



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

The Jewish People, Jesus Christ, and World History

Zechariah 3:1-10

“The ‘Holy Land’ Cleansed in One Day”

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for the privilege that is ours again to look into these ancient prophecies written by the prophets of the Old Testament who walked with Thee, and received visions from Thee, and messages from Thee, and burdens from Thee, and sought faithfully to proclaim the word of God as it was given to them. We thank Thee for the vantage point from which we look back at these ancient prophecies. And we thank Thee for the fact that still minister to us, as the New Testament apostles have told us. These things written before time are written for our admonition and learning, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. And as we study tonight, give us direction, guidance from the Holy Spirit, that we may understand and profit from the things that we read. We commit this time to Thee. In Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen.

[Message] One of Judaism's most revealing features is its concept of sin. In fact, the American rabbinate, by and large, does not understand or believe that man is sinful in nature. It's not uncommon for people to reject the doctrine of original sin. Today, I received some material from the Institute on Religion and Democracy. I did receive some from them, but that was not it. I received some literature from a Jewish organization

which is seeking to help Russian Jewish people, and in the course of the material that I received today, I read of a person who is being persecuted, a Seventh Day Adventist, who is being persecuted, according to this, because he believes in the doctrine of original sin. It was very interesting. So, it's not surprising that we should find that in Judaism the concept of sin has largely been lost.

In Joseph Siteland's *Principles of the Wise* a book on the social and religious views of the American rabbinate, the author presents the following on sin. "Only a minority of those who answered the questions conceived of sin as originating in the base impulses of human nature. The great majority believe that the concept of sin that need greatest emphasis in our age is to be expressed in social terms, either as harm to neighbors, friends, and business associates, harm to society, support of our acquiescence to accepted institutions which are socially harmful." So, sin consists in doing harm to our neighbors, to our friends, to our business associates. If it consists in doing harm to our business associates, there's a whole lot of sin around, but still it's not recognized. There is harm when one does harm to society he sins, and when one supports institutions which are socially harmful, well that's harmful too.

Irving Crystal the man that I've quoted a number of times because of his statement, "When we lack the will to see things as they really are, then nothing is so mysterious as the obvious." Mr. Crystal, who writes in the *Wall Street Journal* on the editorial page about twice a month, has a statement concerning Judaism and its concept of sin, which is very revealing because Mr. Crystal is a Jew. And he says, "Judaism today, and especially liberal Judaism despite the horrors of modern totalitarianism seems unable to recognize sin when it sees it." So, think of that, a Jewish man acknowledging that so far as Judaism is concerned, it doesn't even know how to recognize sin when it sees it.

Generally speaking, the doctrine of original sin and the sinfulness of human nature was not held by the ancient rabbis. So, one can see how when Jesus Christ came, and when the apostles preached, and while the Christian church has been proclaiming the

message of redemption, there has been so little response in Israel. One Jewish man writing about them said, "Yet if I were asked to furnish the names of people who I would like to see as representative spokesmen for American Jewry, I would have to decline modestly, because there are just no spokesmen for a community made up of the most proudly patriotic and the most totally subversive, of the devout and the irreligious, of the holy and the profane, a people by and large still as proud and as stiff-necked as the Lord God Jehovah found them in the desert; a people hard to define, because they get their individualism from the prophets, Jeremiah, and their collectivism from their apostates, Marx. There are times when they worship the idolatries of the latter more than they do the affirmations of the former. When they envy and easily accumulate the flesh pots of the world, when they elevate their detractors, and calumniate their defenders, when they sink into the ostentatious displays of recently acquired wealth, at the same time they dispose of it through charity, which makes the wealthiest benefactor among their neighbors seem like a piker." That's an article from the *National Review* written and contains a statement by a Jewish man, so one can see that even they understand things about themselves.

Yet, surprisingly there is a whole lot of evidence that the problem of Jesus Christ continues to agitate Jewish minds. Who is Jesus Christ? And they are writing about him today, and many who are thinking Jewish individuals are writing about him. Some of you, no doubt, have read the statement that Sholem Asch made concerning Jesus Christ some years ago. He said, "Ah, I couldn't help writing on Jesus. Since I first met him, he has held my mind and heart. I grew up, you know, on the border of Poland and Russia, which wasn't exactly the finest place in the world for a Jew to sit down and write a life of Jesus Christ. Yet even through those years, the hope of doing just that fascinated me. I floundered a bit at first. I was seeking that something for which so many of us have searched; that surety, that faith, that spiritual content in my living which would bring me peace, and through which I might bring some peace to others. I found it in the Nazarene,

for Jesus Christ to me is the outstanding personality of all time, of all history, both as Son of God and Son of man. Everything he ever said or did has value for us today, and that is something you can of no other man alive or dead, no other teacher, Jewish, Christian, Buddhist, Mohammedan, is still a teacher whose teaching is such a guidepost for the world we live in. Yes, it is true that Buddha influenced millions, but it is also true that only about, shall we say, five percent of Buddha's teaching has basic value for the 20th century. He became the light of the world. Why shouldn't I, a Jew, be proud of that?"

Well, as we look out at Judaism today, and see their inability to comprehend the nature of human sin, and their surprisingly weak views of the greatest Jews that ever lived, our Lord Jesus Christ, it's comforting, I think to read the Bible and realize that there is a radical change that is coming. The Scriptures make very plain that Israel is going to confess her utter sinfulness, her self-righteousness, her godlessness, and even ask for a new revelation from heaven. In Isaiah chapter 64 in verse 1, the prophet writes, "Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence." And then in verse 3, "When thou didst terrible things which we looked not for, thou camest down, the mountains flowed down at thy presence." He's likening, of course, the coming of the Lord to what happened on Mount Sinai. And then in verse 5 and 6 and 7 he says,

"Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways: behold, thou art wroth; for we have sinned: in those is continuance, and we shall be saved. But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee: for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities."

Well, in one of the most touching of all of the scenes of the Scriptures, Israel shall find her Lord. This fourth vision of the Book of Zechariah, found in Zechariah chapter 3, proclaims the great transformation that is going to take place in Israel and in the land. Let me begin by noting that in verse 1 through verse 3 the vision that the prophet has of foul Joshua and Satan. I'll read the first three verses.

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

One of the questions that arises in Zechariah, when we come to this point, and we have now read several times of these magnificent things that the Lord is going to do for Israel and for Jerusalem. One of the problems or questions that might come to us is, how can a holy God provide filthy people, such as Israel is, with such a glorious future? It really is the local problem of how can a holy God justify sinners? But it's the same problem with the nation Israel. They are a sinful people, and so, how is it possible for God to do for them what he says that he is going to do. Now, if you'll look at those verses that I just read rather carefully, you'll notice that the prophet speaks of the sovereign purpose of God, and he speaks also of the sovereign grace of God. Did you notice it? It's right there before you, just as plain as anything can possibly be. Notice the second verse. "The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee." There is the sovereign purpose of God. He has chosen Jerusalem.

Now, if you have been studying along with me, you will remember that this is the third time that this has been said in the book already. Turn back a page, verse 17 of

chapter 1, where we read, "Cry yet, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; My cities through prosperity shall yet be spread abroad; and the LORD shall yet comfort Zion, and shall yet choose Jerusalem." And then in chapter 2, verse 12, "And the LORD shall inherit Judah his portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again." So, this is the third time that the prophet has spoken about the sovereign purpose of God for Jerusalem. But now, he has also spoken of grace. It's in the 4th verse more plainly, "And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment." There is no cause said to exist in Joshua, but this is God's sovereign mercy in the cleansing of Joshua in this vision. So, right here in the beginning we have reference made to the sovereign purpose of God, and the sovereign grace of God, and that is the basis of the statement made in chapter 1, verse 13, which begins these great promises of the future, when the prophet heard the Lord say to the angel that talked with him, he heard him speak to him "with good words and comfortable words." Now, the reason that these words are good and comfortable is because of what God intends to do for Israel and Jerusalem. And what he will do out of sovereign mercy.

Now, what is meant by this vision when we read, "And he shewed me Joshua the high priest." This is a vision, now, that Zechariah is having again in the night time. It's the fourth of his vision, and this time he sees foul Joshua. It is stated in verse 3, "clothed in filthy garments, and stood before the angel." Now, the fact that he is called Joshua the high priest, should suggest to us that Joshua stands as a representative. His title, high priest, suggests that what is said with reference to him is representative of what God will do for the nation as a whole. Furthermore, the reference in verse 2 to "the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee," confirms the fact that Joshua stands as a representative figure in this vision. And so, what God will do in cleansing Joshua is designed to visually represent what he will do for the nation, ultimately through the Lord

Jesus Christ. So, we put it this way, as Joshua is and as Joshua becomes, so the nation is and so the nation shall become. This is the point that he is making. In a sense, Joshua is a representative of Israel, just as the Lord Jesus is the covenantal representative of the people of God.

Now, it's striking that in verse 3 he is said to be "clothed with filthy garments." You know if Jewish people would read the Old Testament and the Hebrew text, many people think of Jewish people as people who can take the Hebrew Bible down and read it like we read the English Authorized Version. It's very rare that you will find a Hebrew that can read the Hebrew Old Testament. They don't know how to read it. They don't know the Old Testament. They don't really know their Scriptures. A rabbi here or there will be able to do that, but the individual Jewish people cannot. The word translated here filthy is a word that is used only here in the Old Testament as an adjective, but the root is used in several other places as nouns, and the idea back of it is the idea of something that is so filthy that it is associated with excrement. So, what we are to think of is Joshua, he is standing before the Lord in clothes that are clothes that are suffused with excrement. Now, that is what God is trying to say. In other words, the garments that Joshua has on are garments that might be dredged up; pardon the idiom, dredged up from the bottom of an outhouse. That's the force of this word. He was standing there in filthy garments. This is God's way of letting you know what Israel is like in his presence. It's one of the strongest figures in all of the Old Testament to express the sin of any people. So, here is Joshua standing in garments that are filled with excrement.

And now, foul Joshua is referred to there, but now we look at what is said concerning Satan. Now, Satan is also standing at his right hand to resist him, and the Lord speaks to Satan in the vision, "The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee." Satan, of course, is the adversary. He's anxious to Satanize Joshua. That's the force of the verb, rendered literally. He's there to resist and Satanize Joshua. In other words, he's there to take advantage of the situation, but God

speaks, and God reminds him that the Lord has chosen Jerusalem. Now notice, it's not their righteousness that causes him to speak as he does. Joshua stands there in these garments that are filled with the odor of excrement; that expresses what God feels about him. But yet God says, "I have chosen Jerusalem." So, it's not their righteousness that's responsible for God's remarkable action. It's not even Satan's brashness, because he hasn't even begun to speak, he's just there to resist. In other words, it is God's gracious choice that is stressed in this vision. So, he has chosen Israel and Jerusalem, and he has chosen them not because of anything in themselves, he has chosen them because he loved them. And as David Baron so beautifully puts it, "He has loved them because he has loved them." So you see there is no ground at all for the blessing that God gives to Israel, except the ground of God's loving grace. That, incidentally, is why you and I are found in Christ. Not because of anything in us, our sins like Joshua's sin, but it's solely in the heart of our sovereign, loving God. That's why.

Now, in verse 2 it is also stated, "Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" Locally, of course, the reference is to the fact that the people of Israel at this point have just been, by the hand of God, delivered from Babylon. So Babylon is the local meaning of the text at this point. But Babylon is illustrative of the ultimate fulfillment in the future. As the Scriptures go on to point out, and as this particular prophecy goes on to point out as well. So, that's the vision of Joshua, filthy Joshua and Satan the resister.

Now, we look in verse 4 through verse 7 at the vision of the cleansing and the clothing that replaces that filthy clothing. Let's read verse 4 through verse 7, "And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him." Notice there's some angelic beings in this particular prophecy who are not described at all specifically. "And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him." So, others in the angelic hierarchy are standing about in the vision as well. "And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment. And I said, Let them set a fair see Zechariah enters

into this himself now. He says, "And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the LORD stood by. And the angel of the LORD protested unto Joshua, saying," The Authorized Version often gives a wrong connotation. This Hebrew word in this case, *zwayaath* [ph 23:29] is a word that really means something like "to give this charge." So, it's not a protest at what is happening, but it's a charge that the angel of the Lord gives to Joshua. And he says, "Thus saith the LORD of hosts; If thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my charge, then thou shalt also judge my house, and shalt also keep my courts, and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by;" evidently the heavenly persons, these other angelic beings, who are standing around.

Now coming back, one might ask, how can God justify his choice of filthy Joshua in the light of his holiness. Well, he can only justify it on the basis of what he is going to do. So, in these verses it is set out what he is going to do. It's the same old question of how can God justify the salvation of you? Lost sinner, wicked sinner, such as you are, how can he justify that? Well, he can only justify that on the basis of what he will do. For he will bear the penalty for our sin through the redeemer, the mediator, and on the basis of what he does, he will be able to do what his purpose intends for him to do.

The same thing is true with Israel. And so this is the picture of that. There is no justification in Israel for what he is going to do. It lies ultimately in the transformation that he will work in them in his grace. So, he says in verse 4, "Take away the filthy garments from him." This is an object lesson, vision, teaching, pedagogy, vision pedagogy. Unfortunately, I cannot do this for you. But it's done for us in the prophet's case. He tells us what happened to him. So, God says "Take away the filthy garments from him." And then he speaks to Joshua and he says, "Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment." So the cleansing of Joshua is referred to simply as the sovereign activity of God. If I were trying to illustrate it by New Testament truth, I would like to refer to Romans chapter 3 in verse

24 and 25, where Paul talks about the fact that we all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, but we are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God has set forth a propitiation through faith in his blood, that he might be just and the justifier of the one who is of the faith in Jesus. So, this is the sovereign activity of God.

And the clothing that is now given to Joshua is a change of raiment, according to the Authorized Version. This is an interesting word, this change of raiment. Probably, in the light of this unusual noun that is used here, what is referred to are the priestly garments of glory and beauty. And what is designed to be represented by this is the reinstatement of Joshua representative of the nation into the priestly office. And so it's a most beautiful picture of Israel, now reinstalled as the priestly nation. Now, if you read the Book of Isaiah you'll know that this is one of the great prophecies of the latter part of the Book of Isaiah, that the nation Israel will be the priestly nation for the nations, because Israel shall have preeminence among the nations according to the Scriptures. This word, *machalatsab*, is a word that refers to garments that an individual would not wear every day. Many of us have some outfit that we would wear on Sunday, maybe we would wear it to a wedding, or possibly if we had some particular engagement we would take out our, as they used to say, the "Sunday go to meeting" clothes. Well, that's what this Hebrew word means. It's translated just that, it's translated in the New International Version as "rich garments." So, it's the kind of thing that you wouldn't ordinarily wear. Not like Harry, here in the second row down here, what he's wearing tonight, but what he wears on Sunday morning when he comes here.

So, rich garments and I guess that, this is not specifically said, but since Joshua is the high priest, and since we are talking about rich garments, or beautiful garments, or garments that are one's Sunday best. Incidentally the Hebrew root lying back of this is "to put off." So, it's the kind of garments that you wear and put them off. You don't wear them all the time, but you wear them on special occasions, your dress uniform. Well, the

dress uniforms for the priests were their garments of glory and beauty. And they wore those garments as they went in and out of the tabernacle performing their services. And on the Day of Atonement they had special attire that they wore just on that day for the year. That was different, but something like garments of glory and beauty. They're designed to represent the tremendous change from garments dredged up from an outhouse, and the garments of glory and beauty that the most magnificent ritual ever devised, that for the nation Israel, that which the priests wore when they carried out their duties.

I know when you think of Roman Catholicism and Lutheranism and Anglicanism, you think of religions that are rich in liturgy and ritual and in things that appeal to the eye. It's nothing in comparison with the Old Testament ritual that Israel carried out. That was beautiful ritual, but when Jesus died the veil of the temple was rent in twain, and all of that was done away with. And the early church met in a very simple way. That's what, generally speaking, enlightened Protestants should do. But at any rate, some of you saw I was really pulling some legs there. But anyway, notice not that Zechariah enters into this, and he says in the 5th verse, "And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head." Now, this of course, was the turban, like the turban that the priests, the high priests wore in the Old Testament, the turban that he wore on his head, which had holiness unto the Lord written across it. So Zechariah, entering into the spirit of the thing suggests that they need to put the mitre on the head of Joshua as well. So, it's what one might call an impatient sanctified interruption by the prophet who so entered into the spirit of this vision that he is seeing that he suggests that what he needs is a mitre. Well you can see that the principle of grace has nullified Satan's attempts to Satanize Joshua.

This is a magnificent story of grace, a magnificent story when you think of what Israel has done in their departure from the Lord. They have so departed from the Lord that the twelve tribes have gone into captivity, and then finally the southern kingdom had

to go into captivity, and now a remnant of them has come back and the nation as a whole is largely departed from the Lord. But this is what is going to be done for them. And it's done in grace. It's hard to think by grace, isn't it? We want to think legalistically. We want to find some kind of moral and religious reason for these things taking place.

I like the story of Henry Morehouse, in which he was, he had, I think a little experience, I've forgotten, I have a reference to it here, whether he really had this experience, yes he was. He was walking in a poor section of the city, and he watched a little boy of five or six coming out of a store carrying a pitcher of milk. And he looked at the fellow as he was walking along, and he was walking along carefully along the street, but finally he slipped and fell, and when he fell the pitcher broke. And the milk ran all over the sidewalk. And the boy let out a wail, he was just a little fellow, and Morehouse, who was a gospel preacher, ran up to him to see if he was hurt.

Well, there was no physical trouble, but the youngster wouldn't be consoled. He kept crying, "My mama will whip me. My mama will whip me." And so, Mr. Morehouse said, "Maybe the pitcher is not broken in too many pieces. Let's see if we can put it together again." He said the boy stopped crying immediately. So, they stood there, and they tried to put it together, and whenever it fell, the boy would start crying again. Finally he said he got every piece together except the handle, and he gave the handle to the little fellow, and he poked it towards the place where it belonged and the whole thing collapsed again. And he let up another wail, and then Mr. Morehouse took him under his arm, and he walked in the store, and he bought a pitcher and had it filled with milk and gave it to him and sent him home. But before he sent him home he said, "Now will your mama whip you?" He said a smile broke out on the streaked face, "Oh, no sir, because it's a whole lot better pitcher than we had before." [Laughter]

Well, that's what God does for Israel and that's what God does for us. So, Zechariah makes his comment. Joshua is going to have magnificent garments of glory and beauty with the mitre over his head, and then in verse 6 and verse 7 an interesting

statement is made. The angel of the Lord solemnly, the Hebrew expression here means something like "solemnly testified" or "gave this charge." And this is the charge. "If thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my charge, then thou shalt also judge my house, and shalt also keep my courts, and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by." Now, when people read that, if they immediately think that everything is lost; we've been talking about grace, but now here is the condition. And so, how can we harmonize a condition with these magnificent promises of grace? Well, it's not so hard. You see, the prophets wrote about conditions that exist down through the centuries. And it is true. Individuals, even though they may be part of the chosen people, may not enter into the blessings of the chosen people. For you see, the promises that are directed to Israel are directed to Israel as a nation. Individuals may by their unbelief lose the blessings. For example, the generation in our Lord's Day largely lost their blessings. A remnant who were believers entered into them.

You see, the Apostle Paul will say in Romans 9, "Not all who are Israel." These are Israel. There are two kinds of Israelites, but they are Israelite, they're not Gentiles. "Not all who are of Israel are Israel." Two kinds of Israelites; believing Israelites, unbelieving Israelites; it's to the believing Israelites that the promises are given. But there are given to Israelites, not Gentiles. Gentiles participate, but the promises are given to Israel. So, you see the condition applies to the enjoyment of the promises that are, by grace, solemnly given to the nation as a whole. And the nation will enter into those blessings. And Paul says, and so all Israel shall be saved. He doesn't mean every single Israelite. One has to read the Old Testament only a little bit to see that the term all Israel doesn't refer to every Israelite. It refers the nation as a whole. But there will come a time when the nation as a whole will enter into the blessings. So, these conditions set out in the Old Testament in the Davidic covenant, in the new covenant are conditions that have to do with individual participation. But so far as the corporate promises, they are

sovereign and shall be fulfilled. How will they be fulfilled? Because God will give faith in the future, to the nation as a whole.

So the conditions for enjoyment are set out here, and then in verse 8 through 10 we have the explanatory predications. Let me read the last three verses.

"Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH. For behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone shall be seven eyes: behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day. In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, shall ye call every man his neighbor under the vine and under the fig tree."

A question might arise at this point, who is going to accomplish this great transformation, and when is it going to be accomplished. Well, to answer it in the words of Zechariah, the person who is going to accomplish this is "my servant the branch." Now, not a whole lot is said about "my servant the branch," here. In the 6th chapter more will be said about it, and so we'll just wait for the 6th chapter to give further detail. But it is obvious that this is an anticipation of the Lord Jesus Christ's ministry. He is God's servant, the branch, the servant of Jehovah. This term goes back to the Book of Isaiah chapter 4, where the Lord Jesus is referred to as the servant, the servant of the Lord, it turns out. So he says, "You and your fellows that sit before you, they are men wondered at." Joshua and the priests foreshadow future events. They are representative people, so the prophet is told.

And then for "it's my servant the branch," the reference is typical, because they represent the Messiah and his people. The servant will do God's work. The branch, or the chute, glorifies the priesthood. The fact that in verse 9 we read, "Behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua," suggests also something about the time when this shall

come to pass, for associated with the Lord Jesus Christ's ministry as the great stone, is the Second Advent set out in Daniel chapter 2, a passage that we looked at about a month ago, and then also in the New Testament.

Now, I must confess that those words that follow, "Behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone shall be seven eyes," it would be nice if I had about fifteen minutes to talk further about that, but it is a very difficult clause or two here, and it's difficult for, I think, any interpreter to feel absolute certainty concerning the meaning of the expression, "upon one stone shall be seven eyes." It's even possible that the term should be rendered springs here, as some of the most recent commentators have suggested. So, I'm just going to leave that. That's a very difficult thing to understand.

He says, "I will engrave the graving thereof, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day." This is really the key to the vision, showing that it refers to the nation and to the land primarily. So in that one day, the iniquity of the land will be removed. I think that as we read through the New Testament, it becomes very plain that the time when the iniquity of the land is removed in one day, is the time of the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus Christ in the future. That's the time when Israel the nation shall be saved, as Paul says, and the iniquity of the land shall be removed. That's Israel's Day of Atonement. Not in the sense that that is the time when it is accomplished, but it is the time when they enter into the blessings provided by our Lord's crucifixion in his first advent.

Perhaps the best illustration of this is the illustration of Hagar and her son in the wilderness in the Book of Genesis. When they went out into the wilderness, and finally Hagar thinking that she and her son were going to ultimately die, when the water was gone she put the child under one of the shrubs and she went and sat down over against him a good way off, as it were a bow shot. For she said, "Let me not see the death of the child." And she sat over against him and lifted up her voice and wept, and God heard the voice of the lad, and the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven and said to her,

"What aileth thee Hagar? Fear not, for God hath heard the voice of the lad, where he is. Arise, lift up the lad and hold him in thine hand for I will make him a great nation." And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water, and she went and filled the bottle with water and gave the lad drink. You notice how it's put? "And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water." Now, we cannot be absolutely positive, but it looks to me as if the well was there all along, but she just didn't see it. But now God, in a sense, removes the veil from her eyes and she sees the water, which she can give to her child and save the life of her child.

The cross of Jesus Christ, or Calvary, is just like that well for Israel today. It's there, the atonement benefits are available, but Israel doesn't see. Like Mr. Crystal said, they have no concept of sin. They don't understand their need. They have no sense of what it is to abide under the judgment of God, and so the well, while there, they cannot see. But the day is coming when the veil shall be removed, and they will see what has been provided for them for centuries. And then at that time, the iniquity of the land shall be removed in a day, and Jerusalem, chosen by the Lord, shall enter into the blessings set forth in holy Scripture.

There's a tremendous stress in this passage on the initiative and the love of God. Verse 2, "I have chosen Jerusalem;" verse 4, "Take away those filthy clothes." Verse 4 again, "I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee." Verse 8, "Hear now, oh Joshua," etc. "I will bring forth my servant the branch;" verse 9, "For behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua." See that's the sovereign work of a sovereign God. That ought to thrill you, you know. I do hope that is one of those things that you can rejoice in, because the way in which God deals with the nation is the way that he deals with us. And if you can appreciate the grace of God in your salvation, you should appreciate it also in his salvation of Israel. And I look forward to that day, because it's a revelation of our great God and how he deals with men. May God help you, help us to appreciate what he has done. And may the Lord give us grace to tell others about it. We have such

a magnificent message to give to others. May God help us to be faithful. Let's bow in a closing word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are so grateful to Thee for these marvelous promises that are found in the word of God. We see, in the way in which Thou dost deal with the ancient people, the way in which Thou dost deal with us. For our promises, too, are related to Abraham. In him all the families of the earth shall be blessed, Thou hast said. And so, we share in those promises. We have been grafted into the olive tree, and we partake of the fat root of the olive tree. And we desire, Lord, that all of the people of God may enter into their blessings. Use us as instruments for Thy glory, so that men may come to understand who Thou are, what Thou hast done. What a great God we have. We worship Thee Lord, and we give Thee praise and thanks. For Jesus' sake. Amen.