



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Zechariah 9:10-17

“International Disarmament and Universal Peace”

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Returning again to the book of Zechariah and reading from chapter 9 beginning with the 10th verse for our Scripture reading. Zechariah chapter 9 and verse 10.

Now the prophet has just given us against the background of the conquests of Alexander. And not only a prophecy of Alexander's conquests, but also against that background, a look into, for him, the far away future. And he has concluded with that marvelous text which had its climactic fulfillment in the triumphal entry of the Lord Jesus into the city of Jerusalem. And you will remember as you read the New Testament this text, Zechariah chapter 9 and verse 9, is said by the evangelist Matthew to have been fulfilled when the Lord Jesus made his entry, “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.”

In other words, he came in such a way, that Israel could not possibly have made a mistake in identifying their Messiah if they had given attention to the Scriptures. Beginning with the 10th verse, the prophet moves on and still having the Alexandrian conquests and the following history in the foreground, he looks on against that

foreground to the background of Israel's ultimate restoration and blessing. Which gather, of course, around the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus. So now in verse 10 the prophet continues,

“And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off: (that means, of course, that war shall discontinue.) And he shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth. As for thee also, (now unfortunately in English, ‘thee’ does not have gender. In the Hebrew text at this point, the thee is feminine, and so the author is referring to Zion or to Israel.) As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water. Turn you to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope: (and by the way, that is the only time in the Old Testament that this particular word ‘hope’ has an article. Prisoners of the hope, literally, the reference being to the Messianic hope. The hope of the Messianic promises and their fulfillment.) Turn you to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope: even today do I declare that I will render double unto thee; When I have bent Judah for me, filled the bow with Ephraim, (you know, that’s a wonderful metaphor. We often skip it as we read along. We fail to see that the metaphor is the metaphor of the use of the bow and arrow. And the picture is of God bending Judah as his bow and then inserting Ephraim as his arrow into the bow, goes on to say,) and raised up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece, and made thee as the sword of a mighty man. And the Lord shall be seen over them, and his arrow shall go forth as the lightning: and the Lord God shall blow the trumpet, and shall go with whirlwinds of the south. (It was from the south part of the country that the greatest dangers to Israel came by way of hot, windy storms.) The Lord of hosts shall defend them; and they shall devour, and subdue with sling stones; and they shall drink, and make a noise as through wine; and they shall be filled like bowls, (that is, bowls used to carry the blood of the sacrifices to the alter. And so the picture is of

Israel’s victorious and yet bloody conquest. And as the corners of the altar, where the blood from the sacrifices often poured over. And then verse 16,) And the Lord their God shall save them in that day as the flock of his people: for they shall be as the stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign upon his land. For how great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty! Corn shall make the young men cheerful, and new wine the maids.”

Prosperity shall attend the coming blessing of Israel. May God bless this reading of his word. Let’s bow together in prayer.

[Prayer] Our gracious God and heavenly Father, we thank Thee for the privilege of reading the word of God. We thank Thee for the aptness of its teaching. For the way in which the prophets were held by the spirit of God and gave us the message which Thou didst desire that we have. We thank Thee for the living, vital character of the Old Testament. We thank Thee of its applicability to us today. We thank Thee for the picture that it gives of a God who keeps his covenants and his promises. And we are so thankful Lord to know this, for we know that the promises which Thou has given to us in New Testament times are promises that are given by the same promise keeping, covenant keeping God. And therefore, Lord we know that when Thou dost make a promise in Thy word that Thou wilt keep it.

We thank Thee most of all for the promise that the Lord Jesus Christ offers eternal life to all who will come to him. And we’re so grateful for the way in which Thou hast led us to him, and for the measure of that life which we know and possess, because the Lord Jesus died for us. And, oh Father, we pray particularly for any who may be in this audience today who do not know him as their personal savior. May today be the day in which they find him. May they issue from hearts that wonderful petition, “Oh Father, I thank Thee that Jesus Christ hast died for me, and now I pray, oh God, that Thou wilt give him to me as my Savior.”

We pray, oh God, for the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Oh, Father, may there be the work of the Spirit that brings conviction; the sense of need, the sense of alienation from Thee, the sense of meaninglessness and life apart from Thee. We especially pray for the young people who are here and rejoice in the interest already shown. Oh Father, wilt Thou minister to them and impress upon them the greatness of Thy wonderful name and of the immense privilege of knowing Thee and of serving Thee?

We pray, oh God, for those that are sick. We think again of some who have been in the hospital now for weeks. We thank Thee for the measure of encouragement. But, oh Father, we ask again that thou wilt lay Thine hand upon those who are ill. We pray that Thou wilt restore to health and strength. And, oh Father, give us a sense of compassion for those who are in need, and for this congregation.

Lord, we pray that Thou wilt bind us together in love one for another because we love him. And may there be a sense of reality. Deliver us from hypocrisy. Deliver us from the façade of so much of evangelical Christianity. And give us, oh Father, by Thy wonderful grace, a reality that arises out of a heart that has been cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ and which knows its place beneath a sovereign God.

Bless the officers; we pray for each one who is a regular attendant and member of this congregation. May all of the spiritual needs that exist be met. Father we ask that Thou wilt lead us on and use us for his glory. Lead on, oh King eternal and give us grace, oh God, to follow in his steps. This we ask in his name and for his sake. Amen.

[Message] The subject for today as we continue the study in the prophecy of Zechariah is, “International Disarmament and Universal Peace.” Peace and disarmament; what hopes and aspirations these words stir in the hearts of men. Arising from these basic drives have come the great peace congresses of the last one hundred years. Beginning with the first London congress in 1843 and continuing down almost to the present day. And then the great disarmament conferences of the 20th century. The

Washington conference, The London conference, the Kellogg-Briand Pact. These things reflect the desires of men, the aspirations of men for peace. And yet, of course it is tragically evident that man does not have the power to keep the covenants that he makes. For example, after the signing of the Kellogg-Briand Pact by fifteen nations, only three years later, one of the nations, Japan, a signatory to that compact declared an undeclared war against Manchuria. It was just a few years later that Italy attacked Ethiopia. And Italy also was a signatory to that pact. And soon after that, Germany launched the Second World War by attacking Poland. Just two years or ago, or really not two years ago, the United States and the USSR signed a nuclear treaty. There was in that treaty a preamble, a text of twenty-two hundred words, I think, and seventeen articles.

Now I, it so happens believe that the words that the Scriptures give concerning the hearts of men are true. And therefore I do not believe that the treaty, which we have signed with the USSR, will be kept unless it is to the personal interest of each one of these governments to keep that particular treaty. Here in the 9th chapter the 10th verse of the prophecy of Zechariah in one article of nineteen words, in the Hebrew text, in one article of nineteen words, God will accomplish man's futile dreams. That which man cannot do, God in his word says that he will accomplish. And it will be a peace that, Martin Luther, who said, “Peace if possible, but truth at any rate,” can approve. It will be a peace that is consonant with truth.

Now this is the subject of these last verses of the 9th chapter of the prophecy of Zechariah. And since in the Scripture reading this morning I gave you some of the smaller points of the text, which are found within it, I would like this morning in the time that we have to concentrate our attention upon three things that stand out in the passage. There is the prophecy of peace in the 10th verse, there is the prophecy in the liberation in the next five or six verses, and finally the passage concludes with praise for the Messiah of Israel.

Now remember that in the study of the word of God, and particularly the prophetic word, you discover as you read the Old Testament that the Old Testament does not give too much attention to the age in which we are living. We live in the light of the first coming of Jesus Christ. It is very difficult for us to have true perspective. We think of the nineteen hundred years, which have elapsed since Jesus Christ came. And being selfish human beings, or just human beings, and therefore selfish, we naturally look at things in light of our situation. We tend to think that all of divine revelation has been given in order that we in Dallas, Texas, in 1967, might be blessed. And yet as we study God’s word, we discover that the greatest thing in the Bible is the series of promises that were given to Abraham, and God’s program in the ultimate fulfillment of these promises.

In fact, that’s the story of the Bible. The story of the Bible is how God through Jesus Christ fulfilled the promises that he made to Abraham many, many hundreds of years ago. Consequently in the Old Testament prophecy, for theoretically, Israel should have been prepared for the first coming of the Lord Jesus. In the Old Testament prophesies, there was no indication given that there exists between the First Advent and the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus, now almost nineteen hundred years. In fact, you read the Old Testament and you will discover that in most of the passages in which the first coming of Jesus Christ is referred to, that in that immediate context, there is a reference to the Second Advent.

And it is impossible to harmonize those passages unless we understand what has happened in history. That’s why the prophets were so puzzled. They studied the Old Testament. Peter says, “They searched what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify. When the Spirit of Christ testified before him the sufferings of the Messiah, and the glories that should follow.” The Lord Jesus, speaking to the disciples on the Emmaus road said, “O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?” In other words, they had looked at the Old Testament. They had failed to see

that the Old Testament pictures' sufferings of the Messiah and glories, they had tended to concentrate their attention upon the glories. They were therefore stumbled by the sufferings, and they did not understand what was going to happen in this age.

Now the Lord Jesus in the 13th chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, after it becomes evident that Israel will not receive its king, and then the great climactic events which the Old Testament pictured will not then come to pass immediately, the Lord Jesus said to the disciples, now I want to tell you about the mysteries of the kingdom of the heaven. And he told them that there is going to exist a time of seed sowing between the first coming and the end of the age. He said the seed is going to be sown not only by God but it's going to be sown by Satan. And as the gospel message goes forth, some are going to respond. A minority but nevertheless, some will respond. Satan will also sow his seed. And he shall have a seed, too. And throughout this age, there shall be an age of conflict between the sowing of the good seed and the sowing of the evil seed. In fact, the Lord said it's going to be impossible to tell the difference between the products of the good seed and the products of the bad seed. It's so impossible that we must wait to the end of the age and for divine, omniscient judgment in order to be able to judge properly.

Now we are living in that day. And if ever a day manifests the fulfillment of the words of the Lord Jesus, this day does. For as you look out, it is very difficult to discover what is true and what is false. There has been a great sowing of the seed. And there is an acknowledgement of Christianity throughout the nations of the earth. There are many churches that say on Sunday morning, we are a Christian church and we meet in the name of Jesus Christ. And yet, of course, in the light of the Scriptures there is much that is said that makes it absolutely certain that the church which claims to be a follower of the Lord Jesus is not really a follower of the Lord Jesus as he is presented in holy Scripture. There are churches that say we are followers of the Christian revelation or religion which deny the deity of the Lord Jesus, which deny the saving work of the atonement, which deny the bodily resurrection, which deny the second coming.

Now all of these things indicate that what we are living in today is the age that the Lord Jesus referred to as the age of seed sowing. And so the Lord, in the mysteries of the kingdom, lets us know that there is a great time period between the first coming, and the second coming.

Now if we bear this in mind, as we read the Old Testament we will begin to understand it. That's why in the 9th verse of Zechariah chapter 9 we read about the king who comes just having salvation, lowly, riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass. And then in the very next text we read that he shall speak peace to the nations and his dominion shall be from sea, even to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth. In other words, between the 9th and 10th verses of Zechariah chapter 9, we must insert now nineteen hundred plus years, of the preaching of the gospel of the Lord Jesus, of the formation of the church, and of all of the activities that go to make up the activity of the Christian church up to the present time. So between verses 9 and 10 then, we have this age. With verse 10, we move on to the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus. And I want you just to notice the things that Zechariah attaches attention to. He says, first of all, that there is going to be world disarmament ultimately. “I, (that is God,) I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim. (That means the tank in our language; and I don't know what it will mean when it actually comes to fulfillment.) I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the horse, (that's the diesel engine or the jet-powered engine.) And the battle bow shall be cut off.” And that's whatever piece of firearms we're using at the present day. He's going to cut these off and there's going to be disarmament.

Let me insert this just as a human opinion. This is the only time, as far as I can tell, when disarmament is not the most foolish thing that a nation can possibly do. It seems to me, that if we consider man's nature as set forth by God's word, that we in the United States, that we in the United States could never really be for disarmament. Disarmament is the surest way to commit national suicide. And only disarmament, when given by God, and supported by his power, only then can we support this noble aim.

God will bring it to pass. Some people often say to me, “What do you think about the United States and prophecy?” I say, “I don’t think anything about the United States and prophecy.” I’ve seen lots of messages entitled, “The United States and Prophecy.” That would be a sermon I would like to attend because it wouldn’t last very long. [Laughter] It would be very brief.

The Bible says nothing about the United States and prophecy. Why it does, I do not know. It may just be that the reason the United States does not appear in prophecy is because when these great events take place, we are an insignificant nation. It may mean that we have been defeated by some power. It may mean that we have been wiped out from the face of the earth. It may be that the historians fifty years from now will be saying of the United States, “It was a nation that’s history was like a sparkplug. It had a bright beginning, but then it petered out to a stupid conclusion because they believed in disarmament and signed disarmament treaties and the result was that they were taken over and destroyed by other nations.” By the way, that’s not in the Bible. [Laughter] That’s not even my opinion. That’s just a guess. That’s a guess about a guess in the dark. No one knows. But it just may be. At least I think this text tells us that God is going to bring disarmament and then I will be for disarmament.

The next thing that the text says is that the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall speak peace to the nations. World peace is something that every Christian, of course, longs to have. We would long to have world peace. No Christian could really be against world peace. We would long to see every single good that the League of Nations or the United Nations could accomplish come to pass. All of us would, but nevertheless we know from the teaching of God’s word that it shall never do what it is intended to do.

And furthermore, we know from the history of it, from the present time, that it not only is something that is harmless but something now, which apparently is very, very harmful in the United States. And so we cannot really support the aims of the United Nations. We know it shall not succeed, and we do not like what goes on at that place.

There is coming, however, a time when world peace shall come, and it shall come through the Lord Jesus. And when he comes in his Second Advent, he shall speak peace to the nations and we won't have any need for the League of Nations. We won't have any need for the United Nations, or whatever organization may follow this one because we shall have a king who rules and reigns in righteousness and love and has the power to carry out all of his desires.

May I just stop to make an application of this text, too? When the Lord Jesus comes to speak peace to the nations, he only does what he claims to do down through the years. He claims to be able to speak spiritual peace to men today. As a matter of fact, that was one of the great messages that the Lord Jesus brought. He said, for example, “In the world you shall have tribulation. Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world, in me you will have peace.” He says, “My peace I leave with you, peace I give unto you.” That, of course, is the piece of right relationship with God. Do you have that kind of peace? Have you put your trust in the Lord Jesus and have you become reconciled to him? God does not need to be reconciled to you, he loves you. He wants you to have everlasting life. He wants you to respond to him. He wants you to know this wonderful sense of the fact that I am right with God, and I have a righteous that avails before him. He can give you that. And furthermore, the Lord Jesus claims that he can give you the peace of God at the present time. That means that he can bring to you a sense of harmony in your daily life.

Now isn't that a wonderful thing? If he is able to speak peace to the nations and they obey him he surely can speak peace to one heart, can he not? What is the source of peace? Well, peace comes from a sense of having adequate resources. When we sense that we do not have adequate resources, we are anxious and disturbed. But when we know that we have adequate resources, we are at peace. And we know that when we have him amidst the crises of life and the crowds, whatever phases us, we know that we can have peace because we have a sense of possessing an adequate resource.

We also have the sense of fellowship with God. You remember when the Lord Jesus was with the disciples on the Sea of Galilee, and the storm arose and the disciples became very fearful because they didn't have the sense of adequate resources to meet that trial in their lives? They looked at the Lord Jesus and he was asleep in the stern of the boat. He had adequate resources. They came to him and they said, “Master, master, carest thou not that we perish?” You see they didn't have adequate resources. They didn't realize that he loved them, even in the midst of the storm. “Carest thou not that we perish?” And the Lord Jesus, you'll remember, stood up in that boat and he spoke, “Peace.” Back to your kennels. For that's the meaning of that word, “Be still.” It's a canine methaphor. It means be muzzled. “Back to your kennels” Dr. Barnhouse used to translate it. Back to your kennels, God treats the elements as if they were just dogs. He's that powerful, the Lord Jesus. And the disciples, of course, were rebuked by him for their sense of anxiety in the midst of the storms of life.

Now Peter was in that boat. And it wasn't but just a few months relatively later that a persecution arose in Jerusalem and James had his head lopped off. And Peter was taken, and Peter was placed in prison. And there he was in the prison. And what do you suppose that Peter thought about when he was in the prison? Well I think he may have thought about the prophecy about his latter end, which the Lord Jesus had given. For in John chapter 21 and verse 18 the Lord Jesus had spoken to Peter, and he had said to him. “Verily, verily I say unto thee, when thou wast young thou girdest thyself and walkest whither thou wouldest. But when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands and another shall gird thee, and carry thee wither thou wouldest not.”

And I have a hunch that Peter was probably thinking, “Well it looks to me as if I'm not going to be able to gird myself again. It looks to me as if my head is next.” And so what would you expect Peter to be doing? Well I think you would expect him to be taking sleeping pills or at least other types of pills and biting off his fingernails and everything else in that prison, making his last will and testament and whatever else you

do when you know that the end is nigh. And I read in the 6th verse of the 12th chapter of the Book of Acts, “And when Herod would have brought him forth the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers. Bound with two chains and the keepers before the door kept the prison.” And then an angel appears and there was a great light in the prison. Peter’s eyes were very sensitive to light, but he slept on. He slept on soundly because he had the sense of adequate resources.

And finally the angel looked over at Peter and reached out his hand and smote him on the head or on side or something, and Peter jumped up with a start, and you know what the angel said to him? “Now Peter take it on the lamb quick because they’re really going to be after you!” No, he didn’t say that. He said, “Peter, gird thyself.” Isn’t that interesting? “Gird thyself.” He’d been preaching about this girding. I guess this is the last time I’m ever going to gird myself. Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. Don’t run out barefooted. Omnipotence has all the time in the world. There is no hurrying with God. And so Peter dressed himself and went out, sleeping when his death warrant apparently had already been signed, figuratively. Because, you see, he had peace. He had a sense of adequate resources. He had a sense of fellowship with God. The Lord Jesus is able to give that.

The time is coming when he shall speak it to the nations, and we shall have world peace. And of course we will have world dominion. We read in the 10th verse of Zechariah 9, “And his dominion shall be from sea even to sea and from the river even to the ends of the earth.” And here we find the fulfillment of that great prophecy in Daniel 2 to which we’ve referred three or four times in this series. When the great image, which Nebuchadnezzar dreamed about is smitten by the rock upon its feet and it all comes tumbling down together, and the rock, you’ll remember, begins to grow, and grow, until finally the rock Nebuchadnezzar saw filled the whole of the earth. The rock is Christ. The rock filling the earth, of course, is the kingdom that he brings. And so when we read that he shall reign from the sea, to sea and from the river even to the ends of the earth,

we know the stone has been smitten, the stone has smitten the image, and the image has now collapsed and the stone has filled the whole of the earth.

Let's look secondly, now at the prophecy of liberation. In verses 11-16 the background is the Maccabean struggle. Remember when Alexander finally died? A division of his empire took place, and four of his generals took over the various parts of his dominion. When you studied ancient history you studied about Ptolemy. And you know that Ptolemy took over southern Syria and Egypt. You heard also, perhaps about Seleucus Nicator. Does that have a vague sense of familiarity to you? Why is our memory of ancient history so vague? Well, anyway, Seleucus Nicator took over Syria and other parts around Asia Minor in the east. And two other generals, Cassander and Lysimachus were given other parts or took other parts of Alexander's empire.

We are especially interested in Seleucus and his successors, for one of his successors was a man by the name of Antiochus the fourth. Antiochus the fourth was called Antiochus epiphanies. That's what he called himself, Antiochus the illustrious. Behind his back they called him not Antiochus epiphanies, but Antiochus Epimanes which means Antiochus the madman. I think he could have been elected to office today. [Laughter] Well Antiochus made a very serious mistake. He thought that he could put something over on the Jews. Others down through the years have made similar mistakes. He thought that perhaps he could go to Jerusalem and get them to worship false gods. He discovered that the Jews had learned their lesson in Babylon; they were not going to fall for idolatry any more. And so finally, he got into difficulty. And one day a Jew who wanted to do what Antiochus wanted him to do was just about prepared to offer a sacrifice when a man by the name of Mattathias, an ancient priest, cut him to pieces. He would not allow a Jew to offer the sacrifices to heathen gods. That started a rebellion. And his son, Mattathias' son, whose name was Judas Maccabeus was responsible for one of the brightest pages in Israel's history. By the way, he was called, as a man for the Kansas City Chiefs is called; he was called Maccabeus, which means a hammer. So he

was Judas the hammer. And he got his name because he was a very, very tough competitor. And finally, Israel gained its independence under a man by the name of Simon.

Now in the background of Zechariah chapter 9 you'll notice the reference to Greece. And so Zechariah, who prophesies hundreds of years before this, prophesies of the years of Maccabean ascendancy, and of their ultimate victory and independence. But against this local background the prophecy goes far beyond that, for he speaks of in that day, one of the great expressions in the Old Testament, which refers to the ultimate future; The time of the Second Advent of Christ. And furthermore, he has spoken about world dominion, not simply local dominion. So against the background of the prophecy of the Maccabean age, and the victory then of Israel, the prophet moves on into the ultimate future.

Now let me just single out one or two things that are important. First of all, he says, that there shall be deliverance from worldwide dispersion. He says in the 11th and 12th verses that, “I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit.” Now I have sent forth is, in the Hebrew text, in the perfect. But there are perfects in Hebrew, which we call prophetic perfects, and this one undoubtedly is that. This should have been rendered; as for thee also by the blood of thy covenant I shall send forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water. The reference is to Joseph, who, years ago, was placed in a pit and in Genesis it is stated in that pit there was no water. Why? Because, if there had been water in that pit Joseph would have perished. To be in the pit without water is a sign of confinement but not of ultimate destruction. And so Israel has been sent out into the four corners of the earth during the present age, they are in worldwide dispersion. But in that pit in which they are, there is no water. That is, there is to be no ultimate extinction of the Jewish race. And now we, of course, see evidence of that in that God is bringing them back into the land of Israel, and they now have their own country. But the time is coming when he is going to deliver them from the pit and he is going to bring them back.

This is figurative language of course. He is going to bring back into the land and restore them.

Secondly, Zechariah says that the Lord is going to be a defense over them as they fight to regain their place as the leader of the nations. And he says in verse 14, “And the Lord shall be seen over them, and his arrow shall go forth as the lightning: and the Lord God shall blow the trumpet, and shall go with whirlwinds of the south.” In other words, when Israel comes back, there is to be a battle, in fact campaigns. And out of the campaigns of the last day, God is going to deliver the nation Israel. He is going to speak, and men are going to recognize that he is speaking.

And those of you who you regularly attend Believers Chapel know that I am from Charleston, South Carolina. Next to Dallas, that’s about the finest place in the United States. And Charleston is a very unusual city. And I won’t talk about Charleston this morning because we don’t have time, but it is also known for two things, which are not so good. It is known for its tornados and hurricanes. It is also known for its earthquakes. And a very severe earthquake took place in Charleston fifty or sixty years ago.

There is a story about a colored pastor who was preaching on the Sunday morning that the first tremors came. He had just opened the Bible, and he had begun to read the Scripture for the day, and the first tremor took place as he finished the reading of the Scripture. And there was a silence, and then the most severe shaking of the earth took place, and the old man looked up and he said, “Now God is speaking, and we had better listen to what he says, for the time is coming when God is going to speak to men, and he is going to be seen, and he is going to move among men as the whirlwinds and tornados which we know today. And he is going to move in such a way that his purposes are without question to be carried out.

And finally, Zechariah says as he describes the liberation that comes to Israel, he says, “The Lord God shall save them (in the 16th verse) the Lord their God shall save

them in that day as the flock of his people: for they shall be as the stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign upon his land.”

Vicki Baum, in one of her books said that, “To be a Jew is a destiny,” and how true that is, for to be a Jew is to be linked up with the destiny of Israel.

Let me stop at this point to say one thing. Sometimes people gain the impression from people who say things, like I do, that I’m saying that every Jew, because he is a Jew, is going to become a child of God in the spiritual sense. That is not true. Every Jewish man who comes to faith in the Lord Jesus shall be saved. There shall never be in heaven a Jew who does not have personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. All the Jews of the future shall be believers in the Lord Jesus Christ just as you are. If they are not believers the whole of the Old Testament as well as the new states that they shall come under the judgment of God just as Gentiles. The only thing the Bible states is that as a nation they’re going to be brought back into the land and restored to their place of imminence. Therefore today there is no difference between the Jew and the Gentile, so far as faith in Christ is concerned. Gentiles and Jews are saved the same way. In the next age Gentiles and Jews are saved the same way. God is only saying that there is going to be a movement of the spirit of God among the Jews so that many of them, enough to constitute them as a nation, in their leadership, they shall come to personal faith in the Lord Jesus. And so we read the Lord their God shall save them in that day. And they shall be the flock of his people. In other words, he is pictured, as Zechariah says, he is pictured as a shepherd. God is that shepherd and he will be their shepherd.

There was a simple Christian, who was speaking often about the things of the Lord with another friend. And she was just an ignorant Christian, but she had the essence of the Christian faith. And finally her friend spoke to her and said to her, “It seems to me that in all of these expressions of your Christian faith you’ve overlooked some of the things that might happen to you. Just suppose that you lost your job? Just suppose that your employer moved out of the city and his business went out of business? Just suppose

there came a tragedy in your life? Just suppose you got sick?” And finally the Christian said, “Stop. Don’t you realize that it is those supposes that we do not have in the Christian faith?” The word of God says, “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.” It’s the supposes that make us miserable, too isn’t it? That sense of insecurity regarding the future. Well Israel, one day, shall have the sense of security and the Lord their God shall save them in that day as the flock of his people, and they shall be his.

And finally our passage concludes with, “How great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty!” These words do not apply to the nation; they apply to the God who saves Israel. And the God who saves Israel is our Messiah the Lord Jesus Christ as the Old Testament sets forth in so many places. What he is saying here is that as a result of this tremendous work of the Lord Jesus in salvation, the people of that day are going to offer their praise and thanksgiving to God for his goodness and also for his beauty. “Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty, they shall behold the land that is very far off,” Isaiah says. Or the Psalmist puts it this way as he refers to the Messiah, “Thou art fairer than the children of men, grace is poured into thy lips. Therefore even God, even thy God hast blessed thee forever.” It’s wonderful to have a God like this.

This past week on Tuesday night I did something that I should not have done. I went to a home of a person who is a friend of Believer’s Chapel, and I went to talk about the Lord Jesus. I spent three hours arguing. This man was a Unitarian. A very fine man, a very intelligent young man, and we had quite an argument. It was friendly, by the way, it was friendly. When we left he said, “Do you know when you have a religious argument no one ever convinces anyone else do they?” I said, “I suppose that’s true.” He said, “Have you been affected by my words?” I tried to keep from saying, “No I haven’t been affected at all,” but I couldn’t but say, “No, I don’t think I have. I haven’t been disturbed a bit.” But we had quite an argument. In the midst of our argument, I attempted to pin him down on this thing, and this thing, and this thing, and this thing, and my goodness he would have made a good broken field runner. [Laughter] But one

thing he kept coming back to, and that was Hinduism. He kept telling me, in fact, if he had not been an American, and if I had not known that he was a Unitarian I might have thought he was a Hindu. Because he thought a great deal of them, and he went on to praise them very, very much. He elicited a promise from me that I would read some of the Vedas, and of course I elicited a promise from him that he would read some of the Bible and get acquainted with the Scriptures. And so I hope to go back and speak to him.

But one of the things that impressed me as I thought about it afterwards was, there is no question but there is much good in Hinduism. It perhaps is one of the most admirable of the religions of the earth, if you can call any of the religions of the earth admirable, it might qualify. But it's a long ways from the Christian religion. And I remembered a story about Bishop Warner who was preaching in India many years ago. And he was talking about the Lord Jesus and speaking about how he went to the cross at Calvary and how people spat upon him, how they mocked him, and finally how they crucified him, and how in the midst of it all the Lord Jesus said, “Father forgive them for they know not what they do.” And there was an old Hindu priest who was listening to the bishop. And as he went on about the Lord Jesus, finally he rushed up and threw himself at the feet of the bishop who was preaching and said, “You must leave India!” And the bishop said, “Why?” He said, “Because we have no story like this. We have no savior who lived a sinless life, who died for his enemies, who prayed for the forgiveness of those who took his life. If you keep on telling this story to our people, they will forsake their temples and follow the Lord.” It's true; there is no story like the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no story anywhere about one who was the Son of God who came and died for our sins. There is no story anywhere that is as unique, and which is so fitted to the hearts of men as the story that the Lord Jesus loved us, and gave himself for us. And that he longs to give us peace with God when we believe in him and the peace of God in our daily life, for he tells us that he comes to dwell within us so that we

know that we have adequate resources for everything that faces us. There is only one thing necessary, and that's to acknowledge that we need him.

Dr. Bernardo had a great orphanage in London a generation or so ago. One day a tattered, ragged little boy came to Dr. Bernardo and asked if he might be admitted to the orphanage. And Dr. Bernardo said to him, “Why son, who are you? Who has recommended you?” And the little boy looked up at the Doctor and said, “If you please, sir, I thought these here rags would be all I needed to recommend me.” And of course the Doctor opened wide his arms and he said, “You're welcome in the orphanage.” There is only one thing needed for salvation through Jesus Christ and that's for us to come with our rags; the rags of our sinfulness, the rags of our failure; the rags of our sense of need; the rags of our insecurity; the rags of meaninglessness in our life. And the Lord Jesus loves to fill them. And I want to tell you from personal experience and from the experience of thousands and millions down through the years that the one who can speak peace to the nations can speak peace to your heart if you'll come to him. May we stand for the benediction?

[Prayer] Now, oh Father, we thank Thee for these wonderful truths. The application seems so plain and clear. And, oh Father, if there should be one person in this audience who desires to know Thee in sincerity, oh, may they come with their rags and receive the glorious garments of righteousness and salvation from the Lord Jesus Christ. We thank Thee that it is upon the basis of grace, and Lord we commit ourselves to Thee and may grace, mercy, and peace go with us throughout the days of this week. For Jesus' sake. Amen.