



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Isaiah 1:1-31

"Introduction"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Now tonight we are going to give something of an introduction to the book which really is the first chapter, because that really is Isaiah's introduction to his book. So let's begin with a word of prayer and then we will take a look at Isaiah's introductory prophecy.

Well, I'd like for you to turn to Isaiah chapter 1 and we will look at the introduction to the Messianic prophecies of Isaiah. Isaiah has been thought by many to be the greatest book of the Old Testament. It is distinguished by a vivid visualization of the truth by profound feeling. For this prophet was a man of profound feeling and especially of majestic utterance. There is an old story about Augustine and Ambrose that illustrates something of the greatness of this book. Shortly after Augustine came to faith and was converted in that remarkable way in which we was he asked Ambrose where he should begin his study of the Bible and Ambrose replied, "You should begin your study in Isaiah." Well, it wasn't a bad word of advice, because probably in nowhere in the Old Testament do we have such a clear view of the grace of God as in the Book of Isaiah. In fact, it has been called the Gospel According to Isaiah. And Isaiah has often been called the Fifth Evangelist, because there is so much of the gospel of Jesus Christ within it.

Augustine later said, "He thinks Isaiah writes not a prophecy but a gospel." And perhaps that's the reason why it has been called a fifth gospel. One could almost construct a life of Christ from the Book of Isaiah. Now, of course, we would not have a number of things about our Lord that we learn from the gospels. For example, we would not know certainly that his name was Jesus. I did once read an exposition by a Jewish Christian interpreter of Isaiah, in which he tried to show that the name Jesus was in the Book of Isaiah. And that if we studied it we would come to understand that the Savior's name would be Jesus. But very few have been able to follow that with any sense of certainty. But we would know something about his birth. We would know something about his family. We would know something about his anointing. We would certainly know a great deal about his character. We would know something about the plain diet and simplicity of his life. We would know his gentleness. We would know about his death. We would know about his resurrection. We would know about his magnificent and glorious second coming and his participation in the kingdom of God. So it's not far fetched at all to see the major outlines of the life of Christ in this book.

We know some very interesting things about its author, but these are primarily traditional things, and therefore it is not possible to be absolutely certain. We know that his name means something like the salvation of Jehovah, Jehovah's salvation or perhaps Jehovah is salvation. But the name Isaiah comes from the Hebrew verb *yasha* which means "to save." And Isai-ah, of course *ab* is the Hebrew term for the deity, one of the terms. And so Jehovah is salvation, or Jehovah's salvation or something like that is the name of the prophet. It has been traditionally thought that he is of royal blood. In fact, some Jewish writings say that he was the cousin of King Uzziah. And that is because his father and the father of Uzziah were brothers. But again, that is tradition and we do not know for certain that it was true that he was the cousin of King Uzziah. We know from the prophecy of Isaiah that he had a wife and that he had two sons. And these sons had names that became signs, Shear-Jashub and Maher-shalah-hash-baz we shall read about

later on because they figure in one of the Messianic prophecies. They were children with specific symbolic names.

It has also been contended that Isaiah worked as a scribe. And in working as a scribe in the royal court he would then have a great deal of insight into all of the things that happened in the days of the kings in whose reigns he prophesied. Because a scribe would be of all people cognizant of what was going on in the kingdom. So from 2 Chronicles chapter 26 and verse 22 it has been contended that he was a scribe, a royal scribe if his family was a noble family. We know that he was called at the time that Uzziah died and he labored for as much as perhaps fifty years. He says in the opening verse that he prophesied concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. Now, Uzziah began his reign in 787 BC and Hezekiah died in 697 AD so that is a period of ninety years, so Isaiah may have prophesied for a rather lengthy period of time.

His message stresses three things. It stresses the sovereignty of God; one can see that particularly in the sixth chapter and the fact that out of that chapter he makes the important point that while Uzziah is dead, God is not dead. That seems to be the whole point of that vision if we summed it up in a sentence. God is not dead, although the great king has passed on. Judah's sinfulness is another one of the great themes of the book, which he lays stress upon because the nation was in the throes of apostasy from the truth and so he writes very strongly as we shall see tonight about the apostasy and departure of Judah and Jerusalem from the will of God.

He is the prophet of the holy one of Israel. Twenty-five out of the thirty-one times that that term as a designation of God appears, appear in the prophecy of Israel. But probably he's known most of all for his great stress on the salvation of God. And when we look at these Messianic prophecies we will see why that is true, because there are so many of them that lay stress on the Redeemer who is to come. The times of Isaiah were very much like our days. On the international scene he lived to see the rise and world

rule of Assyria, which was a great and cruel and brutal power. Now, I'm not going to try to be so provincial as to say that Assyria was the Russia of the day of the prophet Isaiah. That would be foolish, because we don't yet know the end of things. And after all, there are nations that contend with Russia for the cruelest and most brutal of nations today. But one can see that the day in which he lived, this rise of this great cruel, brutal world power suggests also the day in which we live. On the national scene he lived through good and evil rulers.

And in the midst of what was going on in Judah and Israel there was the disease of apostasy. And it was gnawing persistently at the heart of the nation. One of the statements made by one of the commentators has appealed to me for many years. This man, Valetine by name, has said concerning Israel that "his head was in the clouds and his feet on the earth. His heart was in eternity. And his mouth and hand were in time. His spirit was in the counsels of God, but his body was in history." Well, that's a very good description, it seems to me, of what a man of God ought to be, a person whose mind and heart and thoughts are in the things of the word of God and the things of eternity. But at the same time who has feet on the ground.

Well, let's look at the introduction. And the first verse introduces the whole book. We read, "The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah." As we've mentioned these kings span a period of time of about ninety years. Uzziah reigned from 787 BC to 736 BC. Jotham was coregent with him for a while, and so his reign is from 756 BC to 741 BC because he was coregent with Uzziah for twenty years. And then Ahaz was coregent with Jotham for five years, and so he was coregent from 741 to 736 BC and then Ahaz was the sole ruler from 736 to 705 and Hezekiah was ruler from, did I say 705, 725. And from 725 to 697 Hezekiah reigned. So these are the kings who were in authority in the days in which Isaiah prophesied.

He begins with a magnificent indictment of the nation. He says, "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." This is his indictment with the assessors. What this does is the same thing that Micah has done and that some of the other prophets have done from time to time. The scene he imagines is a scene in which there is a trial at law. It seems to me that lawyers ought to like the prophets because so many of the scenes which the prophet's picture are like court scenes. And it is God who has Israel in court, in this case Judah and Jerusalem. There is the judge, and that of course is the Lord. There are the defendants, and it is Judah and Jerusalem. And there is the jury, in this case the heavens and the earth. And against this background the case is presented by the Lord God through the prophet against Judah and Jerusalem.

Now, I'd like for you to turn back to a passage in Deuteronomy 31 because this is the picture in the background of Isaiah's words. In fact, it seems to me very plain that he had this in mind, whether he thought this up or whether it was given him by the Holy Spirit we, of course, cannot know. But you remember that when Israel was being led by Moses out of the wilderness into the Promise Land. As they came on the borders of the Promise Land God gave Moses some instructions, as Moses was about to die. And he told Moses that there was a song, he called it a song, but it's really a prophecy. It's a prophecy; it's a song at the same time because it's a poetic prophecy. And this song Moses was to give to the nation as they went into the land and furthermore, God told Moses, "Moses I want you to teach this to the nation as they enter into the land so it may be a means of preventing the apostasy which I know is going to come to pass."

So he gave Moses the song. Now, it's known as the Song of Moses and it's Deuteronomy chapter 31 and the beginning of it begins in verse 19 of chapter 31 and then the song itself is chapter 32. Now, as you look at this you will notice as you read

through it, we don't have time to do it of course, but this next if you like it would perhaps help you to understand chapter 1 if you read Deuteronomy 31 and 32. You will notice that it is a kind of divine forecast of the whole history of the Jewish people. And Moses describes how they are going to go into the land and furthermore how when they come into the land they're going to rebel against the Lord. And the result is going to be great difficulty for Israel down through the centuries until the latter. But in the latter days God is going to remember Israel and he is going to remember the land and he's going to be merciful to the land and to the people. We read in verse 43 of Deuteronomy 32, "Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people: for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land, and to his people. And Moses came and spake all the words of this song in the ears of the people, he, and Hoshea the son of Nun."

Now, notice how chapter 32 begins. It begins "Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth." Now in the light of that listen to Isaiah in chapter 1 in verse 2. "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me." In other words, in the style of Deuteronomy chapter 32 and the great song of Moses in which God forecasts the history of Israel with their entrance into the land, the divine blessing upon them, their departure from the truth, their discipline by being sent to the four corners of the earth, and then his ultimate mercy upon the land and upon the people. Now, you can see that beginning in that style and in that way Isaiah is holding up Judah to the mirror of the song of Moses. And he's saying in effect, "Look the very thing that God said was going to happen through Moses has come to pass." Listen, "So hear oh heavens and give ear oh earth. The heavens and the earth are witnesses, because you see the heavens have been here from the time of creation. The earth has been here from the time of creation and the heavens and the earth have seen all of the way that

Israel and Judah have responded to the gracious ministrations of the Lord God. You could never have a better witness of truth.

This, of course, is figurative language. You could never have a better witness of the truth than the creation itself, for they have been there from the beginning and they know the way in which Israel has rebelled. But look at that verse, the second verse, "The LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me." Now, he doesn't say against the word or against the prophets but "they have rebelled against me." In other words, in their departure from the truth they have departed from the personal relationship with the Lord God or the holy one of Israel.

Now, I know that all of us who are believers we realize that when we depart from the word of God it's not so much that we are departing from the Bible, that would be bad, of course. For the Bible is the word of God. But what we really depart against is the Lord himself. That's a very solemn thing. We depart from the Lord himself. We are dealing with someone who is a sovereign divine person; to depart from him is to depart from the ultimate authority in this universe. Apostasy, backsliding, apostasy, these are heinous sins against a sovereign God.

Now notice the third verse, for this is part of the indictment. "The ox knoweth his owner and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." What an accusation. The animals have more spiritual intelligence than the people of God. The ox knows his owner, the ass his master's crib, but Israel, named after Jacob who wrestled with the Lord, Israel does not know. The word in the Hebrew text is the word for knowledge through experience. Israel doth not know and she does not discern.

Fifteen years ago I gave a series of messages through the prophecy of Israel and when I did I told the story of an incident that W.T.B. Polston in one of his books says was a true story. He said there was a man who had a family and his family were generally believing people, and on Sunday morning they would get up and he didn't mind. He

gave them permission to go to church and so they got up in the morning and they went to church. And he stayed home because he just wasn't interested in spiritual things at all. He had never been converted. And now this continued over a lengthy period of time until finally he began to feel something of the affects of this. And evidently the Spirit of God was working in his heart because one Sunday morning when everybody left for church he looked forward to this miserable day again for him. And so as he was thinking about it he thought well he'd just wander out of the house and go out down the road into the field and at least have something to do. And so he did. He wandered out to the field which he owned and in it were some cattle. And very disconsolately he went over to a fence that was there and was just leaning against the fence and had his hand over the side of the fence. And while he was doing that one of his cows came over and nuzzled up against his hand. And the text of Isaiah came home to him which he had been forced to learn as a kid. "The ox knoweth his owner and the ass his master's crib." And he is said by Mr. Polston to have said, "By Jove, the cow has more sense than I have." And he was converted through that text. "The ox knoweth his owner and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know."

Now, one might expect the Lord to give some evidence for the prosecution, because he's laid an accusation against the nation, and he's said that they're guilty of rebellion against a sovereign God. Now, let me read the evidence for the prosecution in verse 4 through verse 9. Then we want to say just a word about it.

"Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. Why should ye be stricken any more? Ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with

ointment. Your country is desolate; your cities are burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers. And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city. Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant (In the Hebrew text there's a lot of emphasis on that small a remnant according to a little bit, a very small remnant.), we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah."

Now, when he begins "Ah sinful nation," he begins with a very emphatic kind of expression, *howy gowy*. And the term for *gowy*, of course, is the term for the Gentile nation. It's a term used of the Gentiles, the Goyim. So it's "Ah sinful nation of people laden with iniquity." Sinful, of course, is in glaring contradiction to the Holy One of Israel. But notice the apostasy. It is an apostasy in heart, in words, and in action. "A people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward." So first of all, he says they are people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers. They are wicked and apostate in heart. And then he says that they have provoked the holy one of Israel unto anger. Now, that is a Hebrew word that means something like "to condemn" but it ordinarily is used of blasphemy. And so they have said things that are really blasphemous. And in that sense they have apostatized as well. And he says further, "They have gone away backward." They've turned around and gone and they've gone the other way. So it's a kind of apostasy that's touched their heart, their words, and their actions.

Well, turning away from the Lord begins in the heart, doesn't it? It begins with "I don't really think that I have time to pray." I'll make up for that some other time. And then the next day comes and you say again, "I don't think I have time to pray today, I've got so many things I have to do." John Wesley used to say when he got up in the

morning and he looked at what he had to do, he ordinarily prayed for about an hour. He said, "I've got so much to do today I'll have to pray two hours." That's the way he looked at it, and he was able to get a whole lot done, as anyone who studied his life knows. But we look at it the other way when we're beginning to backslide. We say, "I've got so much to do, well I'll do that later on." And you know it's not long before those thoughts do not even come into your mind. I know you're saying, "How do you know that?" Because that happens to me. And I'm sure there's one or two of you that have similar experiences in this audience. I find that that's the way things go. We naturally tend to drift, because we are sinners and we tend to rebel. And so we rebel in the heart, and the ultimately our words express what we think in our head and finally our feet follow our thoughts and our words.

Now, this is, for one who studies Isaiah and studies it very carefully, this is a striking accusation. Because he says, "Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it." It is overthrown by strangers, and those very terms are the terms that were used back in Deuteronomy chapter 32 to describe what was going to happen to the nation. So he said if you'll just take a look at what has happened to you, you will see that Moses' words are being fulfilled. The curse of the broken Law is upon them, and those very terms are the terms that are used in the great passages of the Old Testament like Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 where God looks into the future and says, "This is what's going to happen to the nation Israel." And so Isaiah writes from the stand point of it's already happened. If you'll just take a look you'll see that the reason that these curses lie upon the land and the country is your departure from the principles of the word of God. And then finally in the 9th verse he says, "Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant."

Now, there is, of course, a seed of the Lord God which he preserves. "In Isaac shall thy seed be called," we read in the Book of Genesis. And all through the Old Testament, even though the nation departed from the Lord, there was nevertheless a

believing remnant, the elect people of God within the nation Israel. And Israel recognizes that. He says, "There is a remnant but it's a very small remnant." Paul, later on, will cite this in Romans 9, 10, and 11. He studied Isaiah, too. I'd like to have had him as the teacher. If he were here to teach I'd sit in the audience and look forward to it with great anticipation.

Now, in verses 10 through 17 evidently as the prophet is looking at the people or thinking about the people he senses in their thoughts, as he knows them, or in their eyes, as he has seen it in his discussions with them that they are appealing themselves to what they have done with reference to the Lord God. Just as in a law case the prosecution makes its case and then there is a rebuttal. Now, evidently the rebuttal that was made was that to which the prophet addresses his next words. And listen to what he says. They obviously have said, "But we are the people of God and we are busy in the service of the Lord God. We haven't abandoned the Lord God. We are still carrying out the ceremonies that Moses told us to carry out. We still have priests. And we have prophets. And we, on the Day of Atonement we observe the feast of the Day of Atonement. We observe the other feasts. We observe the Passover every year. If Isaiah you'll take look over at the temple there you will see that the children of Israel are very busy in the worship of the Lord God."

But listen to what the prophet says, and this is an answer to their rebuttal. Verse 10, "Hear the word of the LORD, ye rulers of Sodom." Notice what God calls Judah and Jerusalem, Sodom. "Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah. To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? Saith the LORD." Why are you bringing your constant sacrifices? "I am full of the burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats."

Now, let me point out one which is something which I'm sure is familiar to practically every one of you. This is not by Isaiah a statement to the effect that the

Levitical ceremonies should not be practiced. They were given by Moses for the nation to practice. But they were to be practiced in faith. And that is what he is talking about.

"When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with." I'm unable to bear it is the idea. "It is iniquity, even the solemn meeting." So if you were to sum up the life of Judah it would be worship, activity, but iniquity in the midst of their worship.

You can hardly think of a church of Jesus Christ, very busy, very active, very concerned outwardly; having meetings Sunday morning, several meetings Sunday morning, meetings Sunday night, meetings during the week, almost every night of the week. But at the same time under the hand, the heavy hand of a God who judges because their heart is not in what they're doing. That's what Isaiah is talking about. Now, do you think that these people had religion? They had religion. They had the most beautiful expression of religion that it is possible to have. Today when we think of outward religion we would probably think of the Roman Catholic church, because they have a very magnificent and impressive liturgy, but it was not nearly as impressive as the Levitical cultus with the priests and the sacrifices and the feast days, all of their magnificent activity, their religious activity. But God says all of that activity is iniquity. In fact, he uses an expression for solemn meeting which refers to a meeting in which people get together. In fact, the implication many feel is that there are so many people there that you're constrained to find a place.

In other words, there were big crowds when they were carrying on the observance of the feasts and the other things that made up their religion. But it was a hateful thing to the Lord. Is it possible that when we put money in the collection plate it's displeasing to the Lord? Is it possible when we have a full church that it is displeasing to the Lord? Is it possible that we may sit at the Lord's Table and sin at the Lord's Table? Is it possible that in the observance of Easter and Christmas and Thanksgiving and other

things that in a sense are identified with the expression of Christian life, that in these things we may sin against the Lord, sin at the Lord's Table by sitting at the Lord's Table. Sin in the baptismal service, sin at Christmas time and in Christmas meetings? Yes it's very possible if our hearts are not in what we are doing, it is a hateful thing to the Lord God. Treading my courts as the priests went out and back and forth in the temple, it was a hated and a displeasing thing to the Lord God.

Notice what he says in verse 15, "And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood." Unanswered prayer, people are very busy serving the Lord, but when our hearts are not in the things of the Lord God, all of our activity is as nothing. Incidentally, the Law had no command to pray. Someone might say, "But we're not told in the Law of Moses that we ought to pray." That's an interesting thing isn't it? But actually prayer is the expression of the relationship to God, and therefore prayer is, of course, of the essence of response to the Lord.

Well, the remainder of the chapter is an appeal and also a statement of hope. Our time is coming near to being up. He says, "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widows." And now the appeal and offer of mercy follows in verse 18 through verse 20, "Come now, and let us reason together." Incidentally, this is Isaiah and Lyndon Baines Johnson. He used to like to say, "Come now and let us reason together." He had a fellow in his office who went around looking for biblical texts to which he could attach to his political speeches. I don't think that was pleasing to the Lord either. His consensus was let us reason together, but God's reasoning is quite a bit different. You can see, however, that the wrath is passing and love is breaking through. And so he offers the forgiveness of sins. "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: But if ye refuse

and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it."

Forgiveness in the Old Testament was very possible for the children of Israel when they submitted to the teaching of the word of God. It is not gained by works. It is gained by faith in the Redeemer who was to come and the Mosaic Law was carried out as a testimony to the reality of their faith. We say faith without works is dead in the present day. And we expect a man who believes in Jesus Christ to manifest his faith. I don't have to see it, but God has to see the manifestation of it in a change in our lives. Well in the Old Testament the Old Testament saints believed in the redemptive program of God as it was summed up in the Messianic promises. And when they believed in the Redeemer to come they were justified, given the forgiveness of sins, and they manifested that by obedience to the requirements of the Mosaic Law. They were not saved by the Law; the Law was the expression of redeemed men. They are addressed as redeemed men and given the Law. And so that's the background of this. Reason together is change your relationship to the Lord God, acknowledge him as who he is, depend upon him and the Redeemer that he has promised, and you shall have the forgiveness of sins.

And evidently they have rejected the appeal largely, because the prophet says, "How is the faithful city become an harlot! It was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers. Thy silver is become dross, thy wine mixed with water: high princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves: every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them. Therefore saith the LORD, the LORD of hosts, the mighty One of Israel, Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies." For God, you see, will avail himself of other means to see that his will is carried out. And if we do not respond to mercy and forgiveness, then he will reach his goal through judgment. And that is the appeal of the last part of the section. It, of course, has some magnificent

promises within it. He says in the 27th verse, "Zion shall be redeemed with judgment and her converts with righteousness."

Well, this is quite an introduction to his prophecy. And the prophet is making it very plain that the nation is not on good terms with the Lord. But in spite of that fact he has magnificent words of the Messianic King and the kingdom that is to come in the future. How important it is for us to be real in the practice of our truth.

Give me just one more minute. I like to read the funny papers. And, of course, you know some of my favorite ones of the comic strips. And a few days ago, I usually, I don't know that I like this strip but I find myself reading it all the time. Why should I read a comic strip about a frog? Well for those of you who know the comic strip "Conrad" you know what I'm talking about. Well, here is the lovely, pretty little girl speaking and she says, "No wonder," as she speaks to kind of a haggly looking woman. I'm not sure exactly who she is, but anyway, "No wonder you have trouble with guys," she said. "You don't go to aerobics. You don't eat sushi. You don't own one garment from Olivia Newton John's new boutique. And you're wearing last year's shade of lip gloss." "But I'm honest, sensitive, and generous," the hag says. "Exactly, you're so superficial." [Laughter] That's the exact reverse of things isn't it?

But that's the way our society thinks today. To be with it we have to be with these things, but the old virtues, the old things that are really reality we don't give them any attention at all. We might not call them superficial, but we really don't pay them any attention at all. But my dear Christian friends, they are the real things, the things that really matter. May God help us to remember that. Let's bow in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee and praise Thee for the word of God. And we pray that Isaiah's words may impress upon us the necessity of reality in our spiritual lives. Deliver us from the true superficiality of worldliness, indifference, and lethargy in spiritual things. Motivate us, Lord, to prayer, loving concern for the lost, concern for our fellow

believers, and above all concern for the glory of God in a day in which Thy name is dishonored and held in reproach.