



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Life of David: Sermon #22

Isaiah 11:11-12

“The Davidic Covenant and Old Testament Prophecy” TRANSCRIPT

We are in the midst of a series of studies on the life of David and we, last week, came to the Davidic Covenant, in 2 Samuel chapter 7. And in the light of the importance of the Davidic Covenant for understanding the Bible, not only the Old Testament but also the New Testament, I want to add two further messages that don't relate directly to the life of David, or as directly to the life of David, by treating today The Davidic Covenant in Old Testament Prophecy, and then, next week – the Lord willing – The Davidic Covenant in the New Testament.

So, we are diverging a little bit from our series but, nevertheless, something that is very much related to it and very important for the Bible as a whole. So, for Scripture reading today, I'm going to turn to Isaiah chapter 11 and read verses 1 through 12 of this very important Messianic chapter.

And, incidentally, in the message itself, which I have hesitated to give, because we are looking at so many passages of Scripture – seven of them to be exact – but this is one that we'll read now and will not read later on. But, beginning with verse 1, in chapter 10, the prophet has just spoken in very vivid way of the destruction of the power of Assyria. And that, incidentally, in his thought, anticipates ultimately the power of the kingdom of

Satan in the last days, and he concludes verse 34 by saying: “He will cut down the thickets of the forest with iron, and Lebanon will fall by the Mighty One.” And the Mighty One is the Lord God.

So, now, in contrast to what happens to earthly power, we read in verse 1 of chapter 11:

1 There shall come forth a Rod [This word, *choter*, is a word that means a rod in the sense of a shoot, a shoot.] from the stem of Jesse, [Or the “trunk” of Jesse.]

And a Branch [or a sprout.] shall grow out of his roots. [So, you have the picture, then, of a tree that has been cut down, apparently dead, but nevertheless, life comes in a surprising way from it. It’s a figurative way of referring to the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the stem of Jesse, David’s father. So, we continue in verse 2:] 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 the fear of the LORD. His delight *is* in the fear of the LORD, And He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, Nor decide by the hearing of His ears; But with righteousness He shall judge the poor, And decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked. [Possibly, “the wicked one” that is, the final anti-Christ.] Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, And faithfulness the belt of His waist. [So you can see, what he is described as the appearance of the root of Jesse, the spout from the stem, and then we have had described the anointing of the Spirit of the Lord upon him. And we have had described his ruling over the earth. And now, some of the conditions of the future rule of our Lord are set forth in verse 6 and following.]

“The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, The leopard shall lie down with the young goat, The calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young ones shall lie down together; And the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play by the cobra’s hole,

And the weaned child shall put his hand in 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. [So, a worldwide kingdom of peace and righteousness is described. And then, in verse 10:]

“And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, [Again, a reference to our Lord who is the greater son of David.] Who shall stand as a banner to the people; For the Gentiles shall seek Him, And His resting place shall be glorious.” 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 are left, [In other words, there has been one exodus in the past of the children of Israel out of Egypt, but now there is a second one, in the future, that is to take place. And it is described as being:] From Assyria and Egypt, From Pathros and Cush, From Elam and Shinar, From Hamath and the islands of the sea. He will set up a banner for the nations, And will assemble the outcasts of Israel, And gather together the dispersed of Judah From the four corners of the earth. [So, we have described then, a kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, anointed by the Holy Spirit, who judges in righteousness in a kingdom of peace; and, also, an exodus of peoples over the face of the earth, back into the Promised Land, a magnificent picture of the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

May the Lord bless this reading of his word and let's bow together in a moment of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for the promises of the word of God. We thank Thee for the way in which the prophets have so beautifully described the things that are to transpire in the future. We remember that someone has said of them that “they dipped their pens in a rainbow, in order to describe the great events of the future.” And, we are thankful for the promises that flow out of the covenantal promises that Thou hast given to Abraham and to the fathers and then to David, concerning the kingdom of God.

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We ask, Lord, Thy blessing upon the ministry of the word of God today, wherever it goes forth and the church of Jesus Christ. We pray for our nation, for our President, for those who are associated with him in government and, particularly at these critical times for men such as the Secretary of Defense, and for the coalition of armies from various nations, and especially for those who are from the United States of America. And we pray for the men in the armed forces, for all of them, we ask that Thou wilt protect and keep them, in accordance with Thy will and that Thou may make it possible for many in our services, who do know Thee, to be an instrumentality in the personal salvation of others who face the possibility of serious injury and death. We commit them to Thee, we pray, O God, that Thou wilt bless and, that if it please Thee, that Thou wilt give them a soon victory.

We commit this particular assembly to Thee. We pray Thy blessing upon Believers' Chapel, upon our elders and upon our deacons, and upon the members and friends and the visitors who are here with us today, Lord, we ask that Thy perfect will may be accomplished in our lives and turn our thoughts to the things that really matter, the things that concern our eternal destiny; our relationship to Thee, our service of Thee, while we are here upon this earth.

O God, by Thy grace, let us not waste our time while we are here in frivolous things, but help us to keep our minds and hearts upon the things that are truly significant.

We pray for the sick; we remember each one of them. For those who have had the physical disappointments of life, that so many of us have had, we commit them to Thee and we pray for each one of them. We ask for those who are bereaving, especially give them comfort and consolation. And for others who have other problems and trials, we bring them to Thee, especially those who have asked us to pray for them. We do pray for them, we ask Lord that Thou wilt minister to them and give them answers to their petitions.

We pray Thy blessing upon us now, as we sing and as we reflect upon the words that Thou hast given to us, through the prophets, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] Every time that we sing that hymn, we come to that fourth stanza, and some of us, such as Howard Pryor and I, reflect back upon the past when we have had individuals point out to us that it's more in harmony with the sentiments of the word of God to sing with a bit more assurance than “O may I then in Him be found,” if we are believers. And so, we were told many years ago in theological seminary, to modify the last stanza to: “O then I shall in Him be found.” And so, occasionally, I sing that. But, it throws off everybody around me – [Laughter] – and so, now, I say the other words but I'm thinking, “O then I shall in Him be found.” So, in case you see my lips going [More laughter] you understand, “I shall” is what I'm really thinking, while we are singing that great hymn.

The subject for today is “The Davidic Covenant in Old Testament Prophecy.” We have been trying to say and trying to say it because I believe that it's true, the keystone of the plan of salvation, both the historical plan of salvation and the things that happened at the first coming of our Lord, and then the prophetic side of his ministry, the things that have to do with his second coming, lies in the divine covenants. The divine promises are promises that lie in the covenant and the prophecies that are derived from the covenants that God has given.

One of the well-known Dutch theologians, Van Oosterzee, has said: “We have learned to recognize the covenant of God with Abraham as the foundation of the entire revelation of salvation.”

And, in fact, one individual who wrote a book on The Destiny of the British Empire, said, “The Abrahamic Covenant is the foundation of all the dispensations of heaven, both to the Jews and to the Gentiles.”

The promises of the Davidic Covenant, which we looked at last week, are promises that testify to a coming theocratic king. We laid stress upon the three-fold occurrence of the adverb “forever” and pointed out that the theocratic king, who is to come from the line of David, to be David’s descendant, David’s seed, is to rule over a restored theocratic kingdom. And we tried to point out that the express, “The seed of David,” in the context of 2 Samuel 7, refers to David’s posterity. And, in saying that there is to be a seed from David that is to come and rule forever, we are trying to say that his posterity will last forever, because it will finally run out in a person who lives forever. That is, it will culminate in the Messiah, who lives forever, and, of whose kingdom there is no end, as Scripture says.

And since our Lord did not have any seed, the seed of David culminates there, in the eternal Son of God, the Messiah of Israel. So, the term seed is a generic term that covers a series of individual descendants of David, but ultimately culminates in the Lord Jesus Christ, as I say, who has no seed, but who lives forever.

The question that frequently arises is: “Must the Davidic Covenant be fulfilled in an earthly, theocratic kingdom?” Now, this is not the time to deal with that topic, which really would take us, of course, a number of expositions, but there are some simple reasons to believe that that is true. First of all, David is a prophet, we are told in Scripture. It would be disparaging if David were wrong in his prophecies. And David and Solomon, his son, both took the Davidic Covenant to involve essentially that, an earthly theocratic kingdom. If you read 2 Chronicles chapter 6, and the words from Solomon and how he links himself up with David, and the things that he says there, it’s very plain that David and Solomon believed that the covenant would be fulfilled in an earthly, theocratic kingdom.

The prophets adopt the same language, as we shall see this morning. And, it was the prevailing belief of centuries of both Jews and Gentiles. And, finally, in this just brief reference to the way in which I would go about defending such, the coming of the king,

Jesus Christ, is literally accomplished in his first coming. He came, literally, and as a matter of fact, the New Testament lays great stress upon the fact that he came in body and in flesh.

For example, in Acts chapter 2, in verse 30, in words that Peter uses there, he says, “Therefore, being a prophet and knowing that God,” he’s speaking about David, “And knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, he would raise up Messiah, to sit upon his throne.” And so, our Lord’s first coming is a fulfillment in body and flesh.

The apostle Paul, in Romans chapter 1, makes the same point. He says that the Gospel concerns his Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, “who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh” and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.

So, the fact that that stage is fulfilled, literally, in the body and flesh of the redeemer, is strong evidence that the remainder of the promises of the covenant shall be fulfilled in similar manner.

Now, I must confess that yesterday as I thought about having to do what I am going to do in thirty-five minutes, it was a bit daunting, because I want to seven passages from the Old Testament and just show you how the prophets of the Old Testament, for example, put the Davidic Covenant promises at the center of their hopes and that, itself, under girding the idea that the Davidic Covenant, based and being an expansion of the Abrahamic Covenant, together with the Abrahamic Covenant, lets us know how important the covenantal program of God is.

Now, the first passage that I want to turn to is in Isaiah, and it’s chapter 7. And I won’t bother to read a lengthy section from it, but to save time, I want to read verse 14 of chapter 7 in which we read these words: “Therefore, the Lord himself will give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”

Now, remember the historical situation, the seed of David is on the throne of Judah, in the person of Ahaz, king of Judah. The Syro-Ephraimic wars were taking place. Ahaz is an apostate king. He has departed from the truth of the Lord God; and looking not above but looking out, is in process of appealing for -- to Assyria -- for help in the war against the northern kingdom and against Syria. So, when the news comes to Ahaz that trouble lies ahead, we read his heart, in verse 2 of chapter 7: “His heart and the heart of his people, were moved as the trees of the woods are moved with the wind.”

It’s very obvious that this son of David did not have the kind of faith that his father had, his father David. And I’m using that in the biblical sense, that he’s a descendant of David. David said, in similar distress, “In my distress I called upon the Lord and cried out to my God. He heard my voice from his temple and my cry came before him, even to his ears.”

But, Ahaz is an individual who does not look up; he looks out. God has called upon him to ask of him a sign, so that he may show that what he says is going to come to pass. And Ahaz has refused to ask for the sign; and he does it in a religious way. Ahaz is a beautiful illustration of an individual who uses religion for diplomatic purposes. And so, he says, when God asks him to ask a sign, he says, “I will not ask, nor will I test the Lord.”

Imagine it! The prophet said, “Ask a sign,” and this little king upon the earth has said, “Well, I don’t want to test the Lord, and so I will not ask a sign.” And so, the prophet giving the words of God to him says, “Hear now, O house of David; Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will you weary my God also?” And then God gives him his own sign, which is the sign of the virgin birth.

The word that I particularly like is the expression in verse 9: “The head of Ephraim is Samaria, the head of Samaria is Remaliah’s son. If you will not believe, surely you shall not be established.” That’s a remarkable statement; and the word “believe” and the word “establish” are forms of the same Hebrew verb, to believe. And, if you’ll listen

as I say the words, you will see that there is a play on these words, which is difficult to produce in English: *am la thaminu, ki la thayamnu* [phonetic]. So, the two verbs are *thaminu and thayamnu*. And, to put it in words that might approach it but not do as well as the original text, “Surely, if you will not believe, neither blessing shall ye receive.” Or, “If in God you do not confide, surely in power you shall not abide.”

Someone has put it, using an old English word, “If you have not faith, then you shall not have *staithe*.” But most of us don’t know what *staithe* means now so there is no need for you to go around repeating that to someone else. [Laughter]

You see, the problem with Ahaz is the problem that you and I have. The problem with Ahaz is, deep down within, when he uses these religious expressions, “I will not ask nor will I test the Lord,” that Ahaz has a secret deep down within his heart that is the fundamental moving fact in his life. And that secret down in his heart is, he trusts in Assyria. He trusts in Assyria. He’d rather put his trust in Assyria in fighting Syria and the Northern kingdom, than put his trust in the Lord God.

It’s no matter that the Lord God is disturbed, because he’s always disturbed if we trust something here instead of trusting him. So, trust in Assur is his fundamental belief. But it comes out in religious words – as so often it does with you and me.

It has been said, by one of the great students of the prophecy of Isaiah, that “The higher a man looks, the farther he sees.” To us, that’s the practical lesson of these first nine verses of the 7th chapter. The very gesture of faith, bestows upon the mind, a breadth of view. The man who lifts his face to God in heaven is he whose eyes sweep, simultaneously, the farthest prospect of earth and bring him a sense of the proportion of things.

So, Ahaz, as he looks out, cannot see over the heads of the people in front of him. And, because he cannot see over the heads of the people in front of him and does not look up, he’s a weak and failing and an apostate king.

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So, God gives the great promise of the child that is to be born of the virgin. Now, the child is called Immanuel, that is, God is with us. But this, for a particular prophecy, and this great promise, is given to the house of David.

Do you notice the statement in verse 13: “Hear now, O house of David!” And then, verse 2: “It was told to the house of David,” for Ahaz represents the house of David and the promise is that the woman shall conceive and bear a son, and he it shall be called Immanuel.

Now, we’re in, of course, a rush to look at all of these passages so I’m not going to stop and try to argue all of these points. In our tape ministry, there is more than one exposition of this particular point. I just want to say this: that it’s impossible in reading the Old Testament to dissociate the announcement to the house of David of the one to be born of the virgin, to dissociate that from the hoped for prince of David’s seed that is to come.

I do not think that it is impossible to read this particular passage, in the light of the whole word of God, without seeing in it ultimately our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Now, secondly, I want you to turn over to chapter 9, where we have another of the great prophecies of this section of the Book of Isaiah. This section of the Book of Isaiah, beginning with chapter 7 and concluding with chapter 12, has been called The Book of Immanuel; that is, it has primary reference to God’s promise of this one who is to come, born of a virgin, who will ascend the Davidic throne and, ultimately, rule over the earth. This is the second of the prophecies. And we read, in verse 6 and 7 of this child: “For unto us a Child is born,” This is Isaiah 9:6, “Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end.” You see, an eternal kingdom – a forever kingdom of the house and throne of David.

We go on to read, “To order it,” or rather, “Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and to establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.”

This sweep of chapter 7 through chapter 12, flows from the child born to the son given to the king reigning.

It’s often been noticed that the prophet says in verse 6: “Unto us a Child is born,” suggesting the human nature of our Lord, but: “Unto us a Son is given” suggesting the eternal Son of God, who as the eternal Son, possess divine nature; so that we have one person who possesses two natures, human and divine. That’s not spelled out here, of course. One sees this only implicitly in the words: “Unto us a Child is born,” “Unto us a Son is given,” and it’s very interesting that our Lord never refers to himself as being “born.” The only time he comes close to it is when he is talking to Pilot, and he does because he’s talking to Pilot and Pilot is a representative of the unbelieving world.

Now, the name that is given is a remarkably complex name. Think of it. But think also of the fact that we have a child and a son given, and he’s going to be governor, sitting upon the throne of David, and over his kingdom. A child is to be a governor. Now, that’s a rather unusual thing. As a matter of fact, when you think of a child governing, you think of a nation that is in difficulty. And, in fact, back in chapter 3 in verse 4, in a context that plainly indicates that that is Isaiah’s thought, we read in verse 4 as one of God’s judgments to the people for disobedience, “I will give children to be their princes and babes shall rule over them.” But that, of course, is looking at things naturally. But here, is God’s child, and God’s babe, born of a virgin; and for him, the government of David is set upon his shoulder and he will order and establish it with judgment and justice, from that time forward, even forever.

So, here is a individual who is able to assume the burdens of government. We have, often, people saying things like this: “The presidency is the loneliest office in the world” -- The presidency of the United States.

Some years ago, I was reading in the paper that “royalty’s burdens” had come to Charles, Prince Charles – this was 23 years ago – and he’s still living and surviving under the burdens. But, in the course of the description of it, his name was given. And I don’t know whether you have ever heard Charles’ name or not, but he has a more distinguished name than I have. I’m very proud of mine: Samuel Louis Johnson, Jr. Doesn’t that sound marvelous and wonderful? Well, that sounds pretty good to me.

But, this is Prince Charles’ title: His Royal Highness, Prince Charles Philip Arthur George, Prince of Wales, Earl of Chester, Duke of Cornwall, Duke of Rothesay, Earl of Carrick, and Baron of Renfrew, Lord of the Isles, and the Great Steward of Scotland.

Well, that’s a great name, but I want to tell you this, that the name given to our Lord Jesus Christ, is far greater, the difference between eternity and human pretention, and upon this individual, the burdens of life shall ultimately rest upon the throne of David. And, notice the guarantee of it, incidentally. “The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this,” as if, someone were to say when Isaiah gave the prophecy, “But, that’s going to be difficult to do!” So, he adds, “The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.”

There is a sense, when we are talking about aloneness, that the Lord Jesus is a person, who of all people, is alone. His whole manner betrays that his moral experience and that of other men are not parallel. He searchingly told others of the evil within our hearts, but never once made any confession of evil on his part. In fact, he said, challenging them, “Which of you convicts me of sin?”

Not only that but there is, in this strange moral aloneness of Jesus Christ, something not negative but positive, as Carnegie Simpson once said. “Others are lost sheep; he is not only not lost but is the shepherd. Others are sick; he is not only in health but is the physician. Others lives are forfeit; his is not only his own but is the ransom. Others all others are sinners; he is not only not a sinner, but he is the Savior.”

So, he’s the Son, the Prince of Peace, and the throne of David and his kingdom shall be given to him and there is no end to that throne. You can see how the prophets reveled in the Davidic promises that were given to them.

Now, of course, I understand the Spirit has given them – to these prophets – but they have acquiesced beautifully in what those prophecies really meant.

Now, thirdly, I’d like for you to notice chapter 11, the one that we read in our Scripture reading. In verses 1 and 2, I’ll just deal with verse 1, really, “There shall come forth a Rod.” Now, the word, *choter*, as I mentioned, means a shoot, a shot from the stem of Jesse, David’s father, and a branch, a *netser* – there’s another term we’ll look at later on, *tsemach*, which is used in Jeremiah. But this is a term that means something like a sprout; and a sprout shall grow out of his roots. The picture that Isaiah gives by the Holy Spirit, is the picture of a tree that is cut down in judgment and, apparently, done away with. But there’s sprigs from it, something that indicates that there will be a restoration of the Davidic dynasty, that’s the point, restoration of the Davidic dynasty.

And so, here we have the twig, the fruitful shoot. A great picture of Assyria’s overthrow is finished at the end of chapter 10 by the Mighty One, the Lord God. The forest has crashed with a deafening roar; judgment upon the enemies of the Lord. But now the twig, the house of Judah, reduced to a twig, because of disobedience and apostasy.

But then, the picture is of the sprout being anointed and, ultimately, ruling over the whole of the earth. And, not only ruling over the whole of the earth, but of a great return into the land by people from the four corners of the earth.

We may be seeing some of this in Israel today when the Russians are pouring down into Israel; literally hundreds of thousands each year now – evidently, a pouring into Israel. I saw just the heading of one article that said, “The troubles in Israel are not keeping them from coming. They are coming; and they are coming from the north.”

But, at any rate, there is justification for saying that the trends that are set forth in the word of God are in our midst today.

The Rod, the root of Jesse, suggesting that the great prayer that we were told is a part of our Lord’s modeled prayer, “Thy kingdom come,” will ultimately be answered in the kingdom of David, that is forever.

Now, will you turn with me to Amos. Now, Amos, it’s in the Old Testament, Amos chapter 9 and the last little section of Amos. Here we have the prophecy of the ruined house rebuilt. And I want to read verse 11 and, perhaps, allude to other verses as well. I’ll read verse 11 and verse 15: “On that day,” Amos 9, verse 11, “I will raise up the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down, and repair its damages; I will raise up its ruins, and rebuild it as in the days of old.”

And then, in verse 15, the concluding verse: “I will plant them in their land, and no longer shall they be pulled up from the land that I have given them,” says the Lord your God.”

Someone has said about Amos that its prophecy is “molten metal heated in the furnace of pity,” because it’s almost entirely a prophecy of judgment until this last little section.

In fact, someone else has commented on this closing oracle that, “It’s a pleasant piece of music, as if the birds had come out after the thunder storm and the wet hills were glistening in the sun.”

So, what it states, specifically, is that after the unmitigated doom that seems to be pronounced by the Lord God on Israel, there is a bright future for the nation. This chapter describes judgment upon the nation, dispersion to the four corners of the earth, it describes their preservation in the four corners of the earth.

And, isn’t it interesting today, that no matter where you go, you can find Jews? That’s very interesting. I think it’s rather one of those confirmations of the prophecies of the word of God that we need to pay careful attention to.

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He describes the discipline and then he describes the restoration of the monarchy in “I will raise up the tabernacle of David,” and, “There will be life and liberty and prosperity,” and notice, it’s in the land. As he says, “I will plant them in their land, and no longer shall they be pulled up from the land I have given them, says the Lord your God.”

And, again, it’s the tabernacle of David – the Davidic promises are in view.

Turn back to Hosea, a few pages and chapter 3. This magnificent prophecy of Hosea is a prophecy of love, unrequited, and then requited. Often expositors of Hosea 3, because of the shortness of the chapter, have made the comment that, “This little 5 verse prophecy contains in the Hebrew text, eighty-one words.” Eighty-one words: *A ultum in parum*, a much in little. And, it surely is that. What we have is prophetic pedagogy. He describes a marriage, he describes a separation and then he describes a partial reconciliation, in spite of adultery. God determining, by this illustration, to show unconditional love – how important that is – unconditional love.

In other words, no matter what has happened to Israel, the northern and southern kingdoms, the nation as a whole today, the promises still hold; the covenants still hold. Discipline is in full harmony with unconditional promises; they are under discipline, but the covenants still hold good.

Now, you know how I love the funny pages, and I was reading this past week, I can’t say it’s one of my favorite ones, but it’s one I don’t miss: Marvin. Everybody who has a little infant smiles when he reads Marvin. Marvin, as you know, is a little infant, but he has the mind of an adult. And his mother is saying to him, angrily, “I love you, Marvin, but sometimes...” And then we get a picture of Marvin, he’s over on the floor, he has the vacuum cleaner, he’s pulled out the inside of the vacuum cleaner and the dust and the dirt was all over him and all over everything else, and smoke of the dust is going up all around him. And the final picture of Marvin is, he’s over in his corner, like that,

facing the wall, in judgment and discipline. And he says, “I always thought a mother’s love was supposed to be unconditional.” [Laughter]

Well, that’s God’s love for Israel. It’s unconditional; but discipline is in thorough harmony with it. And Israel is experiencing the discipline. And Hosea describes the discipline. We don’t have time to read through the chapter. I want you to notice verse 5. We’ll read verse 4, he says: “For the children of Israel shall abide many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred pillar, without ephod or teraphim.” That is one of the most marvelous prophecies in the word of God because Israel, today, has no civil polity, as a whole, they have no worship as a whole, no true religious worship. But, at the same time, as the prophecy says, they are not going to have ephod or teraphim, marking idolatry as characteristic of them. Idolatry has been their great sin; and they’ve been sent to the four corners of the world because of idolatry. But there’s one thing you will not find in Israel – idolatry – in the sense in which they have practiced idolatry in the past.

So, the prophecy now, over these many days time, is a prophecy remarkably fulfilled. But then, the prophet says, afterward shall the children of Israel return and “Seek the Lord their God and David their king.”

David becomes a term in the Old Testament, like Caesar. Caesar is a term applied to a string of deities, a string of rulers, just like tsar in Russia. It’s a term that is generic of rulers. And so, David their king in the future is the Lord Jesus Christ. He’s not a resurrected David of the Old Testament; but he’s David’s seed – great seed and lord – the Lord Jesus Christ.

So, they shall come to David their king. They shall return. They will seek him. They will come tremblingly, is the meaning of the Hebrew expression, “Fear the Lord.” *pachad*, has that sense of the fear as the sense of to come tremblingly. They will come tremblingly because they think of their past sins and how they have turned from the Lord and apostatized from him, and they wonder if they are going to have a reception. But, at

the same time, they tremble because they don't want to fail to come to him. And so, they come tremblingly to the Lord and his goodness in the later days.

The Talmud's lay stress upon the fact that David, their king, is king-messiah. And so, they agree. They just disagree on Jesus of Nazareth being the Messiah. But this David, who is described here as David their king, they know from interpreting the word of God is king-messiah.

Now, turn over a few pages to Micah and to a passage that is very familiar to all of you because it's cited often around Christmas time: Micah chapter 5 in verse 2. There, the prophet Micah writes: “But thou, Bethlehem, Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from old, From everlasting.”

Bethlehem means “house of bread” as you well know. But Bethlehem was never truly, “House of bread” in the fullest sense, until the Lord Jesus Christ was born there.

Now, this prophecy narrows things down concerning the redeemer, still further. He's not only of the seed of Abraham, he's not only of the tribe of Judah, he's not only of the family of David, he's not only seed of David, but he's going to be born in Bethlehem, David's city.

Sennacherib of Assyria, is the time, and Hezekiah, David's seed, is shut up like a bird in a cage, and oh, the humiliation of it, but the great prophecy is “Thou Bethlehem Ephrathah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall he come forth to Me,” who's to be the ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from old, from everlasting.

In other words, Yahweh has not cast aside his people like oakens make – that's a new word, oakens, I know you wouldn't understand that prophetic terminology, so I'll put it in your language - acorns become oaks, like acorns make oaks, so little Bethlehem will bring forth a great one.

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And we read in verse 4, in the later part of the verse, “And they shall abide, for now He shall be great to the ends of the earth; And this One shall be peace.”

So, the ruler is to come from Bethlehem.

And, finally, the last passage we are looking at is in the Book of Jeremiah. All of those prophecies were made prophecies made in the 8th Century, B.C. But now we have one, a little later, Jeremiah chapter 23, a 7th Century prophecy by the prophet Jeremiah in the time of Zedekiah. Zedekiah, a weak, vacillating and wicked king, the last king, incidentally, of Judah, and a king whose name means something like, Yah is my righteousness. Isn't that striking? Yah is my righteousness. Zed-i-kee-yah. Yahweh is my righteousness, or my righteousness is Yah. My righteousness is God, or simply, righteousness is God.

So, Jeremiah says in verse 5: “Behold, *the* days are coming,” says the LORD, “That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness.”

Tsemach – this word means a shoot, also, not *netser*, not *choter*, but *Tsemah*, a very familiar one in the Old Testament and used in messianic passages – a shoot of new growth from a dying dynasty. You see, God tries to comfort Israel constantly, though conditions are as bad as they are, and it appears that the prophecies concerning the dynasty that is to come, the Davidic dynasty that will be ruled and reign forever upon the earth, those prophecies still prevail. The dynasty may look to be dying, but it's not dead.

“I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness, A King shall reign and prosper, And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. **6** In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell safely; now this *is* His name by which He will be called: *Yahwah tsidqenuw* -- THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.”

I like the expression in verse 5, “A king shall reign and prosper.” Now, that Hebrew word, *sakal*, is a word that means often, “to deal wisely” and, in fact, some versions, it's rendered that way here – and I think correctly – wisely or to deal wisely. It occurs in Isaiah 52:13 in the context of the atoning work of the servant of the Lord, or the

Messiah. So, when he acts wisely, when he acts most wisely, is when he carries out his atoning work. And here, when we read, “A king shall reign and act wisely,” he reigns and by virtue of the atoning work that he has accomplished, he has resurrected the dynasty and brought about the atonement of those who are the people of God. And we’re not surprised that verse 6 states: “In his days Judah will be saved and Israel shall dwell safely.”

But his name is called, The Lord Our Righteousness. It’s a play on Zedekiah’s name, because Zedekiah means essentially that, Righteousness, or Yah is Righteousness, or My Righteousness is Yah. But here is a person who is a true – I hate to even use the term a true Zedekiah, because he was a weak, vacillating apostate individual – but here is a person who truly wears the name, The Lord Our Righteousness.

And he wears that name because he conveys that righteousness to those who believe in him. In other words, he is The Lord Our Righteousness because by virtue of the Cross that he died upon, on Calvary’s Cross, the blood that was shed, the atonement that is accomplished, those who believe in him have as a gift from God, when they come to him acknowledging their sin and need, the righteousness that satisfies God.

Halleluiah! What a marvelous thing it is to know that I have a righteousness -- unworthy as I am – that satisfies a Holy God.

His name is The Lord Our Righteousness. And then, of course, in the context of Jeremiah, he adds words that mean something special to any Jewish individual and they mean something special to me too, because Scripture says, We’re going to rule and reign with him upon the earth. Upon the earth! Verse 7 and verse 8: “Therefore, behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord, “that they shall no longer say, ‘As the Lord lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt,’” That’s what they said for centuries. “Our God is the god who brought out of Egypt, through the Red Sea, and by miraculous acts in our behalf, brought us into the land.” They’ll no longer say that. But, they’re going to say, “The Lord lives who brought up and lead the descendants of the

house of Israel from the north country and from all the countries where I had driven them.’ And they shall dwell in their own land.”

What a magnificent future we find before us!

There is a man, of course, who’s seeking to prevent that. In one sense, he’s a kind of descendant of the men of the Old Testament -- the Babylonians and the Assyrians -- Saddam Hussein. And, there was a kind of Oriental savagery about the kings of Assyrian and Babylon. Rome was, generally, free of that. For example, their gods were in the shape of bulls and had wings, like a tempest. The annals of these kings in which they describe their campaigns are full of talk about trampling down their enemies, showering tempests of clubs upon them, raining a deluge of arrows upon them, overwhelming them and sweeping them off the face of the land, and strewing them like chaff on the sea, about chariots with scythes and wheels clogged with blood -- the blood of their enemies -- about great baskets stuffed with the salted heads of their foes, reminding me of Saddam’s threat to send back thousands of Americans in body bags. It’s the same kind of spirit! And you don’t think that that’s altogether with Iraq, do you?

Listen to what an Israeli said this past week, according to the paper, talking about the things that are happening over there. He’s a military official, and he said that Israel wouldn’t be squeamish about striking targets near where civilians live, and then he was quoted as saying, “We could make it so that the Iraqi’s are using gas lamps for the next one hundred years.”

So, we’re dealing with individuals who make outlandish claims but it’s characteristic of human nature, because human beings are sinners. Oh, how sinful we are. I’m so thankful for the Davidic promises and all that is meant in them. What magnificent depth and blessing in the unconditional promises given to David, expanded in the New Covenant and in the New Testament, to be consummated in an exodus out of the four corners of the earth, and an eternal kingdom upon the earth.

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It's no wonder that the prophets of the Old Testament prized the covenantal promises and spoke about them so much. May God help us – for this was, after all, the Bible of the apostles – May God help us to prize them also, as well.

If you are here today and you have never believed in our Lord, we point you to him and urge you to turn to him for the forgiveness of your sins and deliverance from eternal judgment.

Let's stand for the Benediction.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for these magnificent promises. We thank Thee for the encouragement that we have from them. Enable us, Lord, by Thy grace, to understand them and to, as the prophets, rejoice in them, and give Thee thanks and praise as we see the sure hand of our gracious, righteous and eternal Triune God working to bring to pass a great purpose, the purpose of God. If there should be, Lord, someone in this auditorium who has not yet believed at this very moment, may in their heart they turn to Thee and give thanks to Christ and receive freely from Thee the righteousness that he has won that pleases Thee.

For Jesus' sake. Amen.