



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Isaiah 59

“The Power of Human Sin”

TRANSCRIPT

Men are sinners. He states that in that 3rd chapter of that great epistle these words, and you will recognize them as being passages that come from the Old Testament and you will also recognize some from Isaiah chapter 59. He says,

“There is none righteous, no not one. There is none that understandeth. There is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way. They are together become unprofitable. There is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulcher; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips. Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood. Destruction and misery are in their ways. And the way of peace they have not known or have they not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes.”

Now all of those passages are derived from the Old Testament. And so the Apostles Doctrine is Sin is a Doctrine himself which he himself found in Scripture. He did not originate it. He derived it from the Old Testament.

Now in the light of that, it is very interesting to read a citation by Professor Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. Now this is what Professor Schlesinger has to say, “There seems no

inherent obstacle to the gradual advance of socialism in the United States through a series of New Deals. Official liberalism was the product of the Enlightenment, cross-fertilized with such things as science, bourgeois complacency, and a belief in progress. It dispensed with the absurd Christian myths of sin and damnation and believed that what shortcomings man might have were to be redeemed, not by Jesus on the cross, but by the benevolent unfolding of history. Tolerance, free inquiry, and technology, operating in the framework of human perfectibility, would in the end create a heaven on earth, a goal accounted much more sensible and wholesome than a heaven in heaven."

And then a man who gives this quotation says, we have had a series of new deals, fair deals, fast deals, and raw deals, and we surely are moving into socialism as Arthur Schlesinger predicted, but we have not and will not be able to dispense with what he calls the absurd Christian myths of sin and damnation, neither will we ever be cleansed and forgiven for our sins and mistakes by the benevolent unfolding of history. The striking thing about this is that Professor Schlesinger is a Jewish man, and being a Jewish man, he should have known that the doctrine of sin and salvation is not the absurd Christian doctrine of sin and salvation, but it is the doctrine of the Old Testament; his own Old Testament. And if it is absurd, it is the absurd Jewish doctrine of sin and salvation, which the apostles of the New Testament appropriated because they believed the Old Testament to be the word of God.

Now Isaiah, chapter 59, is one of those chapters in which we have the fundamental character of sin set forth. We often hear about the gentle Jesus, and someone has said that the adjectives swamp the substantive, and we have begun to think of The Gentle Jesus primarily as a gentle person, and we have forgotten the other characteristics of our Lord. He is the Gentle Jesus, but he is the Gentle *Jesus*; that is he is the one who has been sent to be the Savior from sin, and as such he is also the Judge. Now sin is one of the most significant of all of the doctrines of the Bible, and we shall

never understand the Bible at all, if we do not understand sin. We call the doctrine of Sin in theology, hamartiology. [Johnson writes on board] Hamartiology; the reason is because the Greek word *hamartia* is the word for sin, and so hamartiology is the doctrine of Sin, the teaching of sin.

Now Isaiah 59 is one of the sources of the New Testament, Hamartiology, and it is also one of the sources of the New Testament, Eschatology or prophecy. Now I want you to notice as I read the first two verses what this text has to say about sin. Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear, but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you that he will not hear. Isaiah is writing from the standpoint of the last decade of Israel's exile in Babylon. Remember, the prophet is looking forward into the future about 150 years before his or after him after his time, it is prophecy for him and he sees the children of Israel in captivity in Babylon. And in Isaiah, chapter 59, he writes of that period of time when Cyrus, the Persian King, is engaging in his war with Lydia, and he does not seem to be anxious to do anything about Babylon. And of course if he were to come to Babylon and free Babylon, then the Jews who were in captivity, would be delivered. And so this chapter reflects the children of Israel's condition in captivity.

It is near the end of the captivity and so they have some understanding of why they are in captivity, at least some of them; and they are longing for Cyrus, the Persian, to make his strike at Babylon, so that they might be delivered. So the hope of the exiles is dark because Cyrus does not seem to be turning to them, and consequently they were pining away in the gloom of the Babylonian captivity. Now that is the background that Isaiah sees as he pens this chapter, but first of all he writes about Israel's condition due to sin, and these two verses that I have just read are something of a theme for the entire chapter. One thing comes between God and man, and that thing is sin. Notice that second verse, “Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.”

Now this is effect of sin. It is not that God cannot hear. He is real. Notice by the way the emphasis in these two verses on the reality of God: the Lord’s hand is not shortened that it cannot see, neither his ear heavy that it cannot hear, but your iniquities have separated between you and your God; and your sins have hid his face from you. And so Isaiah stresses the hand of God, the ear of God, the face of God. It is not that God is not real, he is very real. In fact, the picture that Isaiah presents of God is that he is so real and so near to them that he can even make out the countenance of God. But there is a wall of separation between Israel and God, which has been produced by Israel’s sin. It is not that he cannot hear, it is that he *will not* hear, because they have sinned. Their sins have separated between them and God.

Now that is one of the basic facts of sin. It separates men from God. In fact, in a sense that is really what hell is all about. For ultimately, hell is separation from God. When Paul writes about hell in 2 Thessalonians, chapter 1, he says that those who have rejected Jesus Christ are going to be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord. In other words, for a creature whom God has created to be in fellowship with him, to enjoy him forever; for that creature to be separated from the God who created him and for whom he was created is the ultimate discord of the universe. Instead of being for God completely, he is separated from God forever. That is hell.

And I want to tell you that when I think about hell, to me it is far more significant and far more terrifying to think of being separated from God forever than it is to be in hell fire. I think hell fire of course is a terrible thing, and the picture that we get of the Lake of Fire is surely dramatic and it is surely significant and it is awful, but to me it is hardly more awful than the idea of being separated from God forever. Jude speaks about the blackness of darkness forever. And to think of eternal separation, that is horrible. That is what sin does. Sin separates a man from God, and it is possible to be alive, as you are alive tonight in this auditorium and to be separated from God; sin separates. And

let me also say to you because I imagine that most of you in this room are Christians, sin separates a Christian from God too. Not in the sense that it separates a man who has never believed in Jesus Christ. That man has come to be in the family of God, and he can never be separated from the love of God.

But even in a Christian’s life there comes a sense of discord when he have sinned against God and we have lost fellowship with him when we sin. So sin separates us to the extent that we lose our fellowship with God. It does not separate us to the degree that we lose our relationship to him in the family. But a Christian, who has sinned, is in separation from God in that limited sense. Have you ever felt it? Have you ever felt when you have sinned a sense of discord, a sense of disharmony, a sense of separation from God? Well you know in my experience when I sin and if I persist in my sin, it is almost as if God begins to live in another little compartment from my life. I have put him out. He is not in the same room with me any longer. He is in the same house with me, but he is not in same room with me; it is sort of like that, you know. And I am living in my little sphere and I know that Lord is there, but nevertheless there is a war between us.

Now that is what Isaiah is speaking about here, but he is talking about something that is even more I think terrifying because of course here he is talking about people who are in captivity because they have sinned against God and apparently, the great majority of those in captivity were not within the family of God at all. And I think when we read these terrible words that your sins have hid his face from you that he will not hear, then we have a case of the judgment that comes to an unbeliever because he does not respond to the word of God. You see we can have so much light as an unbeliever, we can have so much light, and we can reject that light and reject that light and reject that light until finally God will not give us light because we have failed to respond to all that he can do and yet not force us. And so there comes a time when retributive judgment takes place.

This week, I got a letter from my daughter. I love my daughter for several reasons. First of course because she is my daughter, and I have a special love for her, but

there is another reason that I love my daughter. She is really interested in spiritual things and she does not mind telling you what she is troubled about too. And also she has always been rather bold in her witness for the Lord, and she is very, very opaque with her character with me. For some reason, father and daughter seem to get along real well.

And she wrote me a letter this week and in the midst of it she said, “By the way dad, I have a question I need answered. Why did Christ speak in parables when he knew many people could not understand them?” Mark 4, 11 and 12 and she underlined the 12th verse. From verse 12, it sounds like he did not want some converted. Is this an evidence of election or what? Please answer, if you have time. This verse bothers me.

And the verse that she was speaking about is Mark, chapter 4, verses 11 and 12, and I want you to turn over there with me for a moment because it fits right in with what we are talking about in Isaiah, chapter 59. Do you remember, the Lord Jesus has just been accused of blasphemy because he healed a dumb demoniac? The details are given in Matthew, chapter 12 and some of the details are given here in Mark, chapter 3, but in chapter 4, verses 11 and 12, he began remember after this to speak to the disciples in parables and then we read, and he said unto them, “Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables. That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them.” Now that is a difficult verse. It does seem that our Lord is not anxious for them to be converted at all. In fact it almost seems as if he is going out of his way to prevent them from being converted. And have you ever thought of our Lord as being like that? What caused this?

Now this is what I wrote Gracey. I said, first of all that one of the things that you must do is look at the context. The preceding chapter Jesus has healed the dumb demoniac and what have the leaders of the Israel said about him. They have said, he casts out demons by Beelzebub. He is in league with Satan, they said. In other words, in

the clear evidence, in the clear light of the evidence of the healing miraculously of the dumb demoniac in the presence of a mighty miracle done by God, they say it was done by Beelzebub, by Satan. In other words, they are attributing the mighty works of our Lord to demonic, satanic agency.

Now you could not be farther from the truth than that. They not only do not say, well it looks like a miracle, but I am not sure or it does seem that this man has some unusual powers. They blatantly say, this man is doing this work by Satan. Now Mark has it in verse 30 of chapter 3 because they said, he hath an unclean spirit. And that word “said” is in the imperfect tense, which means “they were saying.” In other words, this is what everybody was saying. Now the leader is taking the lead and others are following and the word was going around, this man has an unclean spirit. This man is satanic, satanically motivated, satanically empowered. He is doing his works by Satan.

Now you can see that the condition, the spiritual condition of the leaders of the nation is not of neutrality. They have become opposed to the truth of God. They have had light, light, light; and they have refused this light until now. They not only are rejecting the light, but they are attributing to him satanic agency. In other words, they have become so blinded that they cannot see. So what is left for people like that? What is left for the people who have made the ultimate judgment? Well judgment, retributive judgment.

That is why Jesus said in the 9th verse of Mark 4. He said unto them, he that hath ears to hear, let him hear. And when they were alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parable. And he said unto them, unto you -- you who have responded -- it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but unto them that are without; those who have rejected it, those who have become heartened by their rejection, unto them all these things are done in parables. That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should

be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them. And in other words, they have made the decision that has determined their eternal destiny. There is no hope for them.

Now that is a very solemn thing. It is a very solemn thing to realize that a man can hear a light, light, light, light until finally having rejected all of the light that God consistently with his nature can give a man. Then darkness comes and it is retributive judgment. That is the meaning of that text. That is why our Lord spoke in parables, so that they would not see they were under judgment. Now for a Christian of course that is impossible.

Now coming back to Isaiah, what has happened you see in Israel at this point is that they have not responded to the judgment of God, to the light of God, and they have had to go into captivity, and there they have persisted in their sin and consequently we read that your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear. He will not hear because they are unto his retributive judgment.

Well now let us go on and notice verses 3 through 7, in which we have the explanation of their sin. For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity. Now I do not think that he is writing about a period of extraordinary violence and bloodshed. They were in Babylon and so far as we know, this did not exist. He was writing figuratively, I think. And the prophet was trying to express to us the fact that when a man sins against his fellow man, it is as if he has committed a physical crime.

Now who is the Great One who told us that the law should be interpreted with regard to its inner significance? Well, it was our Lord. He said, for example, in the Old Testament when it said, Thou shall not murder. It did not mean necessarily that Thou should not take a sword and plunge it through the heart of a man. That meant Thou shall not hate Thy brother. That hate is equivalent to murder. He also said that when the text of the Bible says, Thou shall not commit adultery that it is possible to break that commandment by a look. In other words, it was our Lord, who gave us this



intensification of the meaning of the Old Testament law. The reason of course was because it is so easy for human being to live up to the letter of a law, to so define a law and so analyze a law and so set it forth that we really emasculate it in all of its significance.

Now Isaiah stood in the tradition of men who really interpreted the Bible. And so he said,

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

And you can of course recognize from this that some of these words are the words that I read in Romans, chapter 3, in which Paul sets forth the total depravity of man. Do you believe in man’s total depravity? Well I surely do. Now this does not mean of course that men cannot do anything good. We are ladies and gentleman, you know. It simply means that there is nothing that man does that is not touched by his sin. That is what total depravity means. It means that all that he does is touched by his sinful character, and that even his best works of benevolence, which are approved by the community, praised by the community are touched with sin. And it is possible for a philanthropist to write out a large check for one million dollars and give it to such and such an organization and do it out of personal pride.

We praise the gift. We thank God for the gift. It was an exhibition of charity, but it was done for self aggrandizement; and sin touches even the best of human beings. That is what total depravity means. It does not mean that there is not a good man around. We all know the good that men do, judged by human standards. But judged by divine standards, all that men do is touched with sin, and here is Isaiah setting forth the true character of the human heart.

Now notice the end of their sin in verse 8. The way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment in their goings. They have made them crooked paths. Whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace. Their whole nature is in discord and there is no peace. Isaiah is great you know for saying there is no peace saith my God to the wicked.

Well then, having set forth Israel’s condition and having said that it is due to sin, Isaiah confesses for Israel their sin in verses 9 through 15, and I want you to notice that the personal pronouns change now. He has been saying, they, they, them, they. Now notice the 9th verse. Therefore is judgment far from us. So the prophet is going to speak as a representative of the people. Often the prophets of the Old Testament so interdent to the revelation that God was giving them that they wrote as if they belonged to Israel, when they were giving God’s message to Israel. And he so identified himself with Israel that he, under the inspiration of the Spirit, confesses Israel’s sin. And notice what he says. Therefore judgment is far from us. First he speaks about the effect of sin. Neither doth justice overtake us. We wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, but we walk in darkness.

They are looking for justice. He is speaking of course of some who are truly the Lords in the midst of the sin. Looking for justice and salvation, they grope, roaring and morning fruitlessly. They are hoping of course that the historical situation is they are hoping that Cyrus will come and deliver them, because it is he who is going to overthrow Babylon. Verse 10, we grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes. We stumble at noon day as in the night; we are in desolate places as dead men.

We roar all like bears, and mourn sore like doves. We look for judgment, but there is none; for salvation, but it is far off from us.

Now he explains their sin; verses 12 and 13. “For our transgressions are multiplied before Thee, and our sins testify against us. For our transgressions are with us; and as for our iniquities, we know them. In transgressing and lying against the Lord, and departing away from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood.”

If we were to sum up the sin, it is apostasy in thought and deed. That is the meaning of these words. Our sin is that we have turned away from the Lord. Apostasy. I think in one sense that is the ultimate sin. It is amazing in the Bible, God can with live with the man who has committed the great out breaking fleshly act of sin, who then confesses that sin, but the one who seems to provoke God is the man who acts as if God did not exist, who is utterly indifferent to God or who turns away from God. It is that man that seems to provoke our Lord.

That is why I think David can be called a man after God’s own heart and yet from human standpoint, from human standpoint, it is hard for us to conceive of David after his great sin being called that. But God’s attitude towards men’s sins is not always the attitude that man has. And the man who has fallen in the ditch very low in a moral way, if he comes back to God, he is surprised to discover how God receives him. Whereas the man who is indifferent to God, who never really engages or falls into any of these out-breaking moral, sexual sins. That man is heinous to God.

Now then he speaks about the end of their sin in verses 14 and 15. He says, and judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off, for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter. Yea, truth faileth; and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey, and the Lord saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment. Divine displeasure.

In verse 16 through verse 21, we come to the third movement, and it is Jehovah’s coming in covenant. What is the remedy? Well the remedy is not in man. Hosea says in chapter 13 and verse 9 of his prophecy, Thou hast destroyed thyself, Israel; but in me that is in God is Thine help. Well that is what we discover here.

A few months ago, I read something very interesting in the Sunday paper. It was an article about tranquilizers. A very interesting article about tranquilizers too. In fact, this article stated that it would not be long before tranquilizers would deliver us from all of our problems. For example, if we wished our child to become a musical genius, all that we need to do is give them the right pill, and they would become a musical genius. If we wished to have our IQs raised, all we need would be take some pills.

Now do not rush to buy these pills because they are not available yet. I have already asked about them. [Laughter] In fact, the doctors claim that through these pills, we may be actually on the way to banishing insanity. And they gave us a couple of illustrations. It is 9:30 in the morning, and the house is empty. The children have left for school and mother is sitting in the kitchen, looking at a coffee cup before her in a dazed condition. Have you ever been in that condition, ladies? The children have just gotten off to school and now you are just about to collapse; and there you are; and a thought keeps coming into your mind, do it now while nobody is at home; do it now while nobody is at home. Open the gas jets, put your head inside the oven and go ahead and make an end of it all, but the woman instead of doing that, suddenly she gets up, she takes a pill from her purse and she swallows it with a coffee and in a few moments, the urge to destroy herself is gone, and she goes over and sings as she does the house work, washing the dishes, making up the beds, doing all of the other trivial little things that women do about the house. And all because of the proper pill.

Then there is another illustration. A boy, 19 years of age; he dropped out of school three years ago; almost constantly in trouble since that time. He is heading surely and swiftly toward a life of crime. This time after he is arrested, he is taken to the

hospital where with his parent’s permission, and he undergoes a series of tests that confirm the doctors suspicions; the chemical makeup of his brain is responsible for his criminal tendencies. He stays at the hospital, he receives some injections and that alter his brain chemistry and in several months, he returns home and gets a job and his mind is channeled away from thoughts of crime and antisocial behavior.

Now you know, I would love to see the day when we have pills that we could take, that would deliver us from all of our problems; it would be great, but I assure you that if it is possible for us to have a pill or so that will help us and I hopefully do have, and I am sure there are certain pills that do help us; we will discover that the basic problem of men is his heart, and that we can never really solve that problem with pills. Thou has destroyed thyself O Israel, but in me is Thine help. The only real help is in the Lord and that is the picture here as we read of his coming in verse 16, and he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor. Therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him. For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak. According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay, fury to his adversaries, recompense to his enemies; to the islands he will repay recompense. So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. You see, the ultimate solution is in God that vivid lonely figure whose heart throbs for his own and whose will strikes for them.

And this passage, which sets forth these threats of his coming, concludes of course with promises, but looking at the coming now he of course is going far beyond the immediate future, as we can tell from the latter part of this chapter. The coming that he is referring to is the coming now of the Second Advent. Our Lord when he came at his first coming did not come in judgment as the prophet sets forth here. He came in grace. But the coming that is set forth here, is the coming of his second coming to the earth, which of course is simply an indication of the fact that we cannot expect to have any peace

upon the earth until our Lord comes a second time. And that is what the prophet refers to here when he speaks about his coming. Isn't it interesting that he says in the 16th verse that he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor, therefore his own arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him.

In other words, it was impossible for a man to save himself. No one could really stand as a mediator. He wondered that there was no intercessor, only Jesus Christ, who came as God’s great Jehovah salvation; only he can be the mediator. Job said, he is not a man as I am that I should answer him, that we should come together in judgment, neither is there any daysman betwixt us that can lay his hand upon us both. There is no intercessor. There is no man who can stand between God and man. He must be God-man to do that. And our Lord is the God-man. And so the prophet speaking for God says that it is God who finally shall make intercession between man and God; his own arm brought salvation.

Notice the 17th verse, for he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal in a cloak. And he comes and he will repay according to their deeds, and he will give fury to his adversaries and recompense to his enemies. And I want you to turn with me now, if you will, over to Revelation, chapter 19, and I want you to notice the parallel between that passage and this one, because that passage is the passage which tells of our Lord’s coming to the earth and you are going to see that John has built his description of the Second Advent of the Lord upon this passage in Isaiah in chapter 59, and especially the one in chapter 63.

But listen, chapter 19 and verse 11 of the Book of Revelation. And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood. Now Isaiah says, and he

put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak. John continues, and his name is called the word of God. And the armies that were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. In other words, he is going to come in judgment and that is what Isaiah is speaking about here. The 18<sup>th</sup> verse says, according to their deeds, accordingly he will repay, fury to his adversaries, so the rebellious among the nation, which are probably included here, are referred to.

Notice also the 19<sup>th</sup> verse of Isaiah 59. So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. In other words, there is going to be general recognition of Jehovah. Now Paul had said in Romans, there is no fear of God before their eyes. That is the essence of sin because that is the product of unbelief, but at the Second Advent; as a result of that, so shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west and his glory from the rising of the sun. One last thing in verse 19, before we move on to finish up, see that last sentence in verse 19; I am sorry that I have to do this, but that text has often been used in a false way. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him. And it has often been used in order to suggest to us that when the enemies of the Lord begin to overtake man and seem to overwhelm man in wickedness that we can expect the Lord to intervene.

Now that well may be a biblical principle and of course I think in the sense that just as it seems as if the whole of the human race is to go under unto the judgment and apostasy of the last days, our Lord comes a second time from the earth and secureth his ultimate victory. That of course is true, but this text does not really quite mean exactly that. It really should be rendered for. So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and his glory from the rising of the Sun; for he will come as a rushing stream, which the breath of Jehovah driveth. And so you get the picture of a rushing stream in the midst

of a storm that is blown by the wind, which causes it to come with tremendous force, and so the statement is really that Jesus Christ, the Lord, when he comes at his Second Advent, is going to come with terrific force in judgment. That is the meaning of the text. For he will come as a rushing stream, which the breath of Jehovah driveth, his inexorable bursting rath will be like a mountain stream in the midst of a storm that overthrows that which is before and overwhelms it. So shall Jesus Christ be at his second coming.

Now then in the last two verses, he writes of his covenant. And the Redeemer shall come to Zion. If judgment leads to universal fear, it also brings about personal salvation for the nation. And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord. The Redeemer, he comes in judgment and he comes in salvation. Here is the climax of Israel’s sad history. Max I. Dimont has written a book called, *God, Israel and History*. I have that book. It is an interesting book. It is called the Jews, God, and History. It is an interesting book. It is a Jewish philosophy of history, and of course it is quite different from the philosophy of history that we read in the Bible. In the Bible, the philosophy of history has its central point, the Cross. It has its ultimate culmination, the coming of our Lord to the earth the second time in the institution of his kingdom, which ultimately of course leads on into the eternal state. That is the divine philosophy of history.

Max I. Dimont was speaking a year ago and in the course of his talk that he was giving, he said that Jewish history can be viewed as a three-act drama, each having a span of 2000 years. The first act began with Abraham and goes to Jesus of Nazareth. Isn’t it interesting that a Jewish man who is not a believer should say that Jewish history may be divided into three dramas of 2000 years each. It begins with Abraham and it goes to Jesus. Then the second stage is from Jesus to the Jewish restoration or to David Ben-Gurion. So from Abraham to Jesus, from Jesus to Ben-Gurion, and the last stage of Jewish history begins with Ben-Gurion and of course leads on to the climax. But Dimont has said that the last stage will be 2000 years too. We do not know what the future holds of



course. It is possible that our Lord shall come to the church tonight and that the great tribulation shall have its beginning in the near future and that actually our Lord’s Second Advent to the earth is not far away.

But I think all of us would agree as we study the Bible and the progress of history, and as we study human experience in the light of the Scriptures that we could hardly believe that we were 2000 years from the folding up of God’s great drama. The chances are, it is not in that distant future. Well here is the last and climactic step of it. And we read of the covenant here. And as for me, this is my covenant with them. And the language that he uses is language that is drawn from the description of the Abrahamic covenant in Genesis, chapter 17. Israel finally becomes the true servant of Jehovah through the ideal servant, Jesus. And so he says, as for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the lord, my spirit that is upon Thee, and my words which I have put in Thy mouth, shall not depart out of Thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of Thy seed, nor out of the mouth of Thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever.

In other words, Israel your hope is in the coming of the Lord, your hope is in the coming of Jehovah, who shall judge your enemies, and who shall forgive your sins, and who shall establish you in the possession of the promises that were made to Abraham hundreds of years ago. In other words, Isaiah desires to comfort the remnant in Babylon with the great prophecies of the future.

Now you we stand in a similar situation today. We are Christians. We have put our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. We are in the midst of things that not very pleasant often, but the thing that is to really sustain us, in 1969 and 1970, is the hope of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The hope that we shall be caught up into his presence, and the hope of God’s great golden age, which he is to bring upon the earth, and in which we have such a real and important part; a that includes the ages of eternity. But Israel’s hope is the hope of his Second Advent and his kingdom.

Now you would think, would you not that after describing this future that Israel has of the Second Advent of Jehovah and the kingdom that he might describe the place where that kingdom shall have its capital, and that is precisely what he does. The 60th chapter of the Book of Isaiah is a chapter about the City of God, the New Jerusalem. He states in the 14th verse, the sons also of them that afflicted Thee shall come bending unto Thee; and all they that despised Thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of Thy feet; and they shall call Thee; the City of the Lord, the Zion of the holy one of Israel. I think that one thing that came home to me as I studied this chapter again was the fact that, you know our hope is the coming of the Lord and in the midst of all of our problems, it is something that should be a vital hope for every Christian. Perhaps tonight is the night that the Lord shall come again; and that hope, if it really burned brightly, would not it make us a different kind of Christian?

Let us close in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for this great chapter, which so wonderfully expresses the fact that sin separates us from Thee, but also closes on the glorious note of the Second Advent of the Messiah of Israel and our Lord, and may O God, these great truths strengthen us and comfort us, and also inspire us to live in fellowship with Thee and to share our faith with others about us.

This we ask for Jesus’ sake. Amen.