



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Zechariah 5:1-4

“The Flying Scroll”

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] And for this morning, the Scripture reading is found in the fifth chapter of this book. And we're going to read the first four verses of Zechariah Chapter 5, and then three verses from Galatians chapter 3. So will you turn now to Zechariah Chapter 5, as we begin with the 1st verse? For those of you who are here for the first time this morning, we are considering the general theme “Zechariah in the light of current events” and we have been looking at the various visions which the prophet was given, primarily of a prophetic nature and we have reached now, the sixth vision, the flying scroll,

“Then I turned, and lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a flying roll. And he said unto me, what seest thou? And I answered, I see a flying roll; its length is twenty cubits, and its breadth ten cubits. Then said he unto me, This is the curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole earth: for every one that stealeth shall be cut off as on this side according to it; and every one that sweareth shall be cut off as on that side according to it. (As you can see, Zechariah sees both sides of this flying roll and he sees these words written on both sides of it.) I will bring it forth, (That is the curse) saith the LORD of hosts, and it shall enter into the house of the thief, and into the house of him that

swaereth falsely by my name: and it shall remain in the midst of his house, and shall consume it with its timber and its stones.”

Now will you turn to the 3rd chapter of Paul’s letter to the Galatians, and we begin reading at the 10th verse, and read through the 12th verse. As you can tell from the vision in Zechariah chapter 5, we have to do with the activity of the law of God in Israel. Now the Apostle gives us a few words of a doctrinal character regarding that Law of Moses, Galatians 3 and verse 10,

“For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, the just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, the man that doeth them shall live in them.”

In other words, the Apostle Paul’s point is, a man is not justified by the works of the law. He is justified by faith. Those who would be justified by the works of the law must continually, everlastingly, constantly, forever be doing the law, and do it perfectly. If they do not do it perfectly, the law condemns them and thus they can not be justified. There are only two ways of salvation. One, that of works, perfection is demanded. The other, that of trust, in Jesus Christ, who has saved, who has accomplished that saving work by his work at Calvary’s cross. It is one or the other, the apostle says. I think it is evident, that no man could possibly, by the works of the law, gain salvation except our Lord Jesus Christ, the only perfect man. May God bless this reading of his word. Let’s bow together in prayer.

[Prayer] Our Heavenly Father, we thank Thee for the privilege of meeting in Jesus Christ’s name, and listening to Thy word. We thank Thee for the wonderful truth of it. We thank Thee for the way in which it speaks to us, the way in which it understands us, the way in which it effectively analyzes man, his needs and also his desires and ambitions.

And we thank Thee too, for the remedy which is the saving work of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. And we thank Thee that his saving work meets exactly the needs that we have as men and women. And we praise Thee for this privilege of proclaiming him and what he has done for us.

And Lord we ask Thy blessing upon this company who are met here today. As we look into the word, in a moment, we pray that our hearts may be opened that we may really desire to know the things of God that the Holy Spirit may teach us and instruct us in divine truth. We also Lord pray for believers who are here with many needs. We pray for those who have physical needs, and ask O God that Thou mayst lay Thy hand upon them and within Thy will restore them to strength and to health. We ask Lord, for those who are here in good health, but at the same time who are troubled and disturbed, because of the fact that the problems of life have become more than they can handle. We pray O God that they may turn to Thee and to Thy Son who is able to untangle all of the tangled strands of life, and cause us to understand ourselves and also understand Thee and that which Thou has before us.

We pray also for this group of Christians, for this church, and we ask O God that Thou wilt guide and direct. We thank Thee for the provision which Thou has made for us. And we look forward, Lord to the future with anticipation in the days that Thou dost give us here upon this earth. We ask O God that Thou mayst lay Thy hand upon us for spiritual good, and that through the preaching of the word, many may come to know Jesus Christ as Savior. And through the teaching of the word may O God, the saints be built up, and instructed in the faith.

We pray that Thou will supply the needs that exist for the building that is to be constructed. And may, O God, as all of the plans mature, and this building becomes a reality, we pray that it may be an instrument in Thy hands, for the glory of Jesus Christ. O Father, we pray that in our lives individually, and together, we may glorify him who

has loved us so much and to whom we owe our life and our breath and everything that we have. May Thy blessing rest upon us now as we sing and as we listen to the word.

For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Song removed from audio]

[Message] Subject for today in our continuation of series, Zechariah in the Light of Current Events is “The Flying Scroll.” Zechariah has been called the prophet of hope, and the first five visions, with their glorious vista of Israel's future spiritual as well as material prosperity certainly justify the accolade, the prophet of hope. But before the golden lampstand of Israel's testimony sheds the light of the knowledge of the name of Jehovah over the whole of the earth, the defiled people and the defiled land must be purged of sin. And that's the force of the two visions which are found in the 5th chapter of the Book of Zechariah.

We have been wonderfully brought along from the beginning of the visions in which the man stood in the midst of the myrtle trees and said in effect, I am with Israel, I intend to fulfill all of the promises to them, intend to see them established as the head of the nations upon the earth. Then the following visions have set forth the blessings that shall pertain to the city of Jerusalem as well as to the nation. And then we moved on in the third chapter to that wonderful vision of Joshua who stood as the representative of the people, and we saw that Joshua stood in filthy garments, but by the grace of God, his garments were changed, and he was given the priestly garments of glory and beauty. This of course, was designed to teach us that the time is coming when, though Israel is vile and filthy, because of their disobedience and sin, nevertheless, they shall not only one day be cleansed, but also one day become the priestly nation, and mediate the knowledge of Jehovah in the earth. And that was followed by the vision in chapter 4 of the golden lamp stand, in which Israel is presented as the light of the world. Now Israel is the light of the world, because they are

the light of the world in Christ. It is because of what he is to them that they become the light of the world. Now as we move to the vision of the flying scroll, we turn to the reverse side of these visions, because the natural question that would come is “Well what is going to happen in connection with Israel’s sin and iniquity?” Suppose they do not respond to the wonderful grace of God? What about their sin and their iniquity? Is it going to be punished? Is Israel’s God a kind of God who does not care for righteousness does not care for justice, but he overlooks that and has determined to bless Israel, and overlooks sin? And so this particular chapter in both of the visions set forth the fact that the defiled people as well as the defiled land must be cleansed before these visions of glory are to transpire upon the earth. It is of course, something that anyone who studies Judaism notices that Judaism does not have a very very strong idea of the biblical doctrine of sin.

For example, one of the things that characterizes rabbinic Judaism is its pride. Pride in the fact that they are the chosen people in spite of their relationship to the word of God, One rabbi, one of their greatest rabbinic authorities, has said, “I have seen the children of the world to come, and they are few, if there are three, I and my son are of their number, if there are two, I and my son are they.” Now it is evident that this boastfulness, this pride, this great pride in Judaism itself and the traditions is something that is thoroughly contrary to the teaching of the word of God. A few weeks back, I read you the statement of one rabbi, one of their chief rabbis, who said, “We require no mediator to save us from the effects of our guilt. Our own sincere repentance suffices to achieve for us divine forgiveness.” In other words, it is not necessary that we have someone die for sins; our forgiveness comes because we sincerely repent, and because we sincerely repent, God must forgive us of our sins. Now that, of course, is contrary to the teaching of the word of God. It may well be true that God’s forgiveness is given to us on the basis of our response in faith and repentance, but the salvation that God accomplishes for us is only purchased at the cost of the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. A

mediator is, not only essential, but absolutely necessary to salvation.

Zechariah does not know anything of that mawkish kind of theology that is so current today. That sentimental kind of “God is love” and that’s all there is to it. For the Bible does say that God is love, there is no question of that, but the Bible also says that God is light, that is that the light of God’s knowledge searches out all of the sin and iniquity of men and exposes it. And when it is exposed, it is subject to judgment. For light is not only that which exposes, but it is that which reveals for judgment. And so God is love, and God is light. And as a matter of fact, he is light before he is love, because God’s holiness is his absolute difference from us, and that is characteristic of him.

Today we are living in the day of apostasy. We are living in the day of apostasy in our philosophical thinking. Man is in revolt against God. I don’t think this has ever been epiphamized more than in two statements made by perhaps two of the greatest thinkers, not that I agree with them, but two of the greatest thinkers of the past century, Marx and Nietzsche. Marx said, “Man can be free only if he owes his life to himself.” That is he is free only if he is his own god. According to Marx, the fall of man is when man recognizes that he is dependent on God, then he falls. And Marx saw correctly, that it is either faith, or freedom, absolute freedom. And for him, he desired absolute freedom and to have absolute freedom, he must be utterly independent of God. Nietzsche, on the other hand, in a statement which I’ve quoted several times to you, and some of you in the old Bible classes will remember it, said, “If there were a gods who can endure not being a god, therefore, there are no gods.” Now these two statements have had tremendous effect on the thinking of men over the past century or so, philosophically. And furthermore, it has become so a part of the thinking of man today, that most of us do not realize that our thought in the twentieth century is largely based on a similar kind of philosophy. As a matter of fact, these statements are 19th and 20th century statements of the earliest statement in the word of God which reflected the apostasy of man, “God is afraid and he doesn’t want you to take of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the

garden, or you shall become as God.”

You see we were created as dependent beings. There is no such thing as absolute human freedom, what you read in the papers day after day of freedom, must always be remembered as a limited freedom. We never have absolute freedom, for we are not God. Now that is the basic character of evil. It is unbelief and rebellion against a God who has created us to be dependent, and if we are not dependent, we are unhappy, and we can never really be happy. This is why so many people in nineteen hundred and sixty-seven are unhappy. They will not recognize the fact that they do not have freedom, that their freedom is a limited freedom within their creation by God. And they belong to him, and if they do not adjust to that, they can not possibly realize the destiny of their lives, even in their daily life. That kind of thinking penetrates into the kitchen and it means that you and your husband can not be happy around the table. If you do not recognize that you are creatures, and you have a limited freedom under a sovereign God. And it is sin to say, “I will be as God.” The basic character is that sense of independence. And that is characteristic of Judaism today, and it is characteristic not only of Judaism, but it is characteristic of Christianity, in much of its manifestations today. It is surly characteristic in the theological thinking of Protestantism today, and it is characteristic in the thinking of much of Roman Catholicism too.

God has two methods of dealing with sin. One, grace, through Jesus Christ, but if we refuse grace, he has another method of dealing with sin, and that is Divine judgment. Now we have seen grace in chapter 3. We are now going to see Divine judgment. We’re going to see that when God gave the law, he did not give the law as simply advice to the children of Israel. He gave this as an expression of his inviolable law. And if we will not respond to grace and be saved by the grace of God from the law of God and its requirements, then we must be subject to the sanctions of the law of God which mean ultimately condemnation, judgment, and spiritual death.

Now the prophet Zechariah is a prophet who sees visions. He dreams dreams, and sees visions. And he says in the 5th chapter that he was called again to look by the interpreting angel, and he did, and behold he saw a flying roll, your text says. I have a friend who says, “Now, this is not breakfast aboard an ocean liner in a storm.” A flying roll, nor is it an argument around the diner table, a flying roll. But as you know, the word roll is a word that really means a scroll. So this is not a flying roll, like a roll we eat, it’s a flying roll of paper like a scroll upon which is writing. And by the way we were talking about an overhead projector, which we hope someday to have, upon which we can draw pictures, now I don’t know exactly how you would picture a flying scroll, even with an overhead projector, it would be wonderful if you could throw a flying scroll up here before us now, and have it fly around a little bit, so you can really see exactly what Zechariah saw. But as a matter of fact, this room is not big enough to contain that which Zechariah saw, as we shall see.

But at any rate, he says that he saw a flying scroll, and furthermore, he states that he saw some writing upon it. Now let me just for a moment say a word about ancient scrolls, ancient scrolls of course were made of two materials, some of them were made of the skins of animals, vellum, others were made of papyrus sheets, similar to our paper. Papyrus was made from the pith of papyrus plants which grew along the Nile, in the country of Egypt. This pith was taken out, sliced into strips, put together, crossed crosswise, then pressed out with the aid of some water and some gluey substance, and finally was polished, and this was a writing material, papyrus. I am not sure, the text does not say what kind of material Zechariah saw, he saw a scroll. Scrolls were ordinarily rolled up. Some of them were rolled upon one stick; some were rolled upon two, so that as you unrolled with one hand, you rolled up with the other. And you would unroll, and then roll, in the mean time; you would read, in between.

This one apparently, was a scroll that was thirty feet long, and about fifteen feet in breadth, and consequently it was unrolled, because Zechariah saw the writing on both

sides of it. So it was rectangular, thirty by fifteen and that was the size of the holy place in the Tabernacle. Zechariah then looks and he sees this tremendous scroll, thirty feet long, fifteen feet wide and he sees it moving in front of him open. And apparently also as it moved in front of him, it must of turned and come back in front of him again, because he saw both sides of the scroll. Now on the scroll, he saw some interesting writing, as a matter of fact; the 3rd verse gives us I think in effect, what he saw, though the exact words are not given. The text says,

“This is the curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole earth: for every one that stealeth shall be cut off as on this side according to it; (That is on this side of the scroll, according to the writing) and every one that sweareth shall be cut off as on that side according to it.”

Now, if you'll remember your Ten Commandments which you learned in Sunday school, you'll remember that the third commandment and the eighth commandment. These commandments had to do with the things that Zechariah is speaking of here. The eighth commandment was, “Thall shall not steal” the third commandment was, or had to do with perjury, or swearing, “Thall shall not take the name of the Lord Thy God in vain.” And so apparently on one side of the scroll, was the third commandment, on the other side was the eighth commandment and the scroll, this tremendous scroll, floated in front of Zechariah in the air, turned and came back before him. This is what he saw.

Now let's think about the explanation of this vision. You'll notice too, by the way that as we move on through these visions, and we're drawing near the end of the visions now, that there is less and less explanation of the visions themselves, apparently, because we are expected to draw upon the information of the earlier visions in the interpretation of the latter ones. Now what is the meaning of this flying scroll? First of all, what does a flying scroll mean in accordance with the word of God? Now, do you remember when

we started out, and we discussed the interpretation of the visions of Zechariah and apocalyptic language specifically, I mentioned the fact that there are some principles that help us to interpret this kind of language. Number one of course is the context; we always look at the context to determine interpretation. Number two, we notice in apocalyptic language, since there is so much symbolic language, or so much symbolism in this type of language, that we therefore look throughout the remainder of the revelation of God for clues with regard to the meaning of the symbols.

For example: If we are studying the Book of Revelation, and we read about a beast that has seven heads, and ten horns, we do not go to our encyclopedias and look up in the animal kingdom to discover some type of animal that has seven heads and ten horns. So far as I know, you'll never discover such an animal as that. We of course go to the Word of God, and as we read through the Word of God, eventually we come to the Book of Daniel, and we discover that in the Book of Daniel, Daniel writing also in an apocalyptic book uses similar figures. So we notice from the Book of Daniel the beast is not a reference to a member of the animal kingdom, but a member of an animal kingdom in this strange way, is used simply as a symbol to represent spiritual truth. We learn from the Book of Daniel, that the beast has to do with the antichrist of the last days. And so when we read the Book of Revelation, we read the 13th chapter in the light of the previous revelation of God.

When we then come to the Book of Zechariah, the 5th chapter, and we read of a flying scroll, we look throughout the Word of God for some clue as to the significance of a scroll flying in the heavens. Now the scroll, or a flying Bible is in Scripture, sometimes a figure of doom. In Ezekiel, for example, who prophesied before the time of Zechariah, the scroll is used as a figure of doom. A scroll is for example, found in the 2nd chapter of the Book of Ezekiel, and that scroll was also written on both sides within and without, and furthermore, it's contents, Ezekiel is told are lamentations and warnings and woe. So that should give us a clue that this scroll is designed to represent doom. The fact that it is

flying indicates that this is rapid doom, because it is flying. Furthermore, since it is flying in the heavens it indicates that this doom is coming from God. So to sum up the idea of the flying scroll, this is a symbolic way of saying that there is rapid approaching doom for certain people. Now the context tells us that Israel is primarily in view. So we learn from this that rapid approaching doom, coming from God is soon to fall upon the nation Israel.

Now what about the dimensions? In verse 2 we read, “I answered, I see a flying roll; its length is twenty cubits, and its breadth ten cubits.” By the way in the Bible, a cubit is generally speaking, thought to be the distance between the end finger of your hand and the center of your elbow, which is a space of about eighteen inches. Some of you I know its not eighteen inches. Would you like to measure? I have a ruler here if you’d like to measure. But as a matter of fact, believe it or not, this cubit came to have a specific measurement, sometimes seventeen point and you know I’ve forgotten the rest of the inches, but about seventeen inches. So when we read that this was twenty cubits, let’s just say eighteen inches, a foot and a half is a cubit, so we have thirty feet by fifteen feet.

Now this is specifically mentioned, so I would assume from this that it is relatively important. It seems to me that the prophet would not have told us the specific dimensions of it if he did not regard that as significant. So we go into the Bible and we look in the Bible for something thirty by fifteen, and we discover that in the Old Testament there are two things that are thirty by fifteen. One was the porch of Solomon’s temple, and on the basis of this, some have said that this flying scroll is designed to represent the fact that there is approaching doom coming from God and since it is the same as Solomon’s porch and that was the place where God communed with men from the porch typically through the men of the Old Testament that it is simply God’s way of saying that he is speaking in this doom that is to come. It is also, this thirty by fifteen feet, it is also the measurement of the Tabernacle, the holy place of the Tabernacle, and most commentators feel that this is the source of the significance of it.

In other words, this is the measurement of God’s sanctuary; the Tabernacle was the great dwelling place of God in the Old Testament. It was that which signified the house of God, the Tabernacle. And even in the New Testament, for example, it is the Tabernacle that attains preeminence, not the temple. And so most commentators feel, and I’m inclined to agree with them, that the reason that the flying scroll is set forth as the same measurements as the holy place of the Tabernacle, that is designed to stress for us the fact that Israel is to be judged, not according to public sentiment, Israel is not to be judged according to Christian opinion, or the opinion of Old Testament saints, but Israel is to be judged according to the standard of the divine sanctuary. In other words, Israel is to be judged according to the truth of God.

Now that is very important as a principle for us, do you know what that means? That means that you and I must stand before God, not as Christian opinion demands that we stand before God, not as public opinion asks us to stand before God, but ultimately, you and I must stand before God as he has revealed himself in his word. That is the standard by which our lives are to be measured. I heard the story of a little boy who was playing over in a room and his mother was working in the room, and finally he turned to his mother and he said, “Mama as tall as Goliath, I’m nine feet tall.” and she looked over at him and said, “What do you mean, sonny?” He said, “Well mother, I just made a ruler, and I’ve measured myself by my ruler, and I’m nine feet tall.”

Now we all laugh at that, but you know that’s the way a lot of people do, they make a little ruler, which is one of their own making and they measure themselves by their little ruler, and they come out fairly good. The Apostle Paul speaks about those who measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves. And if we set up a standard which is inferior to the standard of God, many of us come up very well. And so we say for example, if a man goes to church on Sunday and goes to Sunday school and attends church on Sunday evening and attends the prayer meeting, and is fairly active, being sure to put money in the collection plate, and signing a pledge and

going out every now and then on visitation, why surely he's going to go to heaven. And so we've made our little measurement as to what constitutes a Christian. And we've set it up, and since we measure up to it, we come out fairly good. All of us have our little standard, by which we measure our self, and if we make our own standards of course we can come up pretty well.

When I was in Scotland some years ago, I was taking a drive one Sunday afternoon; we went over into the west of Scotland, over in Ayrshire. And we were going along the road, and someone was driving me, and he said, “Now I'm going to take you to a very strange hill,” he said, “Now you're going to look at this hill and you're going to be absolutely certain that it is uphill.” But he said, “I'm going to go and I'm going to take and cut off the switch and you're going to watch this car roll up the hill.” And so when we got to the hill, we got out of the car and I stood out on the side, and I looked at it. And sure enough it was a hill that went up just like that. You could see the level. We got out of the car, he was in the car, he turned off the key, he took off the brake, and I saw this car begin to roll up the hill. I was utterly dumbfounded. I looked off, I saw a castle over there which Eisenhower knew, also which he had stayed in, looked at this I tried to find out what made that car roll up that hill, and finally, when he came back he laughed and he said, “of course this is an optical illusion, it looks as if we're going up hill, but actually if you put a plum level here, you would discover that it's really down hill. It's very illusory.” In other words, this I think illustrates exactly what we do as human beings. We set up our little standards and so we say if we measure up to these standards, we're alright. But they're very illusory, these human standards, they look as if they are divine standards frequently, but they are not.

Like a man who is out at night in a white linen suit, we don't wear these suits any more in the Southwest, over in the Southeast, I guess they do still. But in the Summer time, that was white linen suit time. In fact all preachers in the Southeast, when June the first came, they came into the pulpit with white shoes, and a white linen suit. Now let's suppose you were out walking in a white linen suit, in a very night, and you come up to

a corner, and a taxi comes up to the corner, and it's been raining, and suddenly there's a splash, and you look down in the dark, and you feel a little wet, and you say I believe that my suit is wet. You take a look at it in the dark, it doesn't look too bad, and so you move on. You don't think anything particularly about it, but after about fifty or seventy-five feet, you draw nearer a street light. You look down, and you see the dirt, and you look and say, “Boy that looks pretty bad.” And finally when you get right under the light, you look at your self, and you are so dirty that you say, “I've got to go home and change my clothes.” If we ever came to the place where we looked at ourselves really in the light of the word of God we would see ourselves as we are. But too often, we look at ourselves in the dark light of human knowledge and we do not look at ourselves in the street light of God's divine revelation. Now

let me be more specific with you. What this means, is simply this, Christians very frequently apply this same type of reasoning to themselves. They set up some standard. Their standards are these, a Christian is a person who has made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ and he doesn't play cards. He has made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ, and he doesn't dance, or at least he wouldn't do the Frug. A Christian is a person who has believed in our Lord Jesus Christ, and he doesn't go to the movies. Oh well, he might go to a Walt Disney movie, but he doesn't go to any other movies. He thinks Hollywood is very bad, although why he doesn't think other things are bad in the same way I've never understood. A Christian is a person who has put his trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and he doesn't wear make up, boy I'm glad there are not many like that in this auditorium. I really do not like to look out on an audience of pale faces, ladies. Please come as dressed as neatly and as nicely and as respectably and as modestly but as nicely as you possibly can, it means a lot.

But these are human standards. And you know it's a surprising thing, but we can allow something like this to go on while at the same time, it's perfectly alright for Christians to gossip. When do the elders ever get together and talk about gossiping

Christians in the church? They never do. Gossip is a sin that is never taken up by the elders at all. Now the elders will take up some of these other things in certain churches. Certain people come under discipline for these outward sins, but do they come under discipline because of these sins of the mental attitude? No, they never do. As a matter of fact, gossip is kind of acceptable among Christians, get on the telephone and rip someone up and down, that's perfectly alright, in fact we even call it having fellowship with one another. [Laughter] Gossip, judgment, we judge one another and that's perfectly alright, that's acceptable. That's acceptable among Christians.

But not some of these other things, and so we have our list of sins, and we totally neglect the important things, the sin of the mental attitude, the sin of the heart. But you see, God does not look at our little things which are not in the Bible at all. You cannot find anything in the Bible about the fact that a Christian shouldn't play cards. Where can you find it? Show me a text. You cannot find it. You cannot find anything in the New Testament that says that I can not dance if I want to. I can do the Highland swing if I want to. I can even do the Frug if I want to or the monkey or any of the other dances that killer Joe Piro devises. I'm not going to do them too much; I just don't happen to like that kind of thing right now. [Laughter] But gossip and hypocrisy, and jealousy and envy and back-biting, it's amazing how acceptable these things are among Christians. And we sit back with our pride and self righteousness and say, “yes we can do all of these things, but we must not do the other things, a spiritual Christian is a kind of Christian who doesn't do these other things.”

But we do all of these vile things, and they are vile in the sight of God. And the time is coming when we are going to be judged, not by our little code of the seven deadly sins, but we are going to be judged by the law of God, if some of our seven deadly sins happen to be in the law of God well that's fine, but not all of them are, I know from the word of God. Furthermore, you know we have another bad thing among

Christians; we have this tendency to isolate certain sins from other sins, like for example, alcoholics or kleptomaniacs.

You know, it's possible for a man who is an alcoholic to be a Christian; it's possible for a man who is afflicted with kleptomania to be a Christian. Now it's a striking thing about Christians, they'll isolate a person like that. They won't have much fellowship with them; kleptos don't have a whole lot of fellowship in the evangelical church today, but gossipers do, hypocrites do. Those are who are guilty of envy do, and you know, I'm going to say something which I really believe with my heart, but you don't have to believe. It so happens that I know some genuine Christians who are afflicted by some sins which we throw up our hands about and abhor and they suffer, while at the same time, we are countenancing sins which are far worse, sins of the mind and sins of the heart. You know I think that when we stand before the judgment seat of Jesus Christ, and we're measured by the sanctuary, not by the human opinion, and Christian sentiment, regardless of what it is, we're going to receive a great deal of enlightenment regarding reality. Well now, I think that's in the text, we should be judged by the sanctuary, not by what we think about things.

But what about the contents now in verse 3? Zechariah is told, “This is the curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole earth: for every one that stealeth shall be cut off as on this side according to it; and every one that sweareth shall be cut off as on that side according to it.” Why are these two commandments singled out in Israel? Do you remember your Ten Commandments? Did you learn the Ten Commandments? It's not bad thing to remember, to learn the Ten Commandments. If you remember, one of them is the eighth commandment, and one of them is the third commandment.

Now if you'll also remember, the commandments were made up of two tables, upon which each of which there were five commandments. The third commandment is the middle one of one table, the eighth commandment is the middle one of the other table. Now you will also remember that the tables of the law, the two tables were divided

up generally in this way, the first five commandments have to do with God, and sins against God. The second five have to do with sins toward man. If we break one of the first five commandments we are false toward God, if we break one of the last five commandments, we are false to men.

Now since the two central commandments are chosen, one from one table and one from the other, one has to do with God, and the other has to do with man. It seems evident that these two are taken simply as samples, and as summaries of the two tables of the law. In other words, when Zechariah saw this scroll that floated before him and then turned and made it's way back across before him, and saw on one side one of the commandments that pertain to men, the central one of it and on the other side another commandment, the central one that pertained to God. We are to understand from this that these two are taken as samples of the whole. And what Zechariah really was to understand by this was that the time was coming when God was going to execute the vengeance of the law of God upon those who refused his grace.

In other words, the time was coming when he was going to deal with men no longer in grace and mercy, but he was going to deal with them in judgment. And he was going to deal with them in judgment that proceeded from the full force of the exercise of the sanctions of the law of God. Now to us today who are not under the law of Moses, we are inclined to Israel and it doesn't pertain to us. I remind you of the fact, the principle in the word of God, the more light we have, the more responsible we are to God. The more light we have, the more certain is our judgment, and the deeper is our judgment. The more light we have, concerning the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, and we have full light, the more we shall suffer if we reject the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

As a matter of fact, if I were today with the full knowledge of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, to reject him as my personal savior, my judgment shall be more than those who are under the law of Moses. It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah our Lord Jesus said than for those who dwelled in Capernaum. For those who

dwelled in Capernaum had the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ, the supreme prophet of God, and the full understanding of the fulfillment of the whole of the Old Testament. And so Zechariah is told that if we do not respond to the grace of God, the judgment of God is coming, because before his kingdom comes upon the earth, there is to be a cleansing of the earth from all thieves, and from all perjurers and from all who constantly break the law of God.

One day a man came to the Lord Jesus Christ he was a rich man, he was a young man, girls, he was a ruler. Just the kind of man, if you'd have been a father, that you would have wanted to marry your daughter. An upright religious sincere affectionate, I'm not just choosing words, these words are based on the text of the account, a man who was humble enough to come to our Lord Jesus and ask for information from him. He came to the Lord Jesus, and he said, “Good master, what shall I do that I may have eternal life?” He had the keys of life hanging from his girdle and everything seemed to be his. Jesus said to him, “Why callest thou me good? There is one good, that's God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.” If you want to get to Heaven by doing, for that's what he said, “What good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?” Go on keeping the commandments.

There is a way to Heaven by the commandments, but you have to keep them. That means you can not break one of them, not one of them, not one single commandment! Not the Christian code, the commandments of God. Not the outward sins, the inward too. Not one thought of envy shall ever cross a man's heart, if he's to keep the law of God. Not one thought of hate for any other being should ever cross his heart or mind; else he's broken the commandments. So if you want to get to Heaven by doing, keep the commandments. The young man was a very self-righteous man, he was a religious man, he was a leader in the day. Today we would say he was a good Baptist. No we'd say he was a good Presbyterian. No, we'd say he was a good Episcopalian. No we'd say he was a good Catholic. We might even say he was a good member of

Believers Chapel. See it can happen to anyone. This was good man, a religious man, not irreligious. But self-righteous, and so he said, “which, which commandments?” Jesus then said, “Thou shall do not murder, (sixth commandment) thou shall not commit adultery, (seventh commandment) thou shall not steal, (eighth commandment) thou shall not bear false witness, (ninth commandment) honor thy father and thy mother (fifth commandment).”

And to sum it all up for this table of the law is summed in this way, “honor thy father and thy mother and love thy neighbor as thyself.” That sums up one table of the law, the other is, “Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart with all thy mind with all thy soul.” You know why Jesus didn’t tell him that? Because here was a man who thought he did. And the only way that you can prove that you do not, is by your actions. And so he gave them the commandments that had to do with men. Do not do all of these things and to sum it up, thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself. The young man said, “All these things have I kept from my youth up. What lack I yet?” It’s obvious he did lack. He himself recognized that his own way of life lacked. Jesus said to him, “If you want to be perfect, go and sell what you have.” And here’s the test for this man of whether he really loves the Lord his God with all his heart with all his mind and with all his soul. And as the Lord Jesus finally put his finger upon the thing that was his testing, his material possessions, that was the test, do you really love God with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your soul? That young man turned and walked away very sad, one of the texts says, because he had great possessions. You see he had broken the law of God. He had not only broken the law of God, he had broken the first law of God, thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy mind, with all thy soul. He actually had often taken the name of the Lord his God in vain.

Now the disciples were very troubled by that, this man was a man that they admired apparently. They thought, boy if we could just be religious and have all of that money too, we would have it made. Surely this man so loving, so kind, so gentle, so

nice, so sincere, not full of all these hypocritical virtues that were true of the disciples, if he cannot get to Heaven, who can? And so they said, “Who then can be saved?” Jesus had said, “Verily, I say unto you, a rich man shall with difficulty enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.” Who then can be saved? If this man cannot be saved, who can be saved? Jesus said, “With men this is impossible.” You know what that means? That means you cannot save yourself. You cannot save yourself. You cannot keep the law. You cannot get to Heaven by doing. But our Lord said, “With God, all things are possible.” And out of that statement came Paul’s words in Ephesians, “For by grace are ye saved through faith and that not of yourselves.” With men it is impossible. “It’s the gift of God.” With God all things are possible. “Not of works, lest any man should boast.”

You see God deals with sin in two ways, by grace through Christ’s sacrifice, if we respond to that, we have new life. We’re given a new heart. We become new men in Christ, we’re born again! If we do not respond, we’re destined for judgment. The flying scroll of God’s law which demands retribution when we refuse grace shall seek us out and find us wherever we are. There is no forest so deep that the law of God shall not find you out. There is no sea so deep that the law of God shall not ferret you out, there is no mountain so high that the law of God shall not find you. If you do not come to Christ who died for you, and gave himself for you, judgment remains. That’s the lesson of the flying scroll.

I have twenty more minutes of message, but it’s time is gone, someone fainted.
[Laughter] May we stand for the benediction?

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for these wonderful visions that Zechariah the prophet was given. We thank Thee for the tremendous lesson that if we do not come to Thee through Jesus Christ, who loved us and gave himself for us in wonderful grace, divine judgment awaits us. And, O Father we ask again if there be one person in this auditorium who has not yet believed, give them no rest and peace until they come in

their hearts to him and receive by grace the gift of life. This we ask in Jesus' name.

Amen.