



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Isaiah 61:1-3

"The Glory of the Servant"

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for the word of God and for the fact that it is sharper than any two-edged sword and pierces even to the dividing asunder of soul and the spirit, and of the joints, and the marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of our hearts. We thank Thee also Lord that Thou hast admonished us that it is with this word that we have ultimately to do.

And we pray as we look into the prophecy of Isaiah tonight that through the Holy Spirit we may be given illumination and understanding, and that the things that we study may be useful to us in our Christian life and in our thinking concerning the things of the truth of God. For we know that the things that we think ultimately manifest themselves in our lives.

We pray for each one present. We ask, Lord, that Thou wilt minister to them. And in their own particular needs and special needs we pray that they may have the experience of the sovereign working of our great Triune God in grace to them. And now we ask Thy presence with us through this hour in Jesus' name. Amen.

[Message] Tonight we are turning to Isaiah 61 in our studies in the Messianic Prophecies of Isaiah. And we're going to read just three verses tonight in Isaiah 61. And

then I want to turn over to the Book of Luke and read a few verses in Luke chapter 4 because it is there that the Lord Jesus, in the beginning of his ministry in Nazareth, cites this passage.

So Isaiah 61 verse 1 through verse 3.

"The spirit of the Lord is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, in the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn, to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified."

Now, let's turn over to Luke chapter 4 and let's begin reading at verse 14, Luke chapter 4 and verse 14.

"And Jesus returned in the power of the spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all. And he came to Nazareth where he had been brought up: and as his custom was he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the Prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it is written, The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, (That is a word that means something like an attendant. And in a moment when we talk about the synagogue

service we'll say just a few more words about it.) He closed the book and he gave it again to the minister, (or to the attendant) and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears. And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son? And he said unto them, "You will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum do also here in thy country. And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country. But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias when the heaven was shut up three years and six months when great famine was throughout all the land; And unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the days of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian. And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him to the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong. But he passing through the midst of them went his way, and came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the sabbath days. And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power."

The subject for tonight as we look at Isaiah 61 verse 1 through verse 3 is "The Glory of the Servant." If you read chapter 61 and 62 of the prophecy of Isaiah, and these two chapters really go together, you have the entire history of Israel from the first coming of Jesus Christ to the second coming. Now, we read these verses in chapter 61 verses 1 through 3 and we saw how the Lord, beginning his public ministry in Nazareth, cited from them and said, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears." But then if you look at verse 10 through verse 12 of chapter 62 you will see that the prophecy here goes on to the time of the Second Advent.

"Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people. Behold, the Lord hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the Lord: and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken."

So what we have is the entire history of Israel in these two chapters. And the prophet, of course, doesn't touch all of the details, but he begins at the first coming, traces the story of Israel, on to the second coming. And in his revelation it is the story of ashes to beauty, of mourning to the oil of joy, and heaviness to the garment of praise. One reads this and thinks of Israel today and cannot help but say, "Poor Israel. She's thirty-six years of age this year and yet her agonies do not cease. Constantly buffeted by the people around her. No peace, constantly disturbed, constantly a problem, constantly a problem to the whole western world and yet at the same time they do not have any peace at all themselves."

This passage is important because, of course, it was used by our Lord and it was used by our Lord to explain his Messianic ministry. Because when he began his ministry in Luke chapter 4 and says, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears." What he is claiming is the things that Isaiah said with reference to the servant in Isaiah 61 are fulfilled in him. And so one sees from this that what we have in Isaiah is an explanation of the Messianic ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.

That service there in Nazareth is a very interesting service, of course, and it's helpful to us I think to realize what went on in the synagogues. Remember that after the captivity the synagogues became very important because they didn't have any temple during the times of the captivity. They could not go to Jerusalem to study the word of

God or to offer their sacrifices. And so the synagogue grew up during that time as a place in which Israelites gathered to study the Scriptures and to worship together. And when we read in the New Testament of the synagogues in the land we are reading of something that is relatively new in the land and was brought with them from the time of their captivity.

The reading of the Scriptures in the synagogue service was probably part of a service, which had four parts to it. For example, the opening invitation to prayer began the service in which the congregation responded adding its confession of the famous Shema and related passages. "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord." If Israel has one great theological text that is it. "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord." And consequently, the idea of the one God assumes tremendous importance in Israel and that is why both Israelites or Judaism and Mohammedanism stumble over the Christian doctrine of the trinity since they are Unitarian in their theology. "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord."

Now, after they had cited the Shema and related passages and the congregation responded then the second part of the service was the Shemone Esre. And the Shemone Esre is really an expression that means "eighteen." And the eighteen were the eulogies or benedictions that followed. There was a particular delegate of the congregation, who was chosen for the purpose by the ruler of the synagogue, and he repeated certain of the eighteen benedictions and the congregation would respond with "Amen". Paul refers to this in 1 Corinthians chapter 14 and verse 16 where he says in connection with the observance of the church meeting and the occurrence of tongues there. In verse 16 of 1 Corinthians 14 he says, well in the 15 verse he had said,

"What is then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. Else when thou shalt

bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest."

In other words, Paul insists that there must be some understanding of what is being said in the meetings of the congregation otherwise you wouldn't know how to say amen. And that's a carryover from the practice of the Jewish men to say amen in the meeting of the synagogue at the close of the prayers. One could insert some other prayers in the Shemone Esre and they could be added at the end of the eighteen benedictions.

And then the third part of the service was the reading of the Law of Moses and the attendant; the Hassan. Now, the Hassan is the one referred to in Luke 4 and translated "minister" in that passage that we read. Well, he would bring a copy of the law from the Arc of the Covenant and then at least seven people would read, and these seven people would read at least three verses. And when they finished the reading of the three verses then one would stand up; usually a *methorigamon*, or interpreter. He would be standing actually by the reader's side. And standing by the reader's side he would translate this into Aramaic because Aramaic had become the language of the people in the captivity. And since they were reading from the Hebrew text then there would be need for someone to translate into Aramaic. And so the *methorigamon* or the interpreter would do that.

And then after the reading of the law there would be a reading of The Prophets. And after reading of The Prophets there would follow a discourse if there were persons present who were capable of offering ministry of the word of God. Ordination was not required for the leader of the prayers. It was not required for the readers. It was not required for the interpreter and it was not required for the person who would teach or give the discourse. He had to have spiritual ability. In other words, he had to have what we find in the New Testament called a spiritual gift.

And even a stranger might speak, remember, because when the Apostle Paul came to the synagogue in Antioch in Pasidia in Acts chapter 13 he and his company came into the meeting of the synagogue. And we read in Acts chapter 13 verse 14, "And when they departed from Perga they came to Antioch in Pasidia and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and sat down. And after the reading of the law and The Prophets that (that third section of the meeting of the synagogue) the rules of the synagogue sent unto them saying, Ye men and bretheren if any of you have a word of exhortation for the people say on. Then Paul stood up and beckoning with his hand said, Men of Israel and ye that fear God, give audience."

In other words, because there was freedom of utterance in the meetings of the synagogue it was possible for Paul to address them. They had ministry by gifted men. And that, of course, is biblical. That's the reason in the New Testament we have ministry by gifted men. It's a carryover from the synagogue. Ministry was not by ordained men. Ministry was by men who had spiritual gift. You might say, "Well, what did the elders do?" Well, the elders were actually men who may have spiritual gift but may not. They were individuals who had the oversight of the congregation of Israel but they were not necessarily the ones who taught the Scriptures. And the ruler of the synagogue was like an administrative officer. He was responsible for the building and all of the other things that had to do with the administration of the property, and to see that the services were carried on in proper order. So what they really had was a kind of charismatic ministry. Now not charismatic ministry like charismatic churches today, but charismatic ministry like Believers Chapel. Does that surprise you? That's why we have a meeting in which we have freedom for men who have spiritual gift to give discourse.

Now, just as in the days of the Apostle Paul and the days of our Lord there were individuals who got up who didn't have spiritual gifts. And in the ancient writings you can find a number of illustrations of popular preachers who did not have any particular learning but who out shown the rabbis in expounding the Scriptures. There are

illustrations of this. Certain individuals who were excellent expositors of the law and the prophets but had not been trained in schools of the rabbis. That's like a man who gets up and gives a magnificent discourse and someone says, "What seminary did you go to?" And he says, "Well, to tell you the truth I've never been to seminary." And we tend in 1984 to think that if a person hasn't been to Bible college or theological seminary that chances are he cannot preach at all and he shouldn't even try. But that's foolish. That's contrary to teaching of the New Testament and it's contrary to the practice of Israel for that matter.

But on the other hand, in the writings of the Jews there are a number of illustrations of individuals who were getting up in their meetings who did not have proper ability, and they complained about them. And sometimes that's good, too. And in our meetings we sometimes have individuals get up and give some expositions of the word of God and it's obvious they don't have a spiritual gift. They shouldn't do that. Or if their gift is not very well developed they ought to wait until it is. And so you can see that in Nazareth the fact that they had ministry like that free it was possible for the book to be given to the Lord Jesus and for him to read the passage from the prophets. And then it was customary when they taught to sit down, not stand up. And so he sat down and then began to teach. Because he hadn't studied under the rabbis he didn't have the proper theological degree. He didn't have an AB. He didn't have an MA. He didn't have a PH.D. He didn't have a TH.D. He didn't even have a DD. So he had no degrees, but nevertheless it was perfectly proper for him to expound the Scriptures and they recognized him as a man who had gift. Well, that ought to be an encouragement to all of the men in the congregation to realize that if you study the Scriptures and become proficient in them you don't have to graduate from Dallas Seminary. You might be better off if you didn't as a matter of fact. [Laughter]

So the synagogue service had four parts. Incidentally, the fourth part was simple a conclusion in which the priest gave the ironic benediction of Numbers chapter 6 verse 24

through verse 26. Now, in a moment we'll turn over to Luke chapter 4, but let's look at Isaiah 61:1 through 3 first. Now, in chapter 60 remember the city's glory had been set forth and here the Messiah's ministry which prepares the city's inhabitants for the kingdom blessing is described. We've been talking about the suffering servant of Jehovah. There are four great passages which unfold his ministry. Isaiah 42, Isaiah 49, Isaiah 50, and then Isaiah 52:13 through 53:12; four great passages. It is likely that this is the fifth.

Unfortunately, the term servant is not used here whereas the term servant is used in the other passages, and so some are a bit hesitant of calling this a passage of the suffering servant of Jehovah. But it seems to me that this is clearly a chapter that has to do with the suffering servant of Jehovah because when the prophet says, "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me," the Lord Jesus in Luke chapter 4 applies it to himself. And if you'll remember Luke chapter 4 occurs shortly after our Lord's baptism in which the Holy Spirit came upon him and he began his Messianic ministry. That is what is meant here by the statement, "The spirit of the Lord is upon me." That was his induement with power for his Messianic ministry. So while the term servant is not used here I think that this is a passage that has to do with the suffering servant of Jehovah and that's why I've called the message tonight "The Glory of The Servant".

The eunuch's question that he offered to offered to Philip when Philip said, "Understandeth what thou readest," is appropriate here. He said, "How can I, except some man should guide me?" And it appears to me that this text here in Isaiah 61 verse 1 through 3 is clearly a text that has to do with the suffering servant of Jehovah. Now, there are good Bible interpreters who say, "No, the text is really of the Prophet Isaiah." But most of them will go on to say, "It is of the Prophet Isaiah but the Prophet Isaiah is typical because he is a prophet of the great Prophet the Lord Jesus, and so ultimately it does refer to the Lord Jesus except not in quite the same way." I suggest to you that the servant is

really speaking here. In other words our Lord, before the time of this earthly ministry, through Isaiah gives words that are his directly and he refers to his future ministry.

But if this is Isaiah speaking of himself as a type of the Messiah who is to come we ultimately wind up with the same thing. And the words then are typical words that refer to the Lord Jesus. The reason I think that that is probably a false interpretation, however, is that Isaiah never speaks of himself as a prophet at such length. And furthermore, practically everything that is said of the person in these three verses is said of the servant of Jehovah in those other passages. In chapter 42, in chapter 49, chapter 50, in chapter 52, and 53. For example, the reference to the spirit of the Lord God being up on him. If you'll turn back to Isaiah chapter 42 and verse 1 in the first of the suffering servant of Jehovah songs the prophet writes, "Behold, my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth, I have put my spirit upon him."

So characteristic of the suffering servant of Jehovah is that he's an individual who carries out the Lord's will in the power of the Holy Spirit. He is said to be sent in these other passages. He's said to be sent here. He's said to speak with a particularly effective tongue in the other passages. And he's said to do the same thing here. He is said to minister to those who are blind, and deaf, and imprisoned. And these are things that are set forth here.

Now, looking specifically at some of the clauses and phrases; verse one begins, "The spirit of the Lord because upon me because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek." Now, remember the term anoint is a term that refers to what we call Christ. The anointed one is the Christ. When we say "Jesus Christ" we mean "Jesus, the anointed one". "Christus" is the term that refers to him as the Messianic King. So when he says, "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek," he is saying, "I am the Messianic King and I minister in the power of Holy Spirit."

Now that occurred in our Lord's ministry; that anointment with the power of the Holy Spirit at the baptism of the Lord Jesus. And in Luke chapter 3 and verse 20 and 21 we read these words,

"This yet above all, that he shut up John in prison. Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened. And the Holy Ghost descended in bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in Thee I am well pleased."

Now, that is the coronation formula of the Messianic King. "Thou art my Son," is a reference to Psalm 2 where he is set out as the Messianic King. And then, "in whom I am well pleased," is a reference back to chapter 42 and verse 1 here again where we read, as we have read, "Behold, my servant whom I uphold, Mine elect in whom my soul delighteth." And that is the first of the suffering servant of Jehovah songs and they end up with or Lord in Isaiah 53 as the substitutionary sacrifice for the sins of the people of God. So when that voice came from Heaven at the baptism of the Lord Jesus to our Lord who was schooled as no other man ever was schooled in the Scriptures it said very plainly to him, "You are the Messianic King; Thou art my Son, and it is your duty to carry out the suffering servant of Jehovah's ministry. You are the one in whom my soul delights."

So right from that point he knew he was the king who would suffer. He was the king who would ultimately die as the substitutionary sacrifice and he would do it in the power of the Holy Spirit. So, "The spirit of the Lord is upon me because he hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek."

And then we read in verse 1 in middle of the verse, "He hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to

them that are bond, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." It would be certainly wonderful to bring the chains on to bind up the brokenhearted.

Mr. Spurgeon has a sermon on this called "Heart Disease Curable" and of course it's an exposition of the magnificent way in which the Lord Jesus Christ is able to heal diseases of the heart. The heart does wound spiritually. It's bad to have a broken limb and bruised flesh. But a fractured heart? Ah, that's something that only God himself can deal with. And the person's whose heart is fractured is in the midst of the most pitiable distress. And as Mr. Spurgeon says, "Such sit by the wells of sorrow having forgotten the palm trees of Elam for the bitter waters of the Mara." But there is a heavenly healing provided by the Lord Jesus Christ and he heals us of the sense of guilt. He first of all brings the hammer of the Law of the God to us and shows us from the Scriptures that we are sinners and that we are under divine judgment and condemnation. And then he reminds us of the blood of Christ, which is able to cleanse us from all sin. And he does it by unfolding to us that wonderful charming little word "substitution".

That's one of the great words of Scripture. It's one of the words that our good Arminian friends just cannot handle. They have a very difficult time with substitution. Sometimes they will speak of substitution and then they will speak of a universal kind of atonement. And if you were to say, "Well, how can you have substitution and a universal kind atonement?" And then they begin to mumble and mutter at that point because substitution is a term, if it is a true substitution it means that the Lord Jesus has born all of the suffering and all of the guilt, all the penalty for those for whom he died. And if he has born all of the penalty, all of the judgment for those for whom he died how is it possible for those for whom he died to ever be judged for sin since our Lord Jesus was their substitute. So if he is a substitute and if he has truly born our sin then how can Heaven punish twice for the sins that Jesus Christ has himself suffered. That's why Calvinists love the term substitution.

Every text in the Bible that speaks of substitution affirms the definite atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ for the people of God. Every text that teaches substitution teaches the special love of the Lord God for his sheep. Now, [name redacted], who's sitting in the audience, was at my house last night. And I'm reading a book written by a good old South Carolinian. It's called *Calvinism and Evangelical Arminianism* and it's authored by a man named Gerardo. And in one of the earlier parts of the book; it's a very clear, very propitious book. Even an Arminian could understand it without any difficulty at all. And he's arguing the fact the universal atonement just does not measure up to Scriptural teaching and he says, "Look, if we have a God who loves everybody the same way then the love of the sheep is the same as the love for the goats." I like that expression because the Scriptures make a great deal over the fact that he loves his sheep in a special way.

And so he's here to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that are bound and he does it by means of his substitutionary sacrifice. So let not that word ever depart from your mind. Whenever you hear the substitution, that term "substitution", think, "He died for his people and he has born all their judgment." And furthermore, let it be such a source of joy and thanksgiving to you that you go out and proclaim his substitutionary sacrifice far and wide that others too may hear that magnificent message that Jesus Christ bears all the penalty, all the judgment, all the condemnation for those for whom he died. And if you wonder whether you are one of them you can settle the question very simply by giving yourself to him in faith. And if you don't want to know that, then what complaint do you have? None. I'll answer the question for you. None. But if you want to know the assurance of everlasting life come to Christ and he will bind up the brokenhearted, he will deal with those who are rejected and those who are afflicted, those who have bereavement and he will do it by virtue of his resurrection power.

Isn't it interesting that he says, "The Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the

captives." In other words, he gives personal service. He doesn't say, "Go to such and such a store and get your forgiveness of sins there." Its personal service the Lord provides. In fact, he still makes house calls. [Laughter] It's all personal service that the Lord God renders through the Lord Jesus and he's fully qualified and commissioned to heal the brokenhearted. And I think it's interesting, too, that he does it for those who are weak and not those who are strong. Don't try to be strong. Be weak and receive the strength of the Lord God himself.

Now, he mentions, "proclaim liberty to the captives". This is the problem a reference to the ancient service of the year of jubilee. It would be nice if we had time to talk about the things that happened every fifty years. There were some magnificent things and they all were designed to be simply an illustration of what was transpiring through the coming redemptive work of the Lord Jesus. The year of the jubilee occurred every fifty years and it began on the Day of Atonement. Isn't that striking? When the slaves were free and they were given back their land a trumpet was sounded, liberty was to all, the land rested and it's a beautiful picture of what personally the Lord does for those who need the forgiveness of sins and deliverance from their slavery to sin. And it also is a picture of the kingdom to come when the Lord Jesus shall rule and reign upon the earth.

Now he says in the second verse, "to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord". Well, that's probably a reference to the forgiveness of sins that the Lord Jesus provides by virtue of his atoning work. In other words, it's a reference to his first coming "to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord". That's the work of the suffering servant of Jehovah.

Now the Lord Jesus in Nazareth stood up, turned to this passage, he read it and he said, "To preach deliverance to the captives, recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised," and then in verse 19 of Luke 4 he said, "to preach the acceptable year of the Lord," and he closed the book and sat down. Now, if you look at Isaiah you will see that's not the end of the verse. "To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all that mourn." In other words,

our Lord stopped in the middle of the text with the words, "To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, sat down as the eyes of all of the them in the synagogue were fastened upon them he said unto them. Today is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears."

Isn't it striking he did not say "the day of the vengeance of our God"? Bible teachers have noticed that. It's very simple why he didn't. The day of the vengeance of our God has not yet come. That comes at the Second Advent of our Lord and so he cannot say at that time, "And the day of vengeance of our God. In a few verses in chapter 63 and about verse 4 he will be giving another prophecy and the prophet will write, verse 1 of Isaiah 63,

"Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? This that is glorious and his apparel, traveling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, might to save. comes the answer. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? (The prophet asks.)

And then the person who is coming says,

"I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me, for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury, and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in my heart, and the year of my redeemed is come."

The day of vengeance you see is the Day of Judgment; the day of the Second Advent. And so the Lord Jesus, as he cites this text, stops in middle of the verse. The day of vengeance awaits the second coming of the Lord Jesus but he has given an Emancipation Proclamation in the opening part of the verse that is a greater Emancipation Proclamation than Lincoln ever gave.

He mentions, "To comfort all that mourn, all who take the fall of Zion to heart are they who mourn." And finally in the third verse he says, "To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord that he might be glorified."

Well, the end of the ministry of the suffering servant of Jehovah then is the glorification of the Son of God. One cannot help but think of Bunyan's Christian and how the burden left his shoulder, and rolled off of his shoulder and rolled into the tomb. Mr. Spurgeon commenting on that says, "Blessed cross, blessed sepulcher, blessed rather be the man that was put to shame there for me."

So Israel's agonies continue and today, thirty-six years later, the nation is growing old, still troubled, still distressed, still confused, still not understanding things because in their Scriptures they have not yet by God's grace come to understand the clue to their history in the ministry of the suffering servant of Jehovah, expecting a king armed to his teeth and be straddling a war horse by which he would overcome the nations about them. They stumbled at the stumbling stone and now have been sent to the four corners of the earth there to be disciplined until finally they look nowhere else but to the Lord God, and finally appeal to him. May God help us as we think about Israel to pray, "O come, O come Immanuel and ransom captive Israel that mourn in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear."

Wouldn't it be marvelous if in Israel there were a Bible study movement to study Isaiah the prophet and the prophecies of the suffering servant of Jehovah. Let's close our class in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father we thank Thee and praise Thee for these magnificent prophecies so filled with rich meaning not only for the nation Israel but for us who belong to the people of God also, grafted into the olive tree unnaturally because we're Gentiles; but

nevertheless, partakers with them of the promises of the good news. We are so grateful to Thee Lord that we are coheirs and coinheritors of all of the promises that Thou didst give to Abraham, and confirmed to Isaac and Jacob, and enlarged to David and through Jeremiah to all the people of God.

We thank Thee for the new covenant by which we have the forgiveness of our sins. And Lord, if there should be someone in this audience who does not have the assurance of the forgiveness of sins, does not have the assurance that Jesus Christ offered a substitutionary sacrifice for sinners. O God, pull the veil from their spiritual eyes to see their lost condition.

[RECORDING ENDED ABRUPTLY]