



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Eschatology

“The Doctrine of the Kingdom”

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Returning in our study of eschatology to “The Doctrine of the Kingdom”. And in our study, I want to look at the subjects of the kingdom generally, and then I want to look at some of the problems of life in the kingdom, such as who shall really reign upon the throne? Shall David -- or there are some prophecies that do speak of David reigning – or our Lord Jesus Christ? What shall be the relationship between them? We also want to consider if we have time, I think we will, the question of sacrifices in the millennium according to the last chapters of the prophecy of Ezekiel, and some of the other questions that arise of the doctrine of the kingdom of God upon the earth.

But we want to look at the subject generally, and I think one of the best passages for us to look at is the passage in Isaiah chapter 11, verse 1 through chapter 12 in verse 6. So will you turn with me to that passage? And will you listen as I read through most of the verses of this section? Isaiah Chapter 11, verse 1,

“And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch
shall grow out of his roots:

And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and

understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of
knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;

And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD:

and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove
after the hearing of his ears:

But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity

for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth: with the rod
of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.”

Incidentally, that word “wicked” is probably not a reference to collectors, wicked men. That probably refers to one single wicked man, the reference being through the antichrist. And if you have a Bible with marginal references, you probably will note some reference here to 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, for that is the passage in which the apostle refers to this passage and does, it seems, relate it to the Man of Sin. We continue with the fifth verse.

“And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle
of his reins.

The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with
the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a
little child shall lead them.

And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together:
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

And the nursing child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child
shall put his hand on the viper’s den.

They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be
full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, who shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the nations seek: and his rest shall be glorious.

And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, who shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the coastlands of the sea.

And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim.”

I shouldn't be turning the pages like that because the approved edition is the King James Version continues on this same page, the 14th verse,

“But they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west; they shall spoil them of the east together: they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab; and the children of Ammon shall obey them.

And the LORD shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea; and with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the river, and shall smite it in the seven streams, and make men go over dryshod.

And there shall be an highway for the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria; like it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt.”

The 12th chapter is really a continuation of this, and it is an expression of thanksgiving and praise, a prophecy of it for that day. And, again, notice the apocalyptic expression *in that day*, a reference to the prophetic day of the future, the day of the Lord.

“And in that day thou shalt say, O LORD, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou hast comforted me. Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord, even the Lord, is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. And in that day shall ye say, Praise the LORD, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted. Sing unto the LORD; for he hath done excellent things: this is known in all the earth.”

Now, notice these expressions that are to be taken literally.

“This is known in all the earth. Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.”

In our last study we concluded with the first verses of Revelation chapter 20 in which the writer of that wonderful apocalypse gave us the vision of the binding of Satan. I think the binding of Satan is one of the most reasonable of the prophetic events. Because if there is to be a kingdom of God upon the earth, it surely is reasonable that Satan could be bound. And, furthermore, that binding of Satan upon the earth throughout the Messianic kingdom upon the earth is designed to exhibit man's responsibility for his depravity. Men are still offering the excuse of Eden, the serpent beguiled me, or, as Flip

Wilson puts it, "The devil made me do it." And this excuse is an excuse that prevails and prevades man's attitude towards God.

But when the time of the Messianic kingdom comes and Satan is bound for one thousand years, then that same excuse can no longer be used. And, finally, I think the binding of Satan illustrates for us something of the vast possibilities of human life on earth, for the kingdom of God upon the earth is surely going to be a golden age. But this golden age is a golden age even with men who do possess a sin-principle indwelling their members. But even in that circumstance, we see some of the vast possibilities of human life on earth, the Lord Jesus Christ's personal presence making it possible for us to see those possibilities. And how wonderful then the eternal state must be, the new heavens and the new earth, if the millennial age can be called a golden age. So it seems to me that the binding of Satan is a very reasonable and rational, easy-to-understand prophetic event of the future.

Now, following the binding of Satan, we are told that the kingdom of God upon the earth will take place. This is one of the great concepts of human existence. Unfortunately, men of the 20th century, I think also of the 19th century, have equated it with democracy, and we have lowered the idea of the word of God concerning the kingdom of God. We have -- if we have not equated it with democracy, we have equated it with the church of Jesus Christ. And we have ministers who speak of the church as the kingdom of God.

Now, there is a sense in which individual believers in the church of Jesus Christ are citizens of that kingdom that is to come. If that were the only sense in which ministers use it, it would perhaps be understandable, and we would not mind it so much. But, generally speaking, the church and the professing church is equated with the kingdom of God. And the church is anything but the kingdom of God put forth in the prophetic word.

Now, if we equate it with democracy, that's bad. But if we equate it with the church, that's very deceptive. When we equated it with democracy, we are inclined to fall prey to such illusions as that the voice of the people is the voice of God. And that of course is not true at all.

Now, when we talk about the kingdom of God, we are then talking about one of the great concepts of the word of God. And I think to really understand it, we must lay a great deal of stress upon the last two words of the phrase, kingdom *of God*. It is the kingdom *of God*, and it's the kingdom *of God* because it's a kingdom in which God, God the Son, rules and reigns. And it also is a kingdom of God because it is the Lord Jesus who brings this kingdom.

Remember when we were looking at Daniel chapter 2 and saw Daniel's great image which was designed to represent the rule of the Gentiles upon the earth. As Daniel saw that great image composed of the different types of materials, he then saw a stone that was cut out without hands, it struck the image upon its feet and shattered it. And then that stone grew and became and filled the whole of the earth.

Now, that was something that came supernaturally and destroyed man's rule in order that God's rule might be established. Now, that is the kingdom of God from God's standpoint. It is something that he brings. It is not something that we ourselves are responsible for.

The premillennial philosophy of history is a most rational philosophy of history. I do not think that any other philosophy of history can compare with the premillennial philosophy of history. It is true that postmillennialists who believe that through the preaching of the gospel we are going to bring to pass a kingdom of God upon the earth, which the Lord Jesus will then return to, do have some kind of philosophy of history. They at least see progress. And they at least see the ultimate victory of the kingdom of God, although it is done by man. One would almost think we should call it the kingdom of man, which man conveyed to God by their philosophy.

But most of the other philosophies of history, which men who do not have divine revelation offer us as a philosophy, they do not really give us a rational explanation of human existence. And the premillennial philosophy of history is one that is imminently rational for explaining not only the present existence, but it also sets before us a goal, and a goal that is attuned in this particular existence of which we are apart.

There are amillennialists who do not say there is any kingdom of God upon the earth. They, too, it seems to me err in that they do not give us a rational philosophy of history, because, according to their understanding of the word of God, sin occurred in history, redemption occurs in history, but the final consummation of the program of redemption does not take place in history, but rather beyond history.

There is in the premillennial philosophy of history, we have sin in history, we have redemption in history through the cross of the Lord Jesus, and then we have the consummation of the redemptive program for the creation in history. Now, it is true that after that we move on into the eternal state, but that is the continuation of what we think its climax in the kingdom of God upon the earth.

Now, that is imminently rational, and its principal, it seems to me. I've read of a man who spent a great deal of time constructing a ladder. And when he finally finished his ladder, as he looked at it, it was a beautifully and elaborately constructed ladder, but it did not go to any place.

Now, that, I think, is a philosophy of history that does not have a consummation of redemption in history itself, in this earth, where sin and redemption took place. It's like firing a cannon with a blank. But the premillennial philosophy of history gives us something that is principal and rational.

In the 11th chapter in the Book of Isaiah, we have a beautiful picture of the millennium in the form of prophecy, which Isaiah gives us in the conclusion of his great Book of Immanuel. These chapters, chapter 7 through 12 of a prophecy of Isaiah, had been called by Bible students, the Book of Immanuel. They are called the Book of

Immanuel because there is a prophecy in the 7th chapter of a child that is to be born of a virgin. Then in the 9th chapter we read of this child having upon his shoulder the government placed. And then in the 11th chapter we read of the rule of this child. And so there has been a progression from the 7th through the 12th chapters in which we see the child as an infant, then we see a rule upon its shoulders, and hear a description of the king.

This prophecy is given in the background of the rule of King Ahaz in the history of Judah. A new phase in Judah's history had come with Ahaz in 735 B.C. He was the king of no faith. God thought through the prophet to strengthen Ahaz so that he might face the problems that were about him. Syria and Ephraim were attempting to depose Ahaz who was the Davidic king. But instead of appealing to God, Ahaz appealed to Assyria over the protest of the Prophet Isaiah.

He beautifully illustrates the fact that in the trials of life, our source of hope is not from human authority, from human persons, from human power, but our source of hope is the Lord. Isaiah was given a message by God to go and to tell King Ahaz not to panic and, furthermore, to warn him that if he made any alliances with the heathen kings of Assyria in order to protect himself against Syria and Ephraim, he would surely come to distress.

And, finally, as Isaiah concludes his message, he concludes it in a little couplet that expresses some great spiritual truth. In the 9th verse of the 7th chapter he says, "If you will not believe, surely, you shall not be established." Now, that is a Scriptural principle, and it true of every Christian person. If we will not trust, then we shall not be established. In the Hebrew text there is, in that place, a play on the words "established" and "believed" because he wishes to bring home to Isaiah and Ahaz the truthfulness of the fact that trust in the Lord is the secret of deliverance from the trials of life. But Ahaz did not listen because, Ahaz carried a secret in his heart which meant more to him than the promises of God. And the secret in Ahaz's heart was trust in Assyria.

Isn't it sad? Isn't it sad when a person, really deep down within his heart, has greater trust in a heathen king than he does have in the great God Jehovah? Now, we say it's pitiful, isn't it, that Ahaz could be like that? But have you not known many Christians or, better, have you not known many experiences in your life when your trust has not really been in the Lord but in something else in the trials of life? It might be in your money, your material possessions. It might be in some wrong friend of yours. It might be in some scheme you have manufactured by the use of human reasons. So often we have secrets deep down in our hearts and trust in them, and that trust is stronger than our trust in the Lord.

Now, Isaiah, after he has spoken with Ahaz, turns to private ministry, because it's evident that King Ahaz is not going to listen to the prophet. And so the prophet is given three signs that are to guide him and his disciples amidst the troublous times that face him. And the three signs are three names: Two names of his own children and Isaiah's name. God has beautiful ways of communicating to his people. And he communicated first to Ahaz by saying, Ahaz, you're going to have -- Isaiah, you have a child and his name is Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz. How would you like to have a name like that, incidentally?

Now, I've always been a little disappointed in my name because it's Johnson. And the only comfort I can obtain from the name Johnson is that I understand that there are more Johnsons now than there are Smiths, which I've interpreted as everybody wants to be a Johnson [laughter], and they cannot, of course, but they're trying their best. But they -- and I have often wanted a distinctive name like Lancelot or Herman. But Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz, that would be quite a name. That means wholesome booty, hallowed spoil. And, of course, what that name was designed to say to Isaiah was that faithlessness brings judgment.

Isaiah had another son. This son's name was Shear-jashub. Now, Shear-jashub

meant, a remnant shall return. So against the background of judgment, a promise of deliverance for the remnant of those who would trust in the Lord rather than Assyria, a reward for them is suggested as Shear-jashub.

And the third name was Isaiah's own name. Now, Isaiah's name meant, the salvation of Jehovah. And so Isaiah is enabled by God to lift up his eyes to the far-off day and the ultimate issue, when the salvation of Jehovah would come and Israel should be delivered from kings who would not put their trust in the Lord, and be given an ideal king to deny himself who should rule and reign over them in the earth.

But now these names give us the progression of the thought through these chapters until we arrive at the 11th chapter in which Isaiah's name is expounded, the salvation of the Lord. So the third great theme of the Book of Immanuel concludes with this: The Messiah has been seen as about to be in the sense that he should be born of a virgin, then he's actually born in the 9th chapter, the 6th and 7th verses, “unto us a child is born, a Son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulders.” And now we see this son reign.

One of the principles of Bible study always is you must notice the immediately preceding context. The immediately preceding context of the 10th chapter in the Book of Isaiah is a passage in which the overthrow of Assyria is recorded. It is done very vividly. And you can see the king of Assyria's advance toward the land of Judah. And then by a mighty supernatural act of God, the king of Assyria is destroyed.

Now, I want you to notice, beginning with the 28th verse, how rapidly this king advances and how the figure is that of an army that is coming rapidly to overcome Judah, but, surprisingly, they are destroyed just as they are at the point of victory.

Now, what he is speaking about is, of course, the ultimate, almost or -- the ultimate attack of the antichrist upon the city of Jerusalem. And, as you know, and we've been speaking, the antichrist of the future is going to be destroyed at the Second Advent

of the Lord Jesus just as it appears as if he is going to completely overcome the city of Jerusalem.

So what we have here is vivid language against the background of Isaiah's day that looked forward to the last days just before the kingdom of God upon the earth. He says in the 28th verse, He has come to Aiath. He has passed Migron. These are all little places on the way down to Judah. So you can think of this army that is approaching rapidly to destroy Judah. At Michmash he has stored his baggage. They have gone over their paths. They have taken up their lodging at Geba. Ramah is afraid. Gibeah of Saul has fled. Lift up thy voice O daughter of Gallim. Cause it to be heard as far as Laish, oh poor Anathoth. -- that was the birthplace of Jeremiah, remember -- Madmenah is removed. The inhabitants of Gebim gather themselves together to flee. As yet he shall remain at Nob that day; He shall shake his hand at mount of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem. The proud Assyrian king, saying what you are going to do to them. Behold, the Lord, the Lord of hosts, shall lop the bough with terror; and the high ones of stature shall be hewn down, and the haughty shall be humbled.

Now, here we read of God's destruction of this Assyrian king. And he shall cut down the thickets of the forest with iron. And Lebanon shall fall by a Mighty One. In other words, the Assyrian, with his army, is likened to a forest of cedar trees. Lebanon is referred to. And that forest crashes with a deafening roar by a Mighty One. Notice those last words of chapter 10, verse 34, And Lebanon shall fall with a Mighty One.

Now, then we read in Chapter 11, verse 1, And there's come forth a twig. Isn't that striking? This Assyrian army likened to a forest of giant trees approaching the land but by this Mighty One, they are hewn down and we use instead a twig that comes forth out of the stem of Jesse. This rod out of the stem of Jesse is a reference to the Lord Jesus Christ. And the fact that we read here that Jesse only has a stem or a stump is evidence of the fact that when this Assyrian king, who represents the antichrist of the future, comes, the house of David is in ruin.

Now, that is exactly what we read of in the New Testament, that the Lord Jesus shall come and restore the tabernacle of David that has fallen. Today, the tabernacle of David is in ruins. And so it is a rod out of the stem or the stump of Jesse. A branch shall grow out of the root. So the house of David is to renew itself in a time of humiliation and ruin, the Messiah shall come and establish his kingdom by virtue of his overthrow of the antichrist.

I think it is so remarkable how the word of God is written that I must point out a little detail. This has meant a great deal to me. Notice that he likens this Assyrian king to a cedar. Now, a cedar tree is a magnificent tree, but there is one characteristic of a cedar tree that is quite unusual. I guess quite unusual. I'm not that much of a horticulturalist, but I do know this fact about a cedar tree. If you cut down a cedar tree, there will never come up from it a shoot. Once you cut down a cedar tree, that tree is dead. It does not have life within its roots to send out a shoot and become another tree. In other words, when the cedar tree is destroyed, it is destroyed finally.

Now, if you will, turn back to chapter 6 in verse 13. Isaiah is given a commission there that has to do with the tabernacle of David that has fallen. And I want you to read the 13th verse with me. Here we read, “And yet in it shall be a tenth, and it shall return, and shall be eaten: as a teil tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves: so the holy seed shall be the substance of it.”

Now, here the Messianic line is referred -- is described as -- by the figure of an oak tree. Now, there is one characteristic thing about an oak tree, which all of you who have ever had an oak tree know, and that is if you cut it down, it will send up shoots. Isn't it frightening that the Assyrians will be likened to the cedar. Because when he is destroyed it's all over with him. But when the tabernacle of David is in ruin, there is still life in the line of Israel, because the Messianic promises are directed towards the Nation Israel.

And of course that living, vital part of Israel is the Messiah himself. He is the shoot, who in the midst of the ruins of Israel, is [indistinct]. And so, there shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of its roots. A beautiful description of the Messiah and the fact that, though Israel today appears to have nothing of the possibility of a glorious future, it, nevertheless, because it possesses the Messianic promises, has life within it, And there shall come to it the possession of the promises.

Now, in the second verse, we read of the anointing of the king, that is the coming of the king: “And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him.” Messiah is to be anointed with the Holy Spirit. Will you turn over to chapter 61 in verse 1 of this prophecy of Isaiah, characteristic of the Messiah and his ministry is that he is enabled to do his work by the Holy Spirit.

Isaiah chapter 61 in verse 1, “The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound.” In other words, the Lord Jesus is given the imbue of power by the Spirit to perform his Messianic ministry. And here we read of the anointing of the king in chapter 11, verse 2, also. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him. This is the anointing inclusively so that just as Noah’s dove, the Holy Spirit rests upon the Lord Jesus to imbue with power for his ministry.

Now, notice in the description that follows there are six different things that are said to be a part of the outworking of the presence of the Spirit in his life. It's almost as if we have here a description of the seven-branched candlesticks in the tabernacle. The Spirit of God being the central of the branches, and then the six other branches representing, first, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Holy Spirit will touch the intellectual life of the Messiah; then we read the spirit of counsel and might. That is, his practical life. He not only has wisdom, but he also has counsel. That is, he not only has theoretical knowledge but practical knowledge, too; and finally the spirit of knowledge

and the fear of the Lord, his spiritual life, fellowship and fear. And altogether, simply affirmed, that he is Immanuel, God with us.

Then the prophets -- the prophet speaks of his rule third. In verse 3, "And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD." Do you notice that there is no reference here of the sufferings of the Lord Jesus? And the reason for this is that Isaiah will expound them later and, furthermore, in the Old Testament we do not have a great deal of stress in some of these passages that deal with the kingdom upon the sufferings of the Messiah. The Church Age is not mentioned here. Perhaps that's one reason why we have no reference to his sufferings, too. Here he is looked at as the Prince of Peace who comes to rule. "And shall make him a quick understanding in the fear of the LORD."

Now, the Hebrew text really says, "And shall delight in the fear of the Lord." Isn't that expressive of our Lord's maker? He shall delight in the fear of the Lord. We don't think of a person delighting in the fear of the Lord. We think of the fear of the Lord coming upon us almost against our will. But the Lord Jesus is a person who delights in the reverencing of God his Father in heaven. He shall delight in the fear of the Lord.

And then we read of the method of his rule. And what a beautiful thing it is in the light of the kind of society in which we are living. And he shall judge after the sight of his eyes -- not judge after the sight of his eyes -- neither reprove after the hearing of his ears. He's not going to judge by the senses. He is going to judge by the truths of holy Scripture. And, essentially, what is stated here is that his judgment shall be in justice.

Now, if we ever have an age in which there was a need for justice, is it the age in which we are living. Think of the things that are on the front pages of our newspapers today: Kidnappings, ransoming, captures of important men, hijackings, all of the things that are just full of injustice. Children are involved. The innocent are involved. We are living in an unjust age. There is injustice everywhere. It's not surprising that many men are disturbed over the injustice of our society.

And I must say, I even find myself -- even though I have, of course, a biblical view of the nature of man who is totally depraved -- I find myself being surprised now and again at how depraved the totally depraved man is. It is amazing, amazing, absolutely astounding. So we have a just king, a king who shall rule in justice. And then he shall rule in truth. That's not to mention all of the things that happen in our society. And we have manufactured such expressions as credibility gap and things like this that reflect the idea that our government just cannot be trusted, cannot be trusted. There is hardly a man in Washington who can be trusted.

Just a few years ago, one of the press secretaries had a meeting in Texas. And he was lecturing around the country. And he was lecturing on the necessity for lying. Amazing thing. I clipped it out of the newspaper. I couldn't believe my eyes that a man would say that it was a necessary thing for men in authority to lie. And then he gave a few illustrations of individuals who had lied in order to show that it was a necessary thing.

I didn't question at all if there were many of our leaders who had lied, but the necessary thing was a thing that really came home to me. And I was interested in the way in which he concluded his message. He said, good press relations is a continuing problem that will never be solved, and he added that the best press relation is thorough, honest press relation. [Laughter] What a contradiction in terms.

But this king is going to judge in justice, and he is going to judge in truth. Listen to the things that are said. Verse 4, "With righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth: with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked one, the antichrist. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins."

Now, having spoken of the rule of the king, he goes on to speak of his well in verse 6 through verse 9. Here we come to a passage in which some of the great interpreters of the word of God have disagreed. John Calvin, what a great man he was.

Martin Luther, what a great man he was. They looked at passages like the 6th through the 9th verses and said, we are not to take these verses literally. We are to take them as symbolical. We're not going to have an earthly kingdom in which these things are truly going to take place. These are just figurative ways of speaking of the blessing of God and the curse of God in certain contexts upon the girth of Jesus Christ.

Our modern theologians say these are not to be taken literally. As a matter of fact, these things are not going to come to pass at all. They simply represent the beautiful dreams and beautiful wishes of the prophets of the Old Testament. But they were just beautiful dreams and beautiful wishes. They are not going to come to pass at all.

But when we look at these things in the light of the interpretation of the word of God and the many prophecies of the Old Testament, I do not see how we can possibly take these in any other way than to take them literally. This is the greatest illustration of the fulfillment of the word which the Christian church has too often mouthed on Sunday morning.

I grew up in a church in which we had very little liturgy – it was a Presbyterian Church, and Presbyterian churches historically have very little liturgy. The only thing that Presbyterian churches ordinarily had in the past in the years of their greatness did was to sing the Doxology, and to occasionally recite the Apostle's creed, though not all of them even did that. They usually sang the Gloria, and then they also repeated the Lord's Prayer. And it was customary for ministers to conclude their opening invitation with a word of thanks in which they rolled into their thanksgiving, the Lord's Prayer so-called, such as, We thank Thee, Lord, that Thou hast taught us to pray. And after this moment, Our Father... And then we would all chime in and pray or say the prayer. I didn't pray, I must confess, but I said the prayer. And I said it in a way that it was not written. Many of those things -- when I was just little, I listened to what they said, but I wasn't too familiar with the words. And instead of saying hallowed by thy name, I said, how will be thy name. But I was repeating the prayer.

Now, one of the important provisions of that prayer which is prayed, at least recited -- incidentally, it's introduced in Matthew, by don't pray like the heathens do, with vain repetition. And so what we've done is to repeat it every Sunday morning, not looking at the context. But one of the important petitions of that is *thy kingdom come*. Well, when we said that, *thy kingdom come*, what we were saying is this Messianic kingdom that is prophesied in the Old Testament come. That's what we were praying. We are praying for the fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah. And the Lord is going to answer those petitions because there were a few who prayed that petition in faith.

Now, here we have the description of the realm. It's the greatest -- I say the greatest illustration of the fulfillment of thy kingdom come. And this is what was meant when we prayed that petition. Someone has said -- I think it was Mr. Scofield, not in the Scofield Bible, but in one of the sermons that he preached -- "When the prophets describe the kingdom of God, they dip their pencil in a rainbow." There's a beautiful expression of the glory that the kingdom of God upon the earth.

Listen to the description here of the kingdom. And first of all, he speaks of the realm of the animal world, verse 6. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb. And the leopard shall lie down with the kid. And the calf and the young lion and the fatling together. And the little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed. Their young ones shall lie down together. And the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the nursing child shall play on the hole of the asp. And the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den.

Here we have the arrival of the golden age, the peace of paradise is renewed. The wolf lying down with the lamb. Dr. Finberg likes to say when he expounds this passage, "Now, the wolf and the lamb also lie down together today, but the lamb lies down inside the wolf today. But then they shall lie down together." This is an integral link in the predestined course of the history of salvation. And what I was saying in my introduction pertains precisely to this, that what we have here is the expected, rational, sensible conclusion to the program of God.

You see, God created man and placed him in the Garden of Eden and gave him certain instructions. His instructions were that he should rule over the creation this God has created. He was to be, in essence, [indistinct] Adam was to be the king of the earth. He was a kind of Messianic king in the kingdom of God in the Garden of Eden. But of course he sinned. Now, he sinned in history. So it's not surprising then that in the program of God, a last Adam should come, second man, who should take upon himself the path of redemption. And so the Lord Jesus is born in our history. He is one of us. He lives under the same sun on the same earth that we live. And he calls out his ministry and finally upon the cross, he completes the work of redemption saying, It is finished.

Now, that is down in history. Then we see, of course, as we saw this anticipated in the Old Testament, we see the Holy Spirit applying salvation to the hearts of men. I look out at you. And I would presume that 90, 95 percent -- perhaps every one of you or perhaps only 40 percent of you are genuine Christians. Who knows? Only God knows. But I gather the great majority of you have believed in the Lord Jesus, and you know what it is to have everlasting life. Now, this is done in history. The Holy Spirit has worked through this age, and he has brought home the gospel through your mind and to your heart. And he has given you the faith to respond. And you have responded, and you have life. You're a believer. You know deep down within that you belong to the Lord. Now, this has happened through history. So the redemption is happening in history.

So what about the creation? The creation, you see, was put under the curse when Adam sinned. And the creation is under the curse now. Thorns and thistles abound in the creation. That is evidence that it is under the curse of God. Is the work of Jesus Christ going to affect the creation? Yes, it is. We read in Romans chapter 8 that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth together in pain until now, waiting for the adoption -- that is the redemption of the sons of God. They want to enter into the redemption for the creation is part of the object of the redeeming work of the Lord Jesus.

He restores what Adam has lost. Therefore, it is the most logical and rational thing in the world to expect that this redemption that Christ accomplished on the cross should be seen in the creation.

Now, if we, after we have individuals converted, we do not have any redemption of the creation itself, then it is as if it were a ladder that reaches nowhere. The whole plan and purpose of the creation and the program of God does have its natural creation. Now, of course, the time is coming when this redemption that you have is going to be manifested beautifully for the whole of creation because you're going to be given a new body, and it's going to be a glorified body, and it's going to be a tremendous improvement on what I say, of course, and what you see.

Now, the same thing is true of the creation. The creation in the millennial age will experience that which is equivalent to your redemption. But it awaits its glorification, its resurrection in the eternal state. And then, of course, we shall have glorified individuals who dwell in a glorified creation, magnificent thing that God shall accomplish that shall be so different from even the millennial age that cannot be described in the word of God.

What I'm saying is this: that we must have, if we are to complete the program of God rationally, redemption in the creation upon the earth. In that, the kingdom of God upon the earth accomplishes. So in the realm of the animal world, he describes the arrival of the golden age.

Now, in the realm of mankind, in the 9th verse, he describes the arrival of the golden age. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea. The holy mountain refers to all of the land, and we have universal knowledge of the Lord throughout that millennial day.

Then beginning with the 10th verse, the prophet speaks of the program of the king. And notice the four-fold in that day, verse 10, and in that day. Verse 11, and it shall come to pass in that day. And then chapter 12, verse 1, and in that day. And verse 4, and in that day.

These are the future important things. He has a program for Gentiles in verse 10, and in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, who shall stand for an ensign of the people; (a standard) to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious. In other words, in the millennial day, the Gentile world shall also come to the knowledge of the Messiah. He has a program for Israel described in verses 11 through 16. I won't read through that again, but he answers the questions that might arise at this point: how is it possible for him to reign in the midst of a nation that has been scattered to the four corners of the earth? So he describes how the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people. And he likens the return and restoration of Israel to the restoration of Israel out of the land of Egypt into the promised land of Palestine. And God is going to do a second time what he did the first time.

And we find in the Prophet Jeremiah the same kind of thing, an analogy made between the deliverance of Egypt into the land and the deliverance out of all the countries to which, through which God has scattered Israel in the last days back into the land. Then in the 12th chapter, we come to the praise of the kingdom, because redemption results in praise. So we should not be surprised then to read in chapter 12, as we continue the account of the kingdom, to read that there is praise. And in that day thou shalt say, O LORD, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me -- this expresses, of course, the rejection of Israel because of their disobedience down through the centuries -- though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me. Behold, God is my salvation. Isn't it amazing and isn't it wonderful to realize that the day is coming when the great preachers of Calvinism are going to be redeemed Israelites? [Laughter] And that's what they're going to be saying, God is my salvation.

Now, when we say God is my salvation, what we mean, of course, is that God is the answer of our salvation. We mean God is the cause of our salvation. We mean God is the agent of our salvation. We mean God is the one who accomplishes our salvation.

We mean exactly what he says, God is my salvation. I will trust and not be afraid, for the Lord -- even the Lord is my strength and my song, he also has become my salvation.

And just as Israel sang when they were brought through the Red Sea in the Book of Exodus chapter 15, Though having been brought into the kingdom of God through the tribulation period, they shall sing songs of praise through a God who saved men.

He goes on to say in the third and fourth verse, Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. And in that day shall ye say, Praise the LORD, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted.

You know, when the princes of God praise, they are helping. When they are not praising, they are not helping. Praise is the natural result of appreciation. When you see a Christian who does not have any element of praise at all in his life, you are really looking at a Christian who does not have appreciation. He's really somewhat -- I hope this doesn't sound too bad -- he's somewhat sick, spiritually. We praise the things that we like. But if we are not praising, we are not helping. A man who is sick is usually not too happy, and you notice it of course. He's not praising the life that he's living. So praise is natural response of a healthy person. Praise is the natural response of Christians if we have it, and that's what we have here. We have the praise of the individual.

And finally in the last two verses he describes the song and the secret of faith. Sing unto the Lord; for he hath done excellent things: this is known in all the earth. Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion, for great is the holy one of Israel in the midst of thee.

Now, I said in the beginning that these chapters give us the Book of Immanuel.

Immanuel means God with us. God with us never loses its ultimate fulfillment until we, the believers, with Israel are in the Messianic kingdom with our Lord Jesus personally, visibly and in glorified bodily form. He will then prove he is Immanuel.

Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer was, as most of you know in this room, the founder of Dallas Theological Seminary. And he had an article in which he wrote many years ago

when he spoke with the signs of the times. He spoke about the sign of Israel, the sign of the Gentiles, the sign of Jerusalem, the sign of apostasy, and the sign of commercialism. And pointed out in this article that we are really living in days in which it appears that these signs are evidences that the time of our Lord's coming may be near at hand. I think we all have sensed something of this.

Hal Weildisch is a man who has been a very effective preacher of the gospel, and in one of his messages he told a story of a boy who was told by his father that he must go off on a business trip for a very lengthy period of time. And he was just a little kid. And so the son who admired him and loved him very much said, When are you going to return, Daddy? And knowing that he would not understand five months and a half, and he said to him, Son, as they were out walking, you see those trees and their leaves? Now, when they turn in color and finally they come down and fall off, then I'm going to return. And so through the summer the little boy who had a nurse, would often walk, would look up at the trees and think about what his father had said. And then finally the early part of November, latter part of October came and the leaves began to turn. The little boy didn't notice them particularly until one morning after a storm the night before in which millions of the leaves literally in the neighborhood had fallen as a result of the storm, he walked out, saw the ground filled with the leaves, ran over, began to jump up and down and kick the leaves and say, Hoorah, Hoorah. Daddy's coming.

That's, of course, the kind of hope that is printed in the heart of the believers, as he reads the passages of the word of God that tell us the trends that will mark the period of time when the Lord is about to return. And surely we have seen many trends that point to the coming of our Lord Jesus. It may be that we are living in the last days. Well, our time is up. Next time we want to consider several problems of the millennial kingdom. Let's close in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for the Scriptures. We thank Thee for the great hope of the Messianic kingdom. We know how rational this hope is, and we thank

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Thee that Thou hath shown us the victory of the cross in the creation. Go with us as we
part for Jesus’ sake. Amen.