



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Isaiah 4:2-6

"The Glorious Branch"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Tonight we are looking at Isaiah chapter 4 in the continuation of our series of studies on the Messianic prophecies of Isaiah. And our topic is the "The Glorious Branch of Jehovah." We have been saying the last couple of times together that the general flow of the argument of Isaiah 2, 3, and 4, for these three chapters form one prophecy, indicates that it is really one long in a sense analysis of the Jerusalem of his day in the light of the future. And we tried to point out, I think in our first study, and then again in our second study I know, that he sees two Jerusalems in these three chapters, chapters 2, 3, and 4. He sees their histories extending from his day on to the last day or last days.

In other words, he has before him prophetic Jerusalem before the world and he says in chapter 2 verse 1 and following that God's truth overflows the whole of the world in the last days. You'll notice how he begins the 2nd chapter. "The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it." So he looks into the future and he sees Jerusalem in the light of the last days.

But then in chapter 3 after having given us that magnificent prophecy in chapter 2 he analyzes the spiritual condition of Jerusalem in his day. In fact, I think that we could say that from chapter 2, verse 6 through chapter 3 that is what he doing. But we have it particularly before us in chapter 3. And so what he does in this central section is to discuss present Jerusalem before God. In other words, he looks at the spiritual condition of the city in his day and analyzes its difficulties and problems. And one might say if God's truth is to overflow the whole of the world in the future, in the mean time, in Isaiah's day particularly, man's heresies have penetrated Zion. And these heresies are both moral heresies and doctrinal heresies. There, in the future, God alone is worshipped. But here, now the city is crowded with idols. There in the future Jerusalem shall be characterized by tremendous spiritual blessings, but here, now; Jerusalem is full of the spoils of trade as a result of the wickedness and iniquity and greed of the people of Israel's day. There, he says, the swords of men shall be beaten into ploughshares, but here now he talks about vast and novel armaments that Israel is concerned with.

Now, I won't say anything about the relationship of that to the building up of the defense of the United States of America, because the situation in Jerusalem and the situation in Judah and Israel is not really the same as it is in the United States. But of course the spiritual principles are there and those spiritual principles are, of course, that our trust is ultimately in the Lord. And if we put our trust in armaments or in our alliances with our modern day Egypt's, then of course our attitude toward the Lord God is wrong.

But now in chapter 4 in the last part of this one long prophecy, 2, 3, and 4 he looks again at prophetic Jerusalem but this time not so much prophetic Jerusalem before the world but prophetic Jerusalem before the Lord. One might ask, is there any hope for the city after that tremendous accusation of the city in chapter 3. Well, chapter 4 tells us there is hope for the city of Jerusalem and of course the people of Jerusalem. But it will come only after judgment. So chapter 4 verse 2 through verse 6 is the conclusion of the

prophecy which began in chapter 2. And it ends in a promise of the glory of the coming Messiah and his days. And we want to look then at verse 2 through verse 6. Because here we another of the instances in the Authorized Version where those who have divided the Authorized Version into chapters have made a slight mistake, most commentators feel. Chapter 4, verse 1 really belongs at the end of chapter 3 and the chapter division should have been made at chapter 4, verse 2. That's where this Messianic prophecy begins and that's what we will look at.

Now, as I said, in chapter 2, verse 1 through verse 5 the city is more prominent. And here the Lord is more prominent. Now, let's notice verse 2 because this is the beginning of the Messianic prophecy. "In that day shall the branch of the LORD be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel." I'd like to say right in the beginning that what this text says in the light of the interpretation that I want to offer to you is that there is coming a day when the Lord Jesus Christ in both his divine side and his human side will be looked upon as he says, "beautiful and glorious, excellent and comely, for those who have escaped the judgment that is to come in the latter days." In other words, it is a prophecy of Messianic personality, the Lord Jesus himself. And stress is laid upon the double-sided origin of the Lord. Because remember he is the God-man. And so one person possessed of a divine nature and a human nature, and therefore one person who may be looked at from the standpoint of his divine nature from his divine side, or he may be looked at from the standpoint of his human nature, his human side, yet one person.

I should begin this by saying modern commentators, not all of them of course, but many modern commentators do not feel that this is a Messianic prophecy at all, except only generally. In fact, one recent commentator, one under whom I studied briefly in the University of Edinburgh many years ago, Ronald Clements has said that verse 2 is a verse that says nothing more than that the land shall be rich and fertile for the remnant. And of course he does not believe even that this chapter probably came from Isaiah. But

whoever wrote is simply saying that in the day of the future according to the prophecy the land will be fertile. Now, I'd like to suggest, of course, that there is a great deal more to it than that and the orthodox interpretation. And actually the interpretation put upon it traditionally is that this is a Messianic prophecy.

And I'd like to suggest some reasons first of all why this expression, the branch of Jehovah is a term by which the Lord Jesus Christ is described. It is a title of the Messiah. "In that day shall the branch of the LORD be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth," also a Messianic title, "the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel." Now I'd like to suggest some reasons why this is probably a Messianic term. In the first place, the source of this figure lies in previous revelation in the word of God. And I'd like for you to turn with me back to 2 Samuel chapter 23 and verse 5. You know one thing that we learn from the study of the Bible is that those who wrote the Bible were great students of the word of God themselves. They studied the revelation that they had in their hands. For example, it becomes very plain that Zechariah was a great student of Isaiah. His terms, as we shall see tonight, incidentally, his terms are terms that he often derives from Isaiah. And Isaiah, we learned in our first study, was a great student of the Pentateuch, because his whole first chapter is derived from what he read and studied and saw in Moses' great song of Deuteronomy 31 and particularly 32. Now, we're not them saying something that is strange or difficult to believe when we say that the writers of Scripture studied the Scripture that they were able to study, the Scripture that had been written at the time that they were inspired to write.

Now in chapter 23 and verse 1 listen to the last words of David. "Now these be the last words of David. David the son of Jesse said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said," see this is David speaking of himself. "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me and his word was in my tongue. The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God." Now remember, David had been given a

Messianic prophecy in the form of a covenant. He had been given a covenant and promises and those promises had said in effect that he was to have a seed who would sit upon the throne of the nation Israel and would rule over the whole of the earth in an everlasting kingdom. So David was well acquainted with the great promises that God had given to him. He seemed to have entertained for a time that perhaps they would be fulfilled to him. But as we can see in his last words, he has come to realize that the promises were not to be fulfilled to him at that time.

Verse 4, " And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain. Although my house be not so with God." In other words, it's not been fulfilled to me yet, "yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure." Remember Isaiah will speak later about the sure mercies of David. He was a student of this section. "For this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he makes it not to sprout." Now, I've translated that slightly differently from the Authorized Version. It has although he make it not grow, but the term that is used here is the term *tsamach*. Now Hebrew *tsamach* means "to grow." The term for branch is the word *tsemach*. As you can see that's simply a noun built on the same root. *Tsamach*, to grow or to sprout or to cause to sprout; and *tsemach*, a sprout or a branch. So it's not surprising then that later on this term *tsemach*, branch, should come to be associated with the Messianic king who would be the inheritor of the Davidic covenant and rule over the face of the earth. Therefore, it seems to me that what we have already is an indication from the term "the branch of Jehovah" that here is an expression that refers to the Messiah.

But let's look at Isaiah chapter 28; Isaiah 28 and verse 1 and verse 5. And while you are finding Isaiah 28, I'll just read verse 1. It's verse 5 that I have particularly in mind. "Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower, which are on the head of the fat valleys of them that are overcome with wine!" In other words, Isaiah in the first verse attacks the people around him because of

their moral evil. But then in verse 5 he says, "In that day shall the LORD of hosts be for a crown of glory and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue, "the remnant you see, "of his people." Now notice those terms, "shall be for a crown of glory and for a diadem of beauty unto the residue of his people."

Now with that in mind come back and let's read verse 2 then of Isaiah chapter 4. "In that day shall the branch of the LORD be beautiful and glorious," notice the two terms again, beauty and glory, "and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel." In other words, the same kind of thing that is stated in chapter 4, verse 2 is stated in chapter 28 verse 1 and verse 5 in a context in which the Messiah is specifically referred to, as you read Isaiah 28:16.

Now secondly, that's one reason why I think that this "branch of Jehovah is a Messianic term." The source of the figure lies in the history of the unfolding of the Davidic promises concerning the Messiah. Let's take a look now at the usage of the term branch. And first of all, I'm going to have you turn with me to Jeremiah chapter 23; Jeremiah chapter 23 and verse 5. In Jerusalem 23:5 the prophet writes, "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch," notice the expression, a righteous branch, and if you have any question about who this branch is he says, "and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." So he is the branch. Now he is called a righteous branch. And he is a branch unto David. So he is the Davidic king, the righteous branch, and he is going to rule and prosper in the latter days. And his name is, "The Lord our righteousness."

Now, you can see that he is a branch, a righteous branch raised up unto David, the human side of this branch, but his name is Yahweh our righteousness, his divine side. So the two aspects of his character again are set out. He's the God-man and the Davidic king. Now, if you'll turn over to Jeremiah 33, verse 15 we have again a reference to the

branch. We read in verse 15, "In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land." Now, to show you that Zechariah builds on the previous prophecies, because he too was a student of Scripture. You know, if the people who wrote the Bible, men like Isaiah and Jeremiah, and Zechariah studied Scripture how much more ought we to study the word of God.

So let's look now at Zechariah chapter 3 in verse 8. In the visions which make up the earlier chapters of the Book of Zechariah we read in the 8th verse, "Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at." That is they are signs. "For, behold, I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH." So he looks forward to the one who is the servant, the branch. Now you can see that the description of the character and person of the branch is widening. We have, in chapter 4, verse 2 of Isaiah, the expression, "the branch of Yahweh." And then in Jeremiah chapter 23 he is raised up to David and he is called "the Lord our righteousness." And now here he is called "my servant the Branch."

And turn over to chapter 6 and verse 12. In chapter 6, verse 12 of the prophecy of Zechariah the prophet writes, "And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD." Now you can see from Zechariah that this term Branch has already become a proper name. It's become a name for the Messiah, just commonly used so often that by the time Zechariah writes, near the close of the Old Testament revelation, Branch is a proper name. So as one looks at the term Branch in the light of the usage of Scripture that is another reason why it is likely that in Isaiah chapter 4, verse 2 when we read, "In that day shall the branch of the LORD be beautiful and glorious," that we are referring to a personal Messiah.

But that's not all. The preceding context of Isaiah chapter 3 traced the evils and difficulties of the city of Jerusalem to the evils that were taking place through the activities

of men and women in the city. If you read chapter 3, we don't have time to do that. I hope you have read that chapter. But if you have read the chapter you will notice that there is a whole lot of stress laid upon the personal rebellion against the Lord God. There is a great deal said about the rulers and their judicial iniquity against the Lord and a great deal is said about women in that chapter. "Moreover the LORD saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet. Therefore the LORD will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the LORD will discover their secret parts." The moral iniquity of the city has not simply extended to the men, the priests and the rulers, but to the women as well. So we have a chapter in which there's just an unfolding of the inner corruption on rottenness that existed in the lives of the individuals in the city of Jerusalem.

In other words, things are traced back to persons. Well, in the light of that preceding context, since the evils are traced to persons, it's certainly likely that when he talks about what he's going to do in the future that he would be, or easily could be speaking about things done through a person. So I'm inclined to think, in the light of this, to this point, that he is speaking about a personal Messiah whose name is the Branch of Jehovah.

And finally, the Jewish Targum of the prophecy of Isaiah translates this, "At that time shall the Messiah of the Lord be for joy and glory." In other words, in that interpretation of the Old Testament the Messiah is called the Branch of Jehovah. So they looked at this as a Messianic title, the Branch of Jehovah. And in spite of the scholarship of some of our modern scholars, I think in this case they are clearly wrong.

Let me just point out another thing about this term branch. This is just something to make you think. It is interesting how these expressions have been put in the word of God by the prophets. Now, we know when we read the New Testament we read Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. And we are taught from the beginning of the time that

we study the Bible that the gospels give us four different pictures of the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. They are not attempts to give us the same story of our Lord, but they are attempts to give a particular story with a particular emphasis. Call it a theological emphasis if you want. That doesn't mean it's less true. But it does lay emphasis upon the fact that the gospel records are different.

For example, the gospel of Matthew is the gospel in which the royal dignity of the Lord Jesus is set forth most emphatically. And when finally he says that Pilate wrote over the cross, this is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews; well you can see that's the climax of the gospel and the presentation of the Lord Jesus as the king. And then when we turn to Luke we notice a great deal of stress upon the human side of the ministry of our Lord and so ordinarily students, speaking very generally, say Luke presents the Lord Jesus Christ's ministry as the ministry of Messiah the man. And then Mark, Mark is full of the word immediately, immediately. And everything moves rapidly. Our Lord follows the will of God implicitly and quickly. It's not surprising that Mark is said to be the gospel of the Lord Jesus as the servant, and then the gospel of John with its great stress on the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Messiah, the Son of God. Well usually people say John presents the Lord Jesus as the Son of God or as God.

Now, when you go back and look at these terms in the Old Testament, the branch. Well, we have for example in Jeremiah chapter 23 in verse 5, notice what is stated there in that use of the term branch. "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper." There we have the Lord Jesus Christ or the Branch in his royal aspect. That's his Gospel of Matthew aspect.

And then when we turn to Zechariah and read in the 6th chapter and the 12th verse these words and speak unto him saying, "And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man," the man, "whose name is The BRANCH." We have stress upon the human side of our Lord, the "man whose name is the

Branch." Turning back to the 3rd chapter and verse 8, "For, behold, I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH." There is the Markan side of the ministry of the Lord. And finally in Isaiah chapter 4, and verse 2 the passage that we're looking at we have the Messiah called "the Branch of Jehovah." That stresses his kingly dignity and position. He is the Branch of Jehovah.

Now the early church, these things I'm telling you are things that the early church recognized. They and their pictures of the gospels, they picture the gospel writers in these aspects. And so they thought of certain animals. And so they associated certain animals with the gospels, the four gospels. And that was characteristic of the early church. Sometimes they differed over the way that they did, but they saw those different characteristics of the gospels and they saw in them legitimate representations of the different aspects of the Lord's ministry. So I just then conclude by saying that what we have here is a Messianic title, the Branch of Jehovah.

Well, it is common for people to say, "Well if the Branch of Jehovah is a Messianic title, then fruit of the earth must also be a Messianic title, because it is in parallelism with it. He says, "In that day shall the branch of the LORD be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel." A fruit of the earth doesn't sound like a Messianic title, so since that doesn't sound like a Messianic title some have said it's not a Messianic title and therefore Branch of Jehovah is not a Messianic title either.

One of the reasons for the difficulty is that the expression "fruit of the earth" really should be translated "fruit of the land." For the Hebrew expression *pariy ha'erets* means not the fruit of the earth, but the fruit of the land. In other words, there is a much closer relationship to the land of Palestine than appears in the Authorized Version rendering. What this states is that while he is the Branch of Jehovah and it is Jehovah who has caused him sprout, at the same time he is a thoroughly human person who has had his human origin on the earth, in fact in the land. Now Micah, of course, tells us that he is to

be born in Bethlehem. And this same prophet, the prophet [of] Israel will say in the 9th chapter and the 6th verse, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." But it is "unto us" that a child is born.

And finally in the 11th chapter and the first verse listen to what we read, "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots." Now, that term for Branch here is a different term from that in the fourth chapter but the essence of the thought is there. So that the Lord Jesus is looked at on the one hand as the Branch of Jehovah, from his divine side, his divine origin is the eternal trinity. And then on the human side there came a time when he would be born in Bethlehem. He would be of Israel, of the land, and in fact would spring up out of the tribe of Judah. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, I suspect, it's difficult to prove this, was a student of this particular passage, because in the 7th chapter and the 14th verse of the Epistle to the Hebrews he said, "Our Lord, we know our Lord. If he were on earth he wouldn't be a priest, because he wasn't from the right tribe." He said, "We know that our Lord has sprung from Judah."

Now, that might not, of course, be a reference to the kind of springing that we're talking about, except that the Greek word that is used there *anateleo* was a word that was used of the sprouting of plants and herbs. And so even in the usage of the term, in the Epistle to the Hebrews there is an anticipation of that side of the nature of our Lord. He has sprung from the tribe of Judah just like a plant, just like an herb. So what Israel is referring to them is the fact that the Lord will cause the Messiah to sprout from Israel, although he will be the Branch of Jehovah, and it will be done for the remnant of the nation Israel. What he is talking about, of course, as prophecy goes on to unfold is the fact that the Messiah is going to come, and he is going to engage in the work of judgment and burning. And he is going to usher in the kingdom and it will be by virtue of the

ministry of him, the Messiah, as the Branch. If we were looking at the fullness of the fulfillment of this we would have to turn to Romans chapter 11, verse 25 through verse 27 where there the apostle goes on to say that "So all Israel shall be saved." An expression, incidentally, that does not mean every single Israelite, but means the nation as a whole shall be saved. And he links it with the prophecies of the Old Testament citing a text which is a combination of references to the Abrahamic, the Davidic, and the New Covenant. So he is the Branch of Jehovah. He is the Fruit of the Earth, the divine side, the human side.

Now, of course, I would not want, if I were in a theological classroom and I was trying to prove the doctrine of the deity of Christ and the humanity of Christ, I would not turn back to this passage and say, this is the text that we want to prove the deity of Christ and the humanity of Christ from, because being an early text in the unfolding of Scripture, the clarity of the doctrine is not nearly so full and obvious here as it is later on. But the later passages made plain that this passage is what it's saying in its context.

Now then, I would suggest then that this first statement in verse 2 is a reference to the Messiah and his two fold aspect. So the Messianic personality is referred to there. Now secondly, I'd like to notice some of the personal Messianic blessings that are referred to in verse 3 and verse 4. We will not go into this quite as fully, because I think that you probably would grasp it just about as well as I do. He says in verse 3, "And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem." Now, incidentally he's talking about the future, and he's saying "in that day." And by the way, he's still talking about things here on this earth, too. "And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem: When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion." Remember we read about the filth of the daughters of Zion in the 3rd chapter and the 16th and 17th verses. "And the bloods," that's plural in the Hebrew

text, "the bloods of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning."

So he turns from the Messiah in verses 3 and 4 to his people. And he talks about the prerequisites of these blessings in verse 4. IN a sense we will expound verse 4 before we expound verse 3, because he says certain things are going to happen in verse 3 when the things in verse 4 have come to pass. So verse 4 now speaks of the prerequisites of these personal Messianic blessings. The work of judgment finds its reference in the Second Advent. "When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning." Later on in the prophecy and in other prophecies of the Old Testament it is plain that that which he is referring to is the Second Advent of the Lord. That Advent will be in judgment and the purification of those who are upon the earth will take place. Those who are his own will be brought through that time and on into the experience of the kingdom of God. But there must be this judgment first.

Now, the consequences are described in verse 3, "And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion," that is after the judgment and burning, "and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy." I think that's rather striking. His people are holy. In other words, those who enjoy the Messianic kingdom are individuals who have a status of holiness before the Lord God. Now, of course, they are not simply in that kingdom because of their moral holiness. Their status as ones who have, by grace, been brought to trust in the Redeemer and his finished work is the basis upon which they enter into the enjoyment of that kingdom. But it is also true that those who have come faith in the Lord Jesus Christ will be individuals whose lives show the effects of trust in him. That is one of the great truths of the word of God, and one that we should never overlook, that our lives should demonstrate the faith that we have.

Now, of course I don't have to see the evidence in your life and you don't have to see it in mine, but the word of God says there must be that evidence. The Lord is the one

who will of course be the judge of spiritual fruit, not we. We are not fruit testers of other Christians. We like to do that, but nevertheless that is not our activity at all. That is to be done at the judgment seat of Jesus Christ. One thing we can say is it must be there. So these individuals that are holy are those who have in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah to come, the Branch of Jehovah. And therefore have been brought into a status or a position. We might fill it out by saying justification, forgiveness of sins, redemption, reconciliation. At this point the details of that, well they are not given to us in the Old Testament. That will come later on in the flow of divine revelation.

But notice what he says at the conclusion of verse 3, "Even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem." Isn't that striking, that here in the Old Testament, the people of God are said to be holy by divine foreordination. There it is, just as plain as day. Notice, don't miss it. "Shall be called holy even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem." Now that is just Isaiah's way of referring to the facts of divine foreordination. Fundamentally in the final analysis these individuals are in the Messianic kingdom by divine determination. Their faith flows out of this divine determination, just as when Paul preached in Antioch Luke said that "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed." So the faith flowed from the divine foreordination. That's something taught all through the word of God. Faith is our responsibility, but it is also the gift of God. And fundamental to that is the divine foreordination and the divine gift.

The New American Standard Bible translates this, "recorded for life." And Isaiah's not the only Old Testament prophet who speaks about this. Listen to Daniel in the 12th chapter and the 1st verse of his prophecy. He says, "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book." So one must first of all be written in the book. But those who are written in the book are those for whom the Lord through the Messiah works. Now, I like that. What an

encouragement it is to know that our salvation is ultimately founded upon the divine determination.

Now finally, in verse 5 and 6 the national and political blessings are referred to, and the prophet writes, "And the LORD will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defense." I'd like to stop for just a moment and ask you to notice that what he is talking about here in the kingdom is something like a renewal of this creation of which we are a part. In fact, he uses the term *bara*, which means "to create." He says, "The LORD will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion." That, incidentally, is not a reference to individual dwelling places, that word was never used in that sense. It is a reference to the whole of the city of Zion, the whole of Jerusalem. In other words, what he is really saying here is that the city of Jerusalem is going to be like one great holy of holies. Not simply as in the Old Testament one only, the priests could go into the holy of holies. But everybody in Jerusalem and it will not be incidentally located in one place, but the whole of the city of Jerusalem will be one vast holy of holies.

I like also the term that he uses for defense here, "for upon all the glory shall be a defense," or a canopy. This *chuppah*, now any Jewish person would recognize immediately that this is a reference to the marriage canopy. This is the very word, *chuppah*, from which the marriage canopy is derived. Now, I don't know a whole lot about Jewish marriages. In fact, I'm not sure that I ever really have attended one. And my knowledge comes from just observation and things that people have said. But as you know, I think as you know, when people are married according to the Jewish faith, they are married under a canopy. And that is, of course, designed to express, I presume, ultimately and way back the divine interest in this, because the canopy was a sign of protection. It may even have gone back to the 1st chapter of the Book of Genesis and the idea of the firmament over the earth. I'm not sure about that, and didn't have time to

investigate that. At any rate the idea of protection is clearly there. And so he said, "The Lord is going to create in Jerusalem one vase holy of holies, and it's going to be just like a marriage canopy and everybody is going to be under it. And they are going to be then under the divine protection.

Now, it doesn't take much for a Bible reader to see here that there is a reference here to the incident of the children of Israel being led out of Egypt into the Promise Land. Because he said he will create upon every dwelling place of Mount Zion and upon her assemblies a cloud and smoke by day and the shining of a flaming fire by night. And so what he was saying is what was represented in the Old Testament by the pillar of cloud in the day time and the pillar of fire by night, incidentally the fire was there in the cloud in the day time, too, you just couldn't see it because of the sun, the fire being representative of the presence of the holy God. And as the children of Israel were led out of the land of Egypt they were not simply given guidance, but they were given protection. Remember when the children of Israel were pursued by the Egyptians, then of course the cloud protected them from the Egyptians so that the Egyptians were unable to attack them. It was a wall of darkness. So the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire were designed to express guidance and protection.

And then do you remember when finally the tabernacle was built? Well, the Shekinah glory came and abode over the tabernacle so that that became significant in that it expressed the fact of the presence of God. So what the prophet is saying here is, that in the Messianic days of the kingdom of God, God is going to so renew the earth and Jerusalem, Jerusalem the head of the nations as he's already said in the beginning of this prophecy, that there is going to be the guidance of God. There is going to be the protection of God, and the presence of God there. And that's why the nations are going to go up to Jerusalem in order that they might be taught the word of God, as Isaiah has said in the earlier part of his prophecy.

And finally, it concludes with verse 6, "And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the day time from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain." This, of course, figurative of the divine concern and care. Well, it is a magnificent Messianic prophecy, and as I said earlier we would give you a chance at least to ask one or two questions. So if you would like to ask a question, raise your hand. Here's your opportunity. If you've been puzzled by something feel free.

[Question from the audient]

[Johnson] Chapter 12 and verse 1. Any other questions? Surely something more significant than that that Richard has just asked about there. Anything else? You might look at Isaiah chapter 49, verse 16. Dick put that there as well. I didn't have time to turn to that passage, but it bears on that point, too. Any others? Well I didn't know that I had taught that so plainly and clearly to you. Let's close with a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father we are thankful to Thee for these magnificent prophecies of the future. We thank Thee for the magnificent way in which the Lord Jesus is presented, and to think that he is our Savior, how wonderful. And that we have come to know him, how gracious Thou art to us. And as we leave and through the remainder of this week, Lord, help us to be...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]