaven rejoice over this magnificent vision and the interpretation that has been given to it. But the important

thing to note is that it's "the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David" who rules. And Isaiah here, way back in the progress of divine revelation of course, says "the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD. As for me, this is my covenant with them."

Now if you are very familiar with biblical language, your mind probably as you read that has said I've read something like that before. Well of course, you have. And where you read it was in Genesis chapter 17 in a little phrase that comes out of the unfolding of the Abrahamic covenant. And so "As for me, this is my covenant with them," that's from Genesis chapter 17 and verse 9. So Isaiah in giving this magnificent prophecy is simply saying this: There is no hope for Israel; there is no hope for man, except in the Lord God. And the hope for Israel is directed toward the coming of the great redeemer. And when the redeemer comes, he will turn from transgression and "Unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD." And it is by virtue of what he will do that they will be delivered and enjoy their rule forever and ever.

Now the Apostle Paul, when in Romans 11 he is drawing near the conclusion of his chapter in which he points out that one can understand human history if he simply understands that in the Old Testament it was God working with the Nation Israel. Israel was disobedient, and like the branches of an olive tree, in their rejection of the Lord Jesus, those branches were broken off. And now the Gentiles are entering into the family of God. But the time is coming when that will be reversed, and the natural branches are going to be grafted in again into their own olive tree. And as Paul says in Romans 11:25,

"I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, (And now) There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer (That's Isaiah chapter 59, and further), and he

shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: And this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins."

And so, what we have here is not simply the Abrahamic covenant, and not simply the Davidic covenant, but also the new covenant which provides the redemptive basis for the program of God in Old Testament times. So, the result is Israel finally becomes the true servant of Jehovah through the ideal servant the Lord Jesus Christ. It's very fitting, I think, that Isaiah chapter 60 should have as its subject "the new Jerusalem," "The city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel" as is stated in the 14th verse.

So, in Isaiah chapter 59 then, the prophet has gone over the sin of the nation. He's pointed out that there is no solution for the sin of the nation except in the Lord God himself. And that the remedy for Israel's sin is confession. And if they come to him and confess their sins, he will fulfill his unconditional covenants to them. In fact, that's the only thing that awaits the return of Israel.

Now Paul stated that in Romans 11. And he states it very plainly. And I think with this, I'll just close. Listen to what he says. He warns the Gentiles that they ought not to boast against the branches. If you boast, you bear not the root, the root bears you. You Gentiles will say then, he says in Romans 11:19,

"The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. (There's a lot of emphasis on that "I" in the Greek text.) Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be highminded, you Gentiles, but fear. (That applies to us, too. That something applies to us Gentiles who have come to understand the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. So he says), "If God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God:" "toward thee, goodness, if you continue in his goodness: otherwise you too shalt be cut off. (He's

speaking of the Gentiles as a whole now) And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again."

There's only one thing that hinders the Nation Israel from entrance into the blessings that are hers as a nation, and that is her faith in Yahweh, the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ. We look forward to that day.

If you're here tonight and you've never believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, let me make the application of this passage. Your iniquities have separated between you and the Lord God. And you abide under the judgment of a holy God, a gentle loving God, yes, but also a holy and righteous God. And you shall surely face eternal judgment if you do not come to him for forgiveness of sins. You are destroying yourself. You abide under the wrath of God. But in him is your help. Come to Jesus Christ who's offered the atoning sacrifice for sinners. Cling to him and receive everlasting life.

Let's bow together in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for these marvelous chapters which stir our hope in the magnificent future that the seed of Abraham, the Lord Jesus Christ, enjoys as the people of God from Israel and from the Gentiles unite in praise and thanksgiving to him who has made it possible for us to know the forgiveness of sins and to have a hope and a future. And Lord, if there are any here who have not yet believed, draw them to thyself. For Jesus' sake. Amen.