



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Isaiah 54:1-17

“The Glory of the Servants of Jehovah”

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] We thank Thee, Lord, for the privilege that is ours again of opening the Scriptures. We thank Thee for these encouraging words that the prophet Isaiah has written so many hundreds of years ago concerning the Nation Israel, concerning the covenants made with the nation, concerning the blessing of the past as well as the future. We thank Thee for the encouragement that they are to us as we reflect upon the unchanging faithfulness of our great God. And we thank Thee that when we rest ourselves upon him, we rest upon someone who is faithful to his word and shall accomplish all that he has written. And we are grateful for the forgiveness of our sins through the blood that was shed on Calvary's cross. We thank Thee, Lord, for the hope that we have of sharing in the blessings that Thou hast set forth in the ancient covenant. And we know that though hundreds of years have past, that it is as if thou didst make them day before yesterday. For a thousand years with Thee is as one day, and one day is a thousand years. And we thank Thee for the encouragement that we have as we ponder these great truths. And we pray, Lord, that they may minister to us, to our minds, and to our spirits, and that they may have also a fruitful effect in our lives. We commit all of us to Thee. We pray Thy blessing upon us in these very crucial days in which Thou hast placed us. Give us eyes, Lord, to see and to understand the signs of the times that are

about us, and enable us to serve Thee in them. Give us devotion to Thee and to the word of God and to the task of being a faithful witness of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We commit this hour to Thee. We pray Thy blessing upon it. In Jesus' name. Amen.

[Message] We're turning tonight in the continuation of our study of the Messianic prophecies in Isaiah to chapter 54. And the subject for tonight is "The Glory of the Servants of Jehovah."

Now for those of you who have not been here, we have been studying recently the prophecies of the servant of Jehovah and especially the songs of chapter 42, chapter 49, chapter 50, and then last Tuesday night, we attempted the impossible of covering the fourth of these songs, chapter 52 verse 13 through chapter 53 verse 12, in one night. And now we are coming to chapter 54.

And for those of you who have been with us all along, you know that we're not trying to expound the whole book of Isaiah but picking out these Messianic prophecies. But this is a very fitting, I think, chapter to consider after chapter 53, because the subject is the glory of the servants of Jehovah. And in fact, one notices that precise expression here in the 17th verse of the 54th chapter when the prophet writes, "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD."

To the Nation Israel, this chapter, the 54th chapter, should be of tremendous comfort to them. The nation has been battered and beaten through the centuries, by not only man, but also by God in disciplinary judgment. And this chapter should be an invigorating and uplifting breath of heavenly air for them, because it does appear as if the days of the redemption of the nation as a nation are drawing nigh.

We can think of some of the things that Israel has experienced in recent years, relatively recent years. Now, of course, you understand I'm speaking from the standpoint of an old man. Some of you don't even remember things like this, but those of us who have maturity, we do. We can remember, for example, Adolf Hitler saying, "I believe today that I am acting in the sense of the Almighty Creator. By warding off the Jews I am fighting for the Lord's work."

And then, of course, we all remember statements made by Martin Luther, who fortunately made some other good statements which we can put over against some of his evil ones. But this was one of his evil ones, "Jews and papists are ungodly wretches; they are two stockings made from one piece of cloth."

One of the popes issued a decree, and he said, "We order that each and every Jew of both sexes in our temporal dominions, and in all the cities, lands, places and baronies subject to them, shall depart completely out of the confines thereof within the space of three months and after these letters shall have been made public."

One of the Jewish men has said, "The Jews are a frightened people. Nineteen centuries of Christian love have broken down their nerves." Now we can understand that, and I think that we can really appreciate that.

And then, it was not but about fifteen years ago that we had the spectacle of a ruler of Egypt saying things like this. It's amazing to me that people can look at what is happening in the near East and not see that a lot of the things that are happening over there are the reflection of this same kind of attitude.

Listen to what Nasser said before the summer of 1967 and the war of 1967, "Egypt will be glad when her army and that of Syria will meet on the ruins of this treacherous people, the Zionist's gangs." Then in a speech in Alexandria (that was one in Cairo), a speech in Alexandria the 26th of July, 1959, he said, "We want a decisive battle to annihilate that germ Israel." Then on Radio Cairo in 1962 he said, "We will launch a full-scale war when the right moment comes."

And then in 1965 in a message to Arab Students Convention in London he said, "Our aim is the creation of a unified and continuous Arab region from which Israel will be eliminated." Then a joint communiqué with the president of Iraq, May the 23rd, 1965, Nasser said, "The national Arab goal is the eradication of Israel." A speech in Cairo, November the 18th, 1965, "We aim at the destruction of the state of Israel." A press conference in May the 28th, 1967, or rather, I'm sorry, this was a speech to the Pan Arab Trade Unions, Cairo, May the 26th, 1967, "The Arab people want to fight. We've been waiting for the right time when we would be completely ready. Now the war will be total. Its objective will be the annihilation of Israel." And then the press conference in Cairo May the 28th, "Israel's very existence is aggression."

Now after 1967, this same kind of thing. "No peace with Israel. No recognition of Israel. No negotiations with Israel. The war has not ended; it has only begun. When the time comes, we will strike." Then later in 1968, "The Arab nation has decided to embark on the path of war. We will move on to the containment of Israel, and after that, to its eradication. No recognition of Israel. No negotiations with Israel. No peace with Israel. We aim at the destruction of the state of Israel." That was at the Congress of the Arab Socialist Union in Cairo, 1968.

"The Fatah fulfill a vital task in sapping the enemies' strength and draining his blood. The UAR appreciates the attitude taken by the Palestinian organization in rejecting the security council resolution of November 1967. The resolution may serve the purpose of eliminating the consequences of the aggression and lead to total Israel withdrawal, but it is inadequate for determining the fate of Palestine. The UAR places all its resources at the disposal of these organizations. The Six Day War," he said, "was in actual fact the prelude to a war that has not yet ended."

Well, that of course is true. That war is still going on. That war will continue to go on, and probably will continue on until its successful conclusion in the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In chapter 54 of the prophecy of Isaiah, Zion is pictured, as in Revelation, as the bride and the city of Jehovah. One reads this when we begin verses 1 through 6, and I'd like to read these verses. And then I'll read verse 11 and 12, because in these verses you will see that Jerusalem is pictured as the bride of Jehovah.

"Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD. Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes; For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited. Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more. For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called. For the LORD hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and as a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God. (Let me read on. I'll read on at verse 7 too, because we want to comment on these verses in a few moments.) For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer. For this is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah shall no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee. O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colors, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates

of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones. And all thy children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children. (As we shall see in a few moments, that text is one that the Lord Jesus himself studied. Of course, I guess that we should say he studied the whole of the Scriptures, but we know that he studied this one, for he cites it in the New Testament in the chapter that Arminians frequently read through very rapidly, John chapter 6.) In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression; for thou shalt not fear: and from terror; for it shall not come near thee. Behold, they shall surely gather together, but not by me: whosoever shall gather together against thee shall fall for thy sake. (Well, there is a man who knows about that, and his name is Nasser) Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work; and I have created the waster to destroy. No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD."

Now, if you read through this chapter, you will notice that Zion is pictured as in the Book of Revelation as the bride and the city of Jehovah. Now that is not uncommon for people who lived in the east, because it was a rather ordinary thing for them to think of their gods as being wedded to them, wedded to the people, and also, wedded to their lands and to their cities. And that same kind of figure of speech is used by the prophet here.

So the servant's life and work, particularly his sufferings as we have seen in chapter 53, has solved the problem of the restoration of the nation. One should never forget that Isaiah chapter 54 follows Isaiah chapter 53. And Isaiah chapter 53 has given us this magnificent exposition of his substitutionary atoning work. And so it's natural to think and then read of the blessings of the effects of that work upon the Nation Israel.

So chapter 4 follows chapter 3 as the effects of the work that the suffering servant has accomplished. The seed of chapter 53 verse 10 has come into existence, and the "many" are so many, that is, the many for whom he has died and whom he has redeemed are so many that the cords must be lengthened and the stakes must be strengthened. The righteousness of the servant, chapter 53 verse 11, is seen now as of Jehovah.

Isaiah 53 then is the summit of the prophecy of Isaiah putting the capstone on the work of the servant of Jehovah. And from now on, Isaiah will be largely an unfolding of the results of the servant's work and all that flows from it.

And when one reads those last verses, for example, in chapter 53:10,

"Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed (Well, that seed is set forth for us in this 54th chapter. Of course, the seed is more than is set forth in chapter 54, but this is part of the seed.), he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul (And that, of course, is pictured for us in chapter 54), and he shall be satisfied: and by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities."

And that's that of which we read here in chapter 54 and verse 14, "In righteousness thou shalt be established," and then in verse 17 at the conclusion he says, "This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD."

And I do not think that this is an accident at all that what we have in chapter 53 is the suffering servant of Yahweh, but then in chapter 54, he says "This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD (that is, of Yahweh), and their righteousness is of me, saith Yahweh." So that there is an identification that is made between the Yahweh who is

responsible for the entire program of the suffering servant of Jehovah and of Yahweh himself, so that what is traced to the servant of Yahweh may also be traced to Yahweh himself.

Now, the connection between the two chapters we've talked about, that was caught by John Calvin in his commentary on Isaiah with some modifications. He points out that after speaking of the death of the Messiah, Isaiah speaks of the church that we may feel more deeply the value and efficacy of his death. Well, of course, John Calvin felt that in the Old Testament when we read about Israel the nation, that by a process of spiritualization, then, when we read in the New Testament of the church, we are reading about the same entity. I do not think that is true. The church of the New Testament is not the same as Israel the nation in the Old Testament. But nevertheless, the connection between the work of the suffering servant and the products of his work is true. And if we will just change church in John Calvin's statement to the Nation Israel, then, of course, we will have precisely what we do have in chapter 54.

Tonight, because this is a lengthy chapter of seventeen verses filled with all kinds of wonderful things, I can conceive how a good Bible teacher might go to some place and have a week of meetings on Isaiah chapter 54. It's a magnificent chapter. It's cited in the New Testament in more than one place, and different parts of it are cited in the New Testament. So, what I would like to do is just to read through it very slowly and make some comments as we go along.

And first of all, just to suggest an outline to you, in verses 1 through 10 we have Zion as the bride of Jehovah. Now it must be remembered as we think about Zion as the bride of Jehovah that the Nation Israel, because of her defection and departure from the faith, is the wife who is put away. In Isaiah chapter 49 through chapter 52, we have something of that. But there is never a permanent bill of divorcement given to the Nation Israel. Generations in Israel, because of their disobedience and unbelief, are treated as if they were Gentiles, because after all, remember, "Not all who are of Israel are Israel." For

true believing Israel is to be distinguished from those who are simply national Israelites. But we also need to remember that true believing Israelites are always ethnic Israelites. They're not Gentiles.

So, there is a distinction within Israel, within the ethnic company. There is the believing element, and there is the unbelieving element within the nation. And that's what Paul talks about when he says, "Not all who are of Israel," that is of the ethnic company, "are Israel," believing ethnic company.

Now, Israel as a nation has never been divorced. Generations, of course, have gone into heresy and have been rejected by the Lord, but the ancient covenantal promises made to the nation have never been renounced by God, because when he makes his promises unconditionally, a fulfillment of those promises is ultimately dependent upon his faithfulness and what he says that he will do. So we know that the time is coming when Israel shall be restored to the favor of God as Paul puts it very succinctly in Romans 11. And so, all Israel, or Israel as a whole, shall be saved in the future.

Now, we're reading in Isaiah from the standpoint of people who are sent off into captivity because of divine discipline, and the prophet will also write about the future when they will be restored to their place of blessing. Listen to what he says, beginning in verse 1,

"Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD. (In other words, the time is coming when Israel is going to have more Israelites in the plan and purpose of God, enjoying the blessing of God, than ever in the past.) Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes; For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited."

This passage, of course, has to do with Israel's future blessings. This is not, by the way, a text that has to do with the advance of Christian missions except indirectly.

As you may remember from your study of Christianity, William Carey has been called the father of modern missions, and not without reason. He was a most unusual man. And at a particular conference on a gathering together of Christian people back in 1792, he preached a famous sermon on verse 2 and verse 3, "Spare not, lengthen thy cords, strengthen thy stakes," and called upon the Christian church, which had been largely neglectful of missions, to engage in world missions. And then William Carey himself went to the foreign field and left an indelible impression upon the nation of India.

He was responsible himself. There's no need for us to waste time on the details of Carey's life. It's a most thrilling story. But he was a magnificent linguist and left as a result of his work the translation of Scriptures in thirty-five different languages. So it was a magnificent thing, and it's on the basis of this text that he encouraged those people.

Arminians like to say they were Calvinists, and therefore, they weren't interested in missions. But Carey was a Calvinist. We should never forget that. And actually the modern missionary movement is therefore to be traced to a Calvinist. Now, Arminians don't like to know that, but then, Arminians like to live in strange spiritual climates anyway, so we just have to say that and pass on.

But of course, like so many, what he did was to take a text of Scripture and somewhat misapply its fundamental purpose in being in this part of the text, because what is really in view here is a reference to the future. And God is saying that there are going to be so many Israelites who are going to be saved in the time of which the prophet is speaking that, to use the figures of tents, they are going to have to enlarge the tents in order to encompass all of the people that are going to come into the knowledge of Jehovah.

"Thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited."

In other words, what he is talking about specifically is the ultimate fulfillment of the promises made to Abraham, Genesis chapter 12 and verse 3, where God said to Abraham, "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed," and then reiterated through the early chapters of the Book of Genesis in chapter 15, where the dimensions of the land are set out and various other references to those who are going to be saved. Like the sand of the sea, as we were expounding in Hosea chapter 1 on Sunday morning, like the sand of the sea and like the stars of the heavens. That's why he says "Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes." "And thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited."

Now he goes on and says in verse 4,

"Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more. For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called."

This is the reason that Israel shall prosper, and this is the reason that there shall be this magnificent conversion of the nations, "Thy maker is thine husband." And he can and he will bless, because as he says, he is the Lord God of hosts.

Now in verse 6 we read,

"For the LORD hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God. For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a

moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer."

In other words, there will be a time in which Israel shall abide under the disciplinary judgment of God. He calls that in verse 7 "a small moment" and then in verse 8 "in a little wrath." But this is going to issue in great mercies and everlasting kindness.

Now, everlasting kindness is a reference to the eternal blessings that flow out of the Abrahamic covenant, out of the Davidic covenant and out of the new covenant, all three of these covenants being unconditional covenants, that is, covenants that are dependent upon the faithfulness of God and not dependent upon men. In other words, he is going to fulfill them.

And if you have any question, "Well, will he fulfill them to those who are disobedient?" Well no, he will fulfill them to those who are penitent. But he also guarantees that in the last days, he will bring faith and penitence to a generation, and he will fulfill his covenant to them. So he guarantees that his covenant will be fulfilled in the future.

Now notice how he goes on to speak of what he is going to do,

"For this is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah shall no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that has mercy on thee."

So the ground of the everlasting kindness of the Lord is his oath that has to do with the future and that he will never again show them wrath. So, just as he told the generation of Noah that he would never again bring a flood over the earth, so here he

says there is going to come a time when you will enter into the blessings of the Lord your God, and he will never again bring you under disciplinary judgment. It's a magnificent expression of his unconditional kindness to the Nation Israel. He speaks about his covenant of peace in verse 10, probably a reference to the Abrahamic covenantal line, but perhaps a reference to the everlasting covenant of redemption. We're not absolutely certain of the force of that.

Now in verse 11 and verse 12 he speaks of Zion as the city of Jehovah. And Isaiah under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit describes the beauty of Jerusalem in the kingdom, but it is God who is the architect. One would like to turn to Revelation chapter 21 here and look at Revelation 21, for example, verses 18 through 21 for an expansion of what is set out here.

Notice the 11th and 12th verses. "O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colors, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of precious stones."

This, of course, is the answer to the question of the salvation of human society, and it will be done through the work that God will do with reference to the Nation Israel. There will be no peace over the face of this earth until Israel is finally brought into the experience of the blessings of those unconditional covenants. But at that time, there will be the introduction of a peace that is eternal peace.

Now in the last few verses of the chapter, we have Zion as the object of divine grace and protection. The outward physical glory is the reflection of an inward spiritual glory. And he describes the inward side of things now in verse 13 through verse 17. And you know, one cannot read this without saying that Isaiah was a believer in the sovereign grace of God. Now I want you to notice how he puts it. He says in verse 13, "And all thy children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children." Now

when he says "All thy children shall be taught of the LORD," the reference is not to external preaching, but to effectual calling, as our Lord's use shows.

Now what I'd like for you to do here is to turn over to John chapter 6 and verse 45, because this is a text that the Lord Jesus cites when he's preaching to some of those Israelites who are not of Israel. In John chapter 6 and in verse 44 we read these words, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets (Now, we've just been reading. It is written in the prophets), And they shall be all taught of the Lord."

Well, Isaiah wrote here in verse 13, "And all thy children shall be taught of the LORD." That's what our Lord was referring to. And so he says, "It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of the Lord. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me."

Now you can see from this, of course, that he is not talking about the outward preaching of the word. If he were talking about the outward preaching of the word, then "Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father" would come to him. That's what he says. "Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." And we would have to say that universalism is the teaching of our Lord.

Now some people read a text like this and they never bother to try to think about this text. But think about it for a moment. If he's talking about the external preaching of the word when he says "Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me," he would be teaching that everyone who ever hears the gospel will come to the Lord. Well, the facts are, of course, they don't come. So when he says "Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me," he's talking about the internal hearing and the internal response.

Would you mind if I read you some words that a well-known expositor has written concerning these words. Listen to him. "Now there are two ways in which the

Lord teaches us, by external preaching and by the secret revelation of the Holy Spirit. What kind of teaching the prophet means is explained by Christ when he quotes this passage. And therefore, we ought not to seek a better interpreter. (I agree. If our Lord has interpreted it for us, why should we seek a better interpreter?) It is written in the prophets, says he, 'all shall be taught by God. Every many who hath heard and learned from the Father, cometh to me,' John 6:45. If this passage were to be understood as relating to external preaching, the conclusion which Christ draws from it would not be well founded, for it does not follow. The gospel is preached, and therefore, all believe. Many oppose, others openly scorn, and others are hypocrites. Those only who have been foreordained to life, Acts 13:48, are sincerely teachable and are entitled to be ranked among his disciples. The gospel is preached indiscriminately to the elect and the reprobate, but the elect alone come to Christ because they have been taught by God. And therefore, to them the prophet undoubtedly refers."

I call that good exposition. And so, when we read here in verse 13 of Isaiah 54, "And all thy children shall be taught of the LORD," he is talking about what we talk about when we speak about the effectual grace of God.

Now there was another fellow who was the teacher of the individual whose exposition I just read. And his name was Augustine. And Augustine had this to say about this particular passage. He examined the passage and he applied it skillfully to the Palagians who extolled man's freewill in opposition to the grace of God. They appeared indeed to ascribe something to the grace of God but in such a manner that when they brought it forward, they gave to it an inferior place to man's free will, just as the papists do who assert that any person can either receive or reject it. But, Augustine says, "All shall be taught by God." Now God's disciples are efficaciously taught and follow his calling. He likewise, Augustine adds, that the passage of John's gospel which is cited by our Lord shows clearly that it is not free choice made by man and which is capable of being bent in either direction from which it proceeds.

And so, our Lord, then, leaning upon Isaiah's words, "All thy children shall be taught of the LORD," says "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." That's our Lord's exposition of Isaiah Chapter 54 and verse 13, "All thy children shall be taught of the LORD." And what that means is, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." And so, only those are disciples of the Lord who have been taught by him. That's the distinguishing thing that marks out a true Christian from a non-Christian.

One who has been taught by the Lord is the person who recognizes the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ, who recognizes that he died as a penal substitute, who recognizes that his death was voluntary, who recognizes that he in what he has done on the cross is the sole savior of men, and also who recognizes that it is only in the appropriation of what he has done that we have life. And all who are truly his are united in the conviction that the Lord Jesus is the savior of men. And those who are true Christians are also united together in a devotion and a worship of him. So, "All thy children shall be taught of the LORD."

That's a lovely text, isn't it? That's something that really kind of gives me a tremendously warm exhilarating feeling in my heart, because I know I have been taught by the Lord. And I've come by his grace to understand what I am and what he has done for a wicked sinner like me.

"All thy children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children." Well, we could talk about that forever, couldn't we? "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God." Or if you like the other reading, "Therefore, being justified by faith, let us go on having peace with God." For those who have been taught by him know they have peace, that the enmity has been removed, that the chasm between a sinful man and a holy God has been, (what shall I say?) has been united by the saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now then, in verse 14 he says,

"In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression; for thou shalt not fear: and from terror; for it shall not come near thee. (He speaks again about the nation in the future.) Behold, they shall surely gather together, but not by me: whosoever shall gather together against thee shall fall for thy sake."

You know, the Nation Israel in its generations has suffered much through the years, but no one can destroy the nation. Generations yes, generations God has disciplined. Generations have been set under eternal judgment, but the nation has the promise that its future is inviolable.

That's why Paul in Romans chapter 2 concludes the second chapter with those statements which have led some people to think, "Well, there is no difference between a Gentile and a Jew," for Paul said, "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."

And he's only saying what he says in chapter 9, that one to be a true Israelite must be a believing Israelite, but not a Gentile, a believing Israelite. And so the question comes, "Well what's the advantage of being a Jew?" And you might expect Paul to say, nothing. But he doesn't say that. "What is the advantage then that the Jew has? or what is the profit of circumcision? Much every way." Mind you this is in the age of the church, Romans 3:1-2. "Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God." Those oracles are the promises of God, the covenants and the content of them.

But someone says but "What if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?" Now Paul puts it in a slightly different way, their faith, their unbelief shall not make the faithfulness of God without effect, shall it? Imagine,

man's unbelief canceling the unconditional promises of God. Paul's answer is "God forbid: let God be true, every man a liar."

So he concludes the chapter, the prophet does, by saying, "Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work; and I have created the waster to destroy. No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper." Poor Nasser, poor men who have sought to destroy the nation, exterminate the nation, annihilate the nation, drive the nation into the sea. It cannot be done. How foolish for someone to try to do it.

"Every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of Yahweh (Yes, there is the great servant who's made it possible, but the servants of Yahweh have this heritage), and their righteousness is not of themselves, their righteousness is of me." What they have is the result of the working of the Lord God.

When shall all of this come to pass? Well, we don't know. What are the signs? We cannot even be sure of the signs. We, of course, look about us and we see indications of things that might be the beginning of things that will lead up to these great climactic scenes that are described by the prophet Isaiah and Hosea and others. There is the apostasy of the professing church, and it is deep and broad. There is the return of Israel to the land, which may be a very significant thing. There is the uniting of the nations in the east opposing the Nation Israel, but we cannot know. We can only look and ponder and look forward to the day when these great promises shall be fulfilled. And we know they shall be fulfilled.

We won't suggest that everything that Israel the nation does today is right, because remember, generations have come under the judgment of God, generations perish without the knowledge of the redeemer, generations of Israelites are lost. We only know this, that the nation itself has unconditional promises, and the purpose of God will ultimately lead to their salvation. And the glory of it all will be the Lord's. Their righteousness, just as

our righteousness, is of him. Let us in our hearts, who have been taught by him and become his disciples, give him all the praise.

Let's bow in a closing word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are so grateful to Thee for these magnificent words. We worship Thee, faithful, true, full of lovingkindness and mercy, the God of covenant-*chesed* -- lovingkindness. We magnify Thy grace. Thou hast been so good to us. Our spirits leap within us when we think of what Thou hast done and what Thou art going to do. We praise Thy name, our great triune God, Father, Son, Holy Spirit. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.