



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Isaiah 34 – 35

“The Battle of Armageddon, the Coming of the Lord and the Kingdom of God.”

[End of Prayer] Through our own testimony, this we ask in Jesus’ name. Amen.

[Message] Tonight the subject is “The Battle of Armageddon, the Coming of the Lord, and the Kingdom of God. And these three topics are set forth for us in chapters 34 and 35 of the Prophecy of Isaiah. Franz Delitzsch who has written one of the better commentaries on the Prophecy of Isaiah has said “That these two chapters make up the finale of the judgment upon all the world.” Just as in chapters 24 through 27, which remember was Isaiah’s little apocalypse, special judgments upon nations which the prophet knew, merge into a grand apocalyptic end of all things. From chapter 13 through chapter 23, Isaiah gave some judgments upon the nations of his day. And then when he completed these judgments upon the nations of his day, the 24th through the 27th chapters became an exposition of the final judgment that God is to pour out upon the human race prior to the coming of his kingdom.

And so here in the chapters that have preceded chapters 28 through 33 of the Prophecy of Isaiah have been woes upon the nation and upon the nations, and now these woes upon the nation and the nations that Isaiah knew merge into this grand apocalyptic finale of the end of all things, and so the prophet’s view point moves from the present

and the background of his own time on to the end of the age and the second advent and kingdom of God. In other words, just as in the earlier section, messiah and the lineaments of his personal character form the promise section, so in the latter part it is the coming of the messiah to the earth that is designed to stir the hearts of Isaiah's readers.

Now I think it's important for us to keep some dates in mind and so I have put on the board, while you were in there drinking a cup of coffee or having a Coca-Cola, I have put some dates here and I want to just briefly go over them. Perhaps many of you carry these facts in your minds, but some of you may not but it's helpful in reading the prophets to know these things.

Now the high water mark of the kingdom of David and Solomon was 1000 to 922 B.C. This in one sense is really the high water mark of God's dealing with the nation Israel in the Old Testament. David was a great king and Solomon was a great king, and the rules of David and Solomon marked the high water mark of the kingdom of Israel. Then in 922 B.C. remember the kingdom had a disruption. The kingdom separated. There was schism in the camp and so the Northern Kingdom separated from the Southern Kingdom, the ten tribes of the north from the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin in the south. That occurred in 922 B.C.

Israel is the term that is usually given to the Northern Kingdom from that time on. Israel's dates are from 922 B.C. to 721 B.C. when Israel was conquered by the Assyrians and went into captivity. Judah's dates are 922 to 587 A.D. which is the final date of the captivity to the Babylonians or under the Babylonians. So Judah had a longer history than Israel. In a sense, it was more faithful to God and we shall see that of course as we consider the life of a man like King Hezekiah, one of the great men in Israel. The decline and fall of the Northern Kingdom then began in 922 B.C. and concluded in 721 B.C. when the Assyrians under Sargon II overcame the ten tribes and they went into captivity.

It is on the basis of this that British Israelite teaching claims that Britain, Denmark, and the United States are really part of the ten tribes and that the Bible does not say

anything about the restoration of Israel to the land of Israel and nothing about Israel receiving the promises of the Old Testament, for those promises are fulfilled in Denmark, for example, which is the tribe of Dan, of England which is the tribe of Ephraim, and Manasseh which is the tribe of the United States, and some of our political leaders have become involved in this and many of our conservatives for example, many of them are anti-Semitic because they have been influenced by this kind of teaching, which in effect because some Jews have been involved in the Communist conspiracy, they have developed an anti-Semitism on the basis of it and have been misled in their understanding of Scripture as well as in understanding of some other things too.

The decline and fall of the Southern Kingdom began in 922 B.C. and ended in 587 B.C. In 605 B.C. Jerusalem was conquered by Nebuchadnezzar and tribute was taken but finally in 587 B.C. was the third time that Judah was defeated and then she went into final captivity under Nebuchadnezzar to Babylon, and so the Babylonian captivity of the two tribes began then. Now the Bible speaks of the times of the Gentiles. So when you see when Israel went into captivity in 721 B.C. and Judah and Benjamin in 587 B.C. then the twelve tribes went into captivity. All twelve tribes were in captivity and at that time, the times of the Gentiles began.

Now the times of the Gentiles is the time period during which Jerusalem is under foreign domination. So the times of the gentiles began actually in 605 B.C. when Jerusalem first came into domination and the times of the gentiles shall not end until the second advent of Jesus Christ. Now I have put on the board here and not an attempt to set dates. This is one thing you must never do in the study of Bible prophecy of course. And you will notice that I have not set a date. I have just said that the end of the times of the gentiles will occur in 1969 plus 7 years which is the period of the great tribulation plus how much I do not know. So at that time 1969 plus 7 plus the times of the gentiles will end. They will end at the second advent of Jesus Christ. The decree for the return of the remnant which was given by Cyrus, the king of Persia, in 538 B.C. was the basis for

the return of about 50,000 Jews to the land of Palestine again, Jerusalem particularly, and in the Old Testament, we read of this in books such Ezra, Nehemiah and so on.

Now the final dispersion of Israel occurred in 70 A.D. You see when Jesus Christ came, only a remnant had returned to the land, but that remnant of Jews rejected our Lord Jesus and in 70 A.D. with the destruction of the city by Titus, the Roman, the Jews were dispersed to the four corners of the earth.

Now all of this was prophesied in the Old Testament. I want you to turn for just a moment to Deuteronomy chapter 28 and we are going to read a few verses here in order for you to see that God was not surprised when the nation rejected the son of God. He had already stated in the Old Testament that as a result of disobedience, they would be scattered to the four corners of the earth. In Deuteronomy chapter 28, we have a long chapter which has something to say on this subject and we are not going to read the whole thing. I just want to read a part of it. In the earlier part of the 28th chapter of the Book of Deuteronomy, God sets forth the things that bring blessing and the things that bring a curse, and He describes the various judgments that are going to be poured out upon Israel.

And He states in the 63rd verse of this chapter “And it shall come to pass, that as the Lord rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you; so the Lord will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nothing; and ye shall be plucked from off the land to which thou goest to possess it. And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone. And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind: And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have no assurance of thy life: In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were evening and at evening thou shalt say, Would God it were morning!” Anyone who has

ever studied Jewish history knows how true these statements of Moses are. “For the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see. And the Lord shall bring thee into Egypt again with ships, by the way whereof I spake unto thee, Thou shalt see it no more again: and there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for male and female slaves, and no man shall buy you.”

Now turn over to the 30th chapter and we are going to read just a few verses of the Promise of Restoration. Verse 1 of chapter 30 “And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations to which the Lord thy God hath driven thee, And shalt return unto the lord thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul; That then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, where the Lord thy God hath scattered thee.” So we have here when you are in the land of your dispersion and you remember the Lord thy God and when you turn unto Him, that He will return and He will gather you from all the nations whither He hath scattered you.

Verse 5 “And the Lord thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers.” He is going to remake the nation Israel. Verse 9 “And the Lord thy God will make thee plenteous in every work of thine hand, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy land, for good: for the Lord will again rejoice over thee for good, as he rejoiced over thy fathers: If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which are written in this book of the law, and if thou turn unto the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul.” So the times of the Gentiles then began with the captivity by Nebuchadnezzar in 605 B.C and extend on through to the second advent of Christ.

“The Battle of Armageddon and the Second Coming” by S. Lewis Johnson
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The worldwide dispersion began in 70 A.D. when Israel was scattered to the four corners of the earth and today Israel is in worldwide dispersion. Isn’t it an interesting thing that wherever you go in the world, you find Jews. It’s hard to go any place that you do not find Jews. Why? Because God has scattered them to the four corners of the earth.

Now of course we have seen in our lifetime the remarkable fact that Israel is now a nation again since May of 1948. Over 20 years now, we have had the nation Israel. About two and a half million Jews have come back in the land, but the great majority of the Jews are still scattered over the four corners of the earth. Some of them, the two largest groups of Jews are in New York City, and I am not so sure but some now may be down in Miami. And the other is in Russia and the Russians will not let the Russian Jews out in order to return to the land of Palestine. These are the three great concentrations of Jews in the land, in Russia, and in New York.

Now it’s a remarkable thing I say because I can remember as I have told you when there was no Nation Israel and when it seemed humanly speaking as if it would be very difficult for God to fulfill His word, but it has come to pass and though Israel is pressed from pillar to post by Arabs on every side except the west, she still exists and is a testimony to the faithfulness of the word of God.

Now I want you also to keep in mind some dates of the prophet. Remember he began to prophesy under Uzziah who ruled from 790 to 740 B.C. Isaiah began his prophesying in the reign of Uzziah. You remember he was called in the year that King Uzziah died. Then Jotham reigned from 740 to 732. Now the reason that these dates overlap is because occasionally there was a regency, a co-regency and consequently Ahaz for example ruled the last few years of the reign of Jotham as a regent with him. Then Ahaz, the wicked king, came to rule and he ruled from 735 to 716 B.C. He was succeeded by Hezekiah, the greatest king that Judah in its separated state ever had, and finally Manasseh succeeded Hezekiah in 687 B.C.

Isaiah prophesied during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah and remember that in the days of Ahaz, the great enemy that faced Israel to the south was Egypt and to the north was Assyria, and that is why in the earlier part of the prophecy of Isaiah, you have so much reference to Assyria. But in Hezekiah’s day, the first part of his reign was concerned with Assyria also, but finally in 701 B.C we are going to study this when we come to the study of the life of Hezekiah. But in 701 B.C. the Assyrians were defeated and the Assyrian threat diminished, and so consequently the latter part of Isaiah is concerned with a prophecy on Isaiah’s part of the time when Judah would go into Babylonian captivity, and so against the Babylonian captivity, chapters 40 through 66 of Isaiah are written, and against that background and the return from that captivity Isaiah writes those great prophecies of deliverance in the latter part of his book, but we needn’t go into that at the moment.

With that as a background, let’s turn now to chapter 34 and I want to read a few verses and then I want to review some prophetic events for you. Let’s read the first four verses of chapter 34. Here we have described the Battle of Armageddon in a general way,

“Come near, ye nations, to hear; and hearken, ye peoples: let the earth hear, and all that is therein; the world, and all things that come forth from it. For the indignation of the Lord is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies: he hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter. Their slain also shall be cast out, and their stench shall come up out of their carcasses, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood. And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together like a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and like a falling fig from the fig tree.”

Now let's review for just a moment the events of the future and remember when we talk about the events of the future, we are talking about the events of the end time, and I will just put this very rough diagram again on the board so that some of you who have not been here all along may be able to find your place so to speak in what we are saying. Remember it is at the cross of Jesus Christ that the great central event of all history takes place, the redeeming work of Jesus Christ. Then at the ascension of the Lord Jesus on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit is outpoured and the Church Age begins. That Church Age concludes with the rapture or the catching up of the church to meet the Lord in the air. This is the great event for which we look. We look for the Lord Jesus to come again and he may come at any moment. He might come tonight. He might come before we discuss Hezekiah next week and that will be wonderful with me. I won't have to prepare for it and you will be able to get of course a much better exposition when you get to heaven anyway and so we are looking forward to the coming of the Lord Jesus in the air to meet him there. That's the next great event of the prophetic word.

Now the Bible states that in the future, there is to be a period of time known as the tribulation. We call it just tribulation. It is a seven-year period of time Daniel tells us in his 9th chapter of his prophecy. It probably begins right after the rapture of the church, but the Bible strictly speaking does not tell us that. There could be some interval here, but we do not know. We just have to say a question mark there. Most likely that time begins. That period is going to be a period of judgment, a period of judgment upon the gentile nations and a period of judgment upon Israel, the nation, for its rejection of Jesus Christ. It will conclude with the coming of the Lord Jesus to the earth with the church and then there shall come to pass the kingdom of our Lord on the earth. He will establish this kingdom.

Remember the kingdom is called the Kingdom of God and it is called the Kingdom of God for the simple reason that He is the one who establishes the kingdom. We do not establish the kingdom. This was the great error that liberal preachers made in

the earlier part of the twentieth century in preaching that we were somehow or other going to bring in the kingdom of God, and you still hear occasionally, rarely some fellow who is still living in that and occasionally you will find a man mentioning those old expressions that we used to hear in church so often about bringing in the kingdom. We do not bring in the kingdom. It is our Lord who brings in the kingdom.

Now when we talk about the future then, we are talking about this period of time here, this tribulation period of time. That time is crammed with events which are described in the word of God, this tribulation period. Here are some of them and I will just go through them rather rapidly. We have had them before but perhaps their review will help. During this period of time, there will rise upon the earth ten kings of great significance. Then of course, there will rise an individual, The antichrist, who shall begin to exercise unusual influence in the political affairs of world government. Daniel describes this beast in Daniel chapter 2 and Daniel chapter 7 particularly. Then at the beginning of this period of time, this seven-year period of time, this antichrist, this beast shall conclude a covenant with the Jews by which there is established again in the land of Palestine in the temple the worship of the Jews.

Now we know today they are back in the land and one of the big issues that faces the Nation Israel which they have not dealt with yet is the question of the rebuilding of the temple and the establishment again of the ancient worship according to the Old Testament, for theoretically they should be interested in establishing that worship again since they are a theocratic nation back in the land. David Ben-Gurion and others have often spoken about how they have fulfilled prophecy in coming back into the land and in the establishment of that kingdom again, but they face a problem and of course Israel is internally divided over this. Shall we establish again the ancient ritual, the ancient religion as Moses has set it forth in the Bible or shall we not? They have lived for so many years under an as if form of theology, that is we act as if we have the worship when we don't really have it, but now they find themselves in difficulty. That is to be expected. At any

rate, at the beginning of that period of time, the worship is going to be begun again. The antichrist shall make a covenant with the Jews permitting that. Then there shall follow the domination of politics by Babylonian religion. In other words, religion is going to become inextricably wound up and bound up with politics. According to Revelation chapter 17, religion and politics shall be closely entwined. The Beast will have a most interesting experience during the time of the tribulation period. The antichrist is going to have an experience like our Lord's death and resurrection, that is described in the 13th chapter of the Book of Revelation.

After this supernatural experience which I think is a counterfeit experience, he will break the covenant and as the leader of the ten kings, he is going to overthrow religion in the middle of the 70th week and assume worldwide dominion himself. He shall establish the worship of himself in the temple in Jerusalem, the antichrist, and of course then we shall have an ecumenical religion. It is the worship of the Beast. Many prophetic students think that what we see today is an adumbration, is a foreshadowing of this that the ecumenical movement is a Satanic movement towards the one worship of the tribulation period. That may well be true. No one of us has enough intelligence to be certain of that. At least we can say that there is a great movement worldwide to have one religion. Not just one religion of Christianity, but ultimately one religion over the whole of the earth.

Sometimes our sights are not broad enough. We think you know that if the Christians unite with the Roman Catholics, we will have ecumenism, but of course there are movements underway for the Christians to unite with the Jews also and the time is coming when not only shall Christianity and Judaism unite, but also Mohammedanism and all of the other religions of the world will finally unite in the worship of The Beast or the Antichrist.

Now that shall take place in the middle of that 70th week, in the middle of that tribulation period. That will signal of course the beginning of great tribulation. During

that time, judgment by means of the seals, the trumpets, and the bowls of the Book of Revelation shall be poured out upon the earth. Finally the tribulation period will climax in the defeat of the antichrist and the destruction of his capital city. He shall, in the last days of that period, lead a revolt of all the nations of the earth against the city of Jerusalem, for there, there is a pocket of resistance to the Beast’s worldwide desires and as his armies gather against the city of Jerusalem.

The Bible states that at the second advent of the Lord Jesus, he shall supernaturally destroy the Beast with the breath of his mouth. That is described in chapters such as Zachariah chapter 14, Second Thessalonians chapter 2, Revelation chapter 19 and other passages like that. So the tribulation shall end with the overthrow of The Beast. His capital city which is Babylon, shall also be overthrown supernaturally by God. That is described in the 18th chapter of the Book of Revelation and so the kingdom of man in the form of its king, the Beast, and the government of the whole of the earth shall be destroyed by the kingdom of God and the lamb.

Now that is the picture in general. There are so many details of course, it is impossible for us to go into all of them, but this is enough at least to enable us to set the background or the stage for these four verses. For here, we are taken right into this tribulation period, we are taken right to the end of it when the nations of the earth are gathered against Jerusalem under the leadership of the Beast or the antichrist, and Jesus Christ is soon to come.

Now that's what we read about when we read in verse 1, “Come near, ye nations, to hear; and hearken, ye peoples: let the earth hear, and all that is therein; the world, and all things that come forth from it, for the indignation of the Lord is upon all nations.” In other words, the Lord’s anger is of a worldwide nature. In the fourth verse, we read that heaven itself is involved. “And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together like a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine.”

Now of course the heavens are involved because this is a judgment that touches all of the human race and humanity’s sin has now involved heaven itself. You know there are some texts in the Bible that suggest that this has happened already. Will you take your Bibles and turn with me to Job chapter 15 and let's read verse 15 here. Job 15:15 “Behold, he putteth no trust” that’s in the Old Testament and if you can’t find it, remember use your index. Page 582 in my edition. Now while you try to find Job, I am going to find another passage. Have you found Job yet? Verse 15 chapter 15. Listen “Behold, He putteth no trust in His holy ones; yea, the heavens are not clean in His sight.”

Now in Hebrews chapter 9 and verse 23, you needn’t try to find that; we don’t have time. It was therefore necessary, the writer says, that the patterns of things in the heaven should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. There are some anticipations and indications in the word of God that man’s sin not only affects man, but it affects the whole of the creation and in affecting the whole of the creation, seems to affect the heavens themselves. And so we read here that involved in this last and final judgment upon the earth is the heavens because of the sin of man.

Now whether this is just for past sin or whether sin shall become so rampant that it becomes that the heavens become particularly involved in the future, the Bible does not say at this point. Verse 5, “For my sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold, it shall come down upon Edom, and upon the people of my curse, to judgment.” Now the reason Edom is signaled out here for special attention is because Edom was the ancient enemy of Israel and Edom was a kind of half brother to Israel and Edom signified in the Bible the hostility of the world to Israel. It's the hostility of those who object to the call of Israel. Edom was the anti-Semite nation. It was the nation that objected to God’s choice of Israel. Every anti-Semite is one who ultimately objects to the choice of Israel. He does not find the choice of Israel to his liking and consequently he objects.

In the final analysis, most anti-Semitism can be traced to the fact that they object to God's election of Israel. They fail to see that God chooses not on the basis of our goodness but on the basis of His grace, and that every one of us who is converted, who is of the elect, is chosen not because of any goodness in us. There is no goodness whatsoever in us. We are chosen because it is His sovereign good pleasure to choose us, and it is His design to glorify Himself through the choice of us. As a matter of fact, He has often glorified in His choice those who seem to be the greatest exhibitions and examples of wickedness. The Apostle Paul said that he himself was an illustration for all men of the long suffering of God and he was chosen for that very reason. So the heavens themselves are involved and Edom is signaled out for special attention as a kind of illustration of what God is going to do for those who object to His working in behalf of Israel. I want you to notice the 8th verse before we pass on to chapter 35. "For it is the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion."

Now I think that should be rendered for the cause of Zion. Let's read it that way. "For it is the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the cause of Zion." In other words, the time is coming when God is going to plead for Israel again. At the conclusion of the tribulation period here when the judgments have reached their climax, He is going to plead for Israel and by reason of these judgments and by means of them. He is going to bring the nation to faith in Jesus Christ, and when he comes from heaven in his advent, they shall look upon him whom they have pierced and they shall mourn for him in repentance because they have finally been brought to the knowledge of the savior, the Lord Jesus.

It is at this point that God pleads their case. In a sense, He fulfils His promises which He has made in the word of God. You know it's a serious thing to oppose the Lord and it's a serious thing to object to His choice of Israel or the church. It's a serious thing to be found in opposition to God because it ultimately lands us in judgment. You can go in the Bible and you can see it from beginning to end. Pilate, for example. Pilate

wrought his own ruin by his objection to Jesus Christ. Herod wrought his own ruin by his opposition to the Lord Jesus. Haman in the Old Testament was responsible for his own judgment because he objected to God’s dealing with the nation Israel in mercy and grace, and so it has always been when a man objects to the working of God, he brings upon himself judgment. The time is coming when God is going to plead the cause of Israel because He has given them inviolable promises.

Now let's look at chapter 35. Here we have the coming of the Lord in the first four verses described. “The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom like the rose.” I was looking at the Hebrew text today and I was somewhat surprised to discover that that word blossom like the rose is not what I thought when I thought of a rose. It really was something like a crocus. That seems to take a little bit of the luster away from that text, doesn't it? I don't think I like this text as well as I used to like it, but I better not object to the word of God. The desert shall blossom like the rose. So it's like the primrose or like the crocus, and you can just picture a desert that is blooming.

A beautiful desert. I have some friends who live in Arizona. Now to me the desert is just as ugly as it can be. I take Arizona highways and occasionally an issue will be devoted to the beautiful desert and I always read that with a great deal of suspicion that some artist has drawn all of these pictures and then photographs have been made of them because the desert to me is a very unlovely place, but they tell me that at a certain time of the year, it's beautiful.

Well, the whole of the desert of Israel is going to be beautiful when the Lord comes. There is going to be tremendous change in the earth itself. “It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing; the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God. Strengthen the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to those who are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with

vengeance, even God with a recompense.” Now this is for the enemies of Israel, but He says He will come and He will save you. So here we have the redemption of the creation and the redemption of Israel, and it takes place when their God comes.

Now remember the God who comes for Israel is which member of the Trinity? Not the Father, he is a spirit. We shall never see Him. Not the Holy Spirit. He has no body. It is right. It is the Lord Jesus. He is the member of the Trinity who now has a body and who comes and is seen by men. So our God shall come and He shall save Israel. That is the coming of the Lord. So the agent for the punishment and the agent for the salvation is our Lord Jesus himself, the God who appears.

Now then in the latter part of chapter 35 verse 5 and following, we have the kingdom of God upon the earth and I don't think there is anything in all of Isaiah that is anymore beautiful than this. This is in anticipation of chapters 40 through 66. Notice the first verse first word ‘then.’ What time is then? Well look at the preceding words “He will come and save you,” so that at the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus, “Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.”

What a difference Grace makes! Israel might well have sung “Depth of mercy, can there be mercy still reserved for me?” and human beings would have said no. Israel has so sinned that she has sinned away the grace of God. Her opportunity is lost. It was Israel who rejected the Lord Jesus Christ. How can there be mercy for Israel? But you see it is in this mercy that is shown to Israel in the inviolable promises made to her that we come to understand the grace of God, and let me say to you tonight it is impossible for you to sin in such a way that God not receive you. If you turn to Him and say thank you Lord for giving Jesus Christ for me, I take you as my personal Savior” it is impossible for you to reach the place where God cannot save you. If you turn in repentance and faith to him who loves you and gave himself for you, we manifest in our turning to him the

manifold grace of God, and I guess one of the greatest exhibitions of it shall be in the future when Israel returns to the Lord. Then, then this is the summit of the first half of the Book of Isaiah, then the eyes of the blind shall be opened.

Now let me just stop for a moment here and say something about these things that occur. You see these are messianic signs. These are signs that indicate that the king promised in all of the Bible up to this point is present. When the king is on the earth, then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped, the lame man shall leap like an hart, the tongue of the dumb shall sing. These are signs that the king is here.

Now I want you to turn with me to Matthew chapter 11 and let's read a few verses because you see if you knew the Old Testament as you ought, if I knew it as I ought, O how much more sense the New Testament would make! Now when John the Baptist was here, he was here as the ambassador of the king. Remember, he came to be the forerunner of the Messianic king. He came to announce the salvation of God was at hand for Israel. Now John of course became a little confused and discouraged. He found himself in prison and as he reflected upon what he knew God had called him to be the ambassador of the king, he asked himself the question how can I be the ambassador if I am in prison. It seems as if the purposes of God have been defeated. So apparently his faith wavered a little bit and now we read of an interesting incident,

“And it came to pass, when Jesus had ceased commanding his twelve disciples, he departed from there to teach and to preach in their cities. Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, And said unto them, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?’ (Now he that should come was a term for the Messiah. They spoke of the Messiah as the coming one and so John is asking a very theological question. He is saying are you the Messiah or are we looking for someone else.) ‘Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and show John again those

things which you do hear and see.’ Tell him about the things that you are hearing about and tell him about the things you are seeing, and he will know the answer to the question; and they are these. ‘The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.’”

In other words, the fact that the eyes of the blind are being opened; Jesus healed the blind men. The fact that the ears of the deaf are coming unstopped. The fact that lame men are being healed. These are the signs that the Messianic king that Isaiah prophesied about is here and these were his claims his Messianic credentials. So here in the Old Testament, we are reading of the history which Jesus used to convince John that he really was the Messiah.

Now I think of course that in these things, we have that which is physical. This is the kingdom of God. This is the time when Jesus comes to the earth and in Israel, there will be many of these miracles. A blind man will see; deaf men will hear, lame men will walk, dumb men will have their mouths opened, and everybody shall testify to the glorious power of the king. But remember that the miracles that he does, these miracles are designed to express what he does in the spiritual sphere also. When he was here for example, he healed the blind men, not just simply to testify to his power but to impress upon us that the one who could do this in the physical sphere could in the spiritual sphere open the eyes of our spiritual side, so that we could see spiritual things. And that which he could do upon a man’s ears physically illustrated what he could do upon a man’s ears spiritually. He could make him hear the truth. He could make him see the truth. He could make the man who was lame, who could not please God in his walk, please God. He could make the man who could not express any praise of God and glorify Him in his words, do just that. So all of these miracles which Jesus performs are designed to show us what he is able to do.

And that's what he is able to do today. He is able to open the eyes of the blind and men are blind who have not received Jesus Christ. He is able to open the ears of the deaf and the man who has never responded to Jesus Christ, does not know the will of God, cannot hear the will of God. He is able to make the lame man walk, the man who wanders around in the desert of meaninglessness existence, that man is able to discover meaning in life, purpose, his goal; and he is able to accomplish that goal as he relies upon the messiah who can make the lame man leap like the hart. It makes a tremendous difference you know when Jesus comes into your life and he can do all of these things for you.

We are living in a day in which the average man on the street does not know why he is here. He doesn't know from whence he has come. He doesn't know where he is going. He hasn't any concept of what it is to be an instrument designed by God for His glory, knows nothing about that; and it is in the gospel message and in our Lord personally that we discover all of these things. That's what our young people so much need today. They are wandering around in the wilderness because their parents are in the wilderness, and they need this simple message which is the message that brings all of these things that he is speaking of spiritually. The effects of Christianity are always the best evidence of Christianity, and the things that Jesus Christ can do as set forth here are the things that glorify Christianity.

I think one of the greatest illustrations of this was John Newton. He was a man who went I guess to more, perhaps than any other man, to the bottom in his existence. Newton came from a Christian family. His mother was a Christian, but he finally stooped to the place as he says that he became a slave of slaves. He actually became a slave of an African Negress who rejoiced in humiliating him by throwing scraps from the table, under the table, and requiring him to eat like a dog. He stooped to that and finally one night in a storm, in a boat, when it appeared as if everything was lost, he found himself praying

and on March the 10th about two hundred years ago, he found Jesus Christ as his Savior, and what a tremendous transformation took place in John Newton's life.

He ultimately became a minister of Jesus Christ. He had put on his gravestone, he wrote his own epitaph and he had put on it "John Newton, clerk, once an infidel and libertine, a servant of slaves in Africa, was by the mercy of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ, preserved, restored, pardoned, and appointed to preach the faith that he had long labored to destroy." John Newton became one of the outstanding Christians of his day, influenced men such as Wilberforce and Cowper, led some of the outstanding theologians to the lord like Thomas Scott, a man who had sunk to the bottom, to the drags of human existence, and Newton remember wrote such wonderful hymns as "How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds," "Glorious Things of Thee are Spoken," "One There is Above All Others" and "Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound That Saved a Wretch Like Me," "I Once Was Lost, But Now Am Found; Was Blind, But Now I See." John Newton whose influence has actually extended down to the present day is a testimony to the saving power of the Christian gospel, and these things that take place in the kingdom of our Lord are just little illustrations of what he can do in the spiritual existence of all men today.

Our time's up. I didn't have time to talk about the parched ground becoming a pool, the highway of our God which is going to be set up on the way to the kingdom in Jerusalem and how the ransomed of the Lord shall return upon it, must you read it for yourself. Let's close with a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father we thank Thee for these wonderful pictures of the grace of God in the Old Testament and we thank Thee Lord for the future and the brightness of it. We thank Thee for the unconditional promises that have been given to Israel and we thank Thee Lord that they shall be fulfilled.

We thank Thee most of all for the unconditional promise given to us that when we believe in Jesus Christ, we have life and we thank Thee for the assurance that all of

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the elect shall be brought into the presence of our blessed Lord who died for them, to His
praise and to His glory, may the word work in the hearts of each one present here.

For Jesus’ sake. Amen.