



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

The Jewish People, Jesus Christ, and World History

Zechariah 2:1-3

“The Man with the Measuring Line”

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Our Father, we come to Thee in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and we thank Thee for the inspiration of the word of God and for its authority thereby. We thank Thee for the way in which it has spoken to us, and Lord, we pray that it will continue to speak to us as we read and study it, not only tonight but whenever we open the pages of this great book. We pray, too, that the things that Thou has taught us, by Thy grace that we may be able to communicate to others, that they too may be able to enjoy the things that mean so much to us.

We give Thee a special thanks for the Lord Jesus Christ. We know that Thou art delighted with him, and we are delighted with him. And we share, Lord, with Thee in that delight of the Son of God who is the one who has accomplished all of our spiritual blessings for us. And we thank Thee also for the place that he and we have in the great program of God. We look forward with anticipation to its consummation, and we pray tonight, as we study again a passage which relates to that great plan, that we may be able to understand and then interact and communicate the things that Thou dost communicate to us through the Spirit. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

[Message] One of the great passages of the word of God which sets forth the permanence of the nation Israel is Jeremiah chapter 30, and verse 10 through verse 17. And while I don't want to spend our time reading all of that particular section, let me read just a few verses near the end. In the 16th verse, the prophet writes,

“Therefore all they that devour thee shall be devoured; and all thine adversaries, every one of them, shall go into captivity; and they that spoil thee shall be a spoil, and all that prey upon thee will I give for a prey. For I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith the LORD; because they called thee an Outcast, saying, This is Zion, whom no man seeketh after.”

Now, as one looks through this section of the prophecy of Jeremiah, not only here, but again in the 31st chapter and the 34th chapter, over and over again the prophet makes the point that Israel as a nation shall abide. Well, some of these things are set forth here in the prophecy of Zechariah as well, and tonight we are turning to the 2nd chapter, and we are looking at the subject, “The Man with the Measuring Line,” which is the vision that Zechariah received and has recorded for us here. We said in one of our preceding studies that the survival of the Jew and Jerusalem is both a riddle and an offense to the natural man. Lord Beaconsfield commented some years ago about how many people in many nations had made attempts to extirpate the Jewish nation. And some of the attempts have been made under the most favorable auspices and on the largest scale, for the longest period of time. The Egyptian Pharaohs, the Assyrian kings, the Roman emperors, the Scandinavian crusaders, the gothic princes, and holy inquisitors alike have attempted to do away with the Jewish nation. In our life time, or at least my life time, the German Nazis and the Russian communists, and of course the Saudi kings would like nothing better than to do away with the nation today.

One would not find it difficult at all to find a nation in the Near East anxious to see Israel disappear from the earthly scene. It's a strange thing, but yet it's thoroughly in harmony with the things that are taught in the word of God, and is a confirmatory fact of its divine inspiration. The French philosopher Renan wrote, “The philosophy of history fails utterly to account for the Jew.” Mark Twain said, “All things are mortal but the Jew. All other forces pass, but he remains.” Benjamin Disraeli, in a rather humorous confrontation, when he was the British Prime Minister, in a reply to Daniel O'Connell in Parliament after a slur had been made over the fact that he was a Jew, said, “Yes, I am a Jew. And when the ancestors of the right honorable gentlemen were brutal savages in an unknown island, mine were priests in the temple of Solomon.” So, we should beware of the kind of attitude that so many have to the Jewish people in our day.

And then I commented that it might seem to us a marvel, but Israel is today in the forefront of the news. We have had a number of wars. Israel has so far been successful in their wars. They have become an international problem, simply because of the antipathy that exists toward the nation. God, of course, has his solution, and it is set out in the word of God. But unfortunately, men do not read and follow the word of God. The Psalmist in Psalm 132 in verse 13 and 14, records these words, “For the LORD hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it.” That is God's solution to the Palestinian problem, but it will take us, of course, through a number of years yet, through some agonies on the part of Israelian agonies, on the part of the others who are involved in this, to reach the solution that God has already set out.

Zechariah wrote about twenty-five hundred years ago, and he spoke of Jerusalem's future in this magnificent prophecy. We have said that it contains four divisions. There is, first of all, a call to repentance, and that is found in verses 1 through 6 of chapter 1. Then in chapter 1, verse 7 through the 6th chapter, Zechariah records eight visions that he received. They were prophetic visions. They were also night visions, and

I guess, very properly they closed with a coronation scene in chapter 6, verse, well the few verses ending with verse 15. The theme of these eight visions is Israel and the coming king and kingdom. And we have looked at the first vision, verse 7 though verse 17, and we saw that their Abrahamic promises were guaranteed by the man among the myrtles. And while we cannot, of course, always speak with absolute dogmatism about the meaning of features of symbolic visions, and these are visions and they are symbolic to a large extent; we suggested that the man among the myrtles, who in a sense has guaranteed the future of Israel, is probably designed to represent the preincarnate Lord Jesus Christ.

Then in the second vision, which we looked at two weeks ago tonight, we had a vision of four horns, and here we have even less reason to be dogmatic, because it's a very short vision. We don't have a whole lot of interpretation. We can say this, that what he is seeking to show is that the times of the dominion of the Gentiles over the earth will come to an end. And end further in the demise of those great nations which have ruled over the earth for so many hundreds of years. From the time that Jerusalem went into captivity in roughly 605 BC until the time of the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus Christ, you can see it's at least twenty-five hundred years, Zechariah in harmony with Daniel who gives us really the fullest information, suggest that there will be four great world empires that rise. Daniel specifies that they are the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, the Grecian, and then one great final world-wide empire which is not names. Although, there are some indications in the Book of Daniel, particularly chapter 9, that the nation referred to is some form of the Roman Empire. So, these four nations will rule over the earth, while Israel does not have authority in the city of Jerusalem.

Jesus spoke about the times of the Gentiles in Luke chapter 21, in verse 24. And this is what he said with reference to it, in verse 24 he said, “And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.” In other words

from 605 BC until the time of the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus Christ, Jerusalem shall be trodden under foot by Gentile powers. That, of course, is what we have seen. And even today, when Israel has general control over the city of Jerusalem, she cannot exercise the authority that she has over the holy place where the Masque of Omar is. So, we are still living in the times of the Gentiles. They will be concluded by the coming of the Lord Jesus to the earth. Four great empires will rise, and ultimately the last will fall, being overthrown by the Lord Jesus Christ. So, that's the essence of that second prophecy, not so plainly taught here as in Daniel chapter 2, the passage that we referred to last week. In fact, if we did not have Daniel chapter 2, we probably could not say what we said about this passage. Really, it's Daniel that throws light on these four horns and four smiths and what they mean.

Tonight, we are looking at chapter 2, and first of all let's read the first three verses which record the next of these visions. And Zechariah says, “I lifted up mine eyes again, and looked, and behold a man with a measuring line in his hand. Then said I, Whither goest thou? And he said unto me, To measure Jerusalem, to see what is the breadth thereof, and what is the length thereof. And, behold, the angel that talked with me went forth, and another angel went out to meet him.” Now, remember Zechariah has at his side, through these visions, one who is called an “angel who talks with me.” That's all really that is said about this being, and we do not really know who he is. There has been lots of speculation, of course, prophetic Bible teachers like to speculate a great deal, and it's all right to speculate a bit, expect that we cannot always be absolutely sure dogmatically that they are right. We did read back in chapter 1 in verse 12, of the angel's intercession. “Then the angel of the LORD answered and said, O LORD of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, against which thou hast had indignation these threescore and ten years?”

And notice in verse 13, “And the LORD answered the angel that talked with me with good words and comfortable words.” And then in verse 14 he said, “So the angel

that communed with me said unto me, Cry thou, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy.” So, what Zechariah has learned so far, is that God has good words and comfortable words for the nation, words of love we might say, words of regard for them arising out of his choice of them, but he also has words of judgment. “I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy.” Now, the details of the picture, this picture of the future, begin to emerge. In fact, what we have in chapter 2 is something of an expansion of what we read in chapter 1, in verse 16. “Therefore thus saith the LORD; I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies: my house shall be built in it, saith the LORD of hosts, and a line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem.” So, here is the line that is to be stretched forth upon Jerusalem. He’s like a surveyor that is marking out territory that belongs to him.

Now, in chapter 2 more details will be given. Let me hasten to say that when we read the Prophet Zechariah we must remember the situation. Israel has been in captivity, a number have returned to the land. And often in the prophecy, the things that are referred to will have to do with the more immediate purpose, that is the restoration of Jerusalem that is taking place then. But then often the words go far beyond the time of the Prophet Zechariah and on into the distant future. In fact, it seems to me reading through that the second is much more common than the former. But it’s against the background of the recovery from Babylon, that these prophecies are given which go far beyond that and look on into the future.

Now, let’s notice two or three things about the vision in the first three verses. First of all, he says he beheld a man with a measuring line in his hand. The word behold, generally, always in prophetic literature introduces something that is rather important. If you’ll go back and look at the concordance and look up the English word behold, or if you have a little knowledge of Hebrew and look up the word, Hinnēh, you will notice that in the prophetic literature, it generally marks out something that is rather important. Furthermore, the term that is used to describe the man here, is a common term for man,

but it's not the term that is, for example, more often used of Adam, avam, a person of the earth. It's not enowsh, which refers to a man who is something of a weak man. It's not, gibbowr, a mighty man, but it is the term iysh, which refers to a noble man. Now, he is a man and not a woman. So we have here it's a man, and not a woman, and not a beast, and evidently the surveyor is the same man who is referred to in chapter 1, in verse 8 as the man among the myrtles. He is also said, he speaks about a mission in verse 2, “Then said I, Whither goest thou? And he said unto me, To measure Jerusalem, to see what is the breadth thereof, and what is the length thereof.” Evidently a kind of preparation of a divine city plan of the future of Jerusalem, everything is beautifully prepared ahead of time in God's plans, just like the city of Dallas prepares for the traffic on Central Expressway.

Then in verse 3, he talks about the messengers. He says, “And, behold, the angel that talked with me went forth, and another angel went out to meet him.” The “another angel” may be a reference to the Lord Jesus Christ, but probably not, probably one who speaks his words in his name. That's not important so we won't spend much time upon it. Now, let's notice verse 4, through verse 12, where we have the prophecies that flow out of this vision of the man with the measuring line in his hand. This is what you might call angel talk. You know, we talk about God talk in theology. We talk about girl talk. We talk about boy talk. Well, this is angel talk. And we read, “And said unto him, Run, speak to this young man, saying, Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls for the multitude of men and cattle therein: For I, saith the LORD, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her.” Run, addressed to the young man indicates, of course, that this is something important, so “Run, speak to the young man, saying Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls.” What this speaks of, obviously, is the fact that Jerusalem is going to be someday enlarged and evidently prosperous. And possibly, probably also, Jerusalem is described as a city that does not

need special security; so, possibly a reference to Jerusalem in a time of peace, because it's a city without walls, “shall be inhabited as towns without walls.”

In those days, if you didn't have a big wall around your place, you didn't feel very secure. When you travel in Europe now and you visit the cities in Germany and other places, one of the things that you notice are these walled cities. They were for protection, they weren't for beauty. They were to protect themselves from others who wanted to attack them. But here is a city that in the future is going to be a town without walls. And the reason for the enlargement and prosperity of the city of Jerusalem is described in the 5th verse, “For I, saith the LORD, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her.” Now, the fact that he will be a wall of fire round about her, is very, very fitting and very suggestive, because so much of ancient Israel's past history was related to the protective hand that God exercised over Israel when Israel came out of the land of Egypt. So, the fact that he is going to be a wall of fire around her must have been very meaningful for those who read this prophecy and pondered it, and believed it. In other words, God is going to be for Israel in the future, just as he was in the days of the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire by night.

And further, he will be the glory in the midst of her. Now, that is not explained, and so I must just give you what I think is meant by this. When we say the glory of God, we refer to the display of the excellencies of God. If we say something displays the glories of God, we mean we see the excellencies of God in whatever we may be speaking about. And so, the glory here, would evidently, when he says, he “will be the glory in the midst of her,” well, his excellencies, the beauties of his character will be displayed in the situation in the future when the nation is safe and secure and the city is there in an unwalled town. I would suggest that the reason that we read here that he will be “will be the glory in the midst of her,” is related specifically to his faithfulness to his promises. That's primarily the glory that is in mind. In other words, down through the centuries he's made these magnificent promises with reference to the nation, and now in the future

they are going to come to pass and people are going to give praise and thanks for the glory of God as manifested in his faithfulness to his word. That's very pleasing to the Lord God, when people praise him for his faithfulness to his word. There is no way in which you can more beautifully honor the Lord God, than to believe his word. And there is hardly any other worse way, more insulting way, to respond to the Lord than to not believe his word. How many of you like to know people who do not believe what you say to them? Well, really if you thought about it, you would regard it as a personal insult. That when you say certain things they don't believe you; they think really that you are more likely to be lying than otherwise. So, to fail to believe the promises of God is to act toward him as if he is a liar, but to believe him is to honor the truthfulness and voracity of his word, his person ultimately. So, he will be the glory in the midst of her, because those who are there will have believed his word. They will have seen, too, the manifestation of the faithfulness of his word.

And I think also he will be the glory in the midst of her, because he will be there in his presence. Now, if we talk about a presence of Yahweh in the city of Jerusalem, and if we understand this to be that the people who are there see and know Yahweh is there, then of course we have reference to the second person of the trinity. The first person of the trinity is the person of the trinity who cannot be seen. The third person of the trinity is a person who cannot be seen. The person of the trinity who may be seen is the Lord Jesus Christ. So, when those passages of the Old Testament in which it is said that God, or Yahweh, or the Lord appears to Israel, are references to the Lord Jesus Christ. Often in preincarnate form before the time of the cross, but then if prophetic, they are prophetic of the appearance of the Lord Jesus in his glory as in his Second Advent. So, probably then he will be the glory in the sense that we will praise him for his faithfulness to his word and also because of his presence.

Now, in verse 6 and verse 7 the prophecy continues. And here he speaks of the deliverance that Israel shall experience in those days. I suggest, again, that there is

probably a local reference. That is to the historical situation of Zechariah in the 5th century before Christ, and then also a reference, ultimately, to the future in the last days before our Lord's Second Advent. Again, in the Old Testament we don't always have clues that tell us precisely the time. That's part of the progress of divine revelation, but we can generally be relatively certain of a number of these temporal events. “Ho, ho, come forth, and flee from the land of the north, saith the LORD: for I have spread you abroad as the four winds of the heaven, saith the LORD. Deliver thyself, O Zion, that dwellest with the daughter of Babylon.” So, here probably a reference to the local situation in which Israelites escaped from Babylon from the captivity there, and are coming back, but I think it becomes evident as we read further through here, that this is a far wider escape, a far wider return to the land that occurred at that time. For here, the nations of the earth are going to be involved.

Let me just make a few comments here. This would seem to indicate that there is coming a time when Israel is going to be back in her land. “Deliver thyself, O Zion, that dwellest with the daughter of Babylon.” “I have spread you abroad as the four winds of the heaven, saith the LORD.” But there is a time coming when they will be back in the land. This has been the teaching of the early church. In fact, in the earliest words that we have from the early church concerning the history of Israel, there was a general belief in the fact that there would be such a kingdom and Israel would be blessed within it. But this has been a kind of teaching that has been accepted down through the years. Thomas Brightman, a Bible exegete, in his exposition of Revelation 15, published 1641 referring to the Jews says, “What shall they return to Jerusalem again? There is nothing more certain. The prophets do everywhere confirm it.” John Adams, the second President of the United States, in a letter to Major Mordecai Manuel said, “I really wish the Jews again in Judea, an independent nation.” In the 5th century, Moses of Crete promised to lead the Jews dryshod through the Mediterranean to Palestine. He gained many followers who left their

possessions on Crete, and they subsequently, as you expect, drowned in the sea. But that, at least, was a reflection of what was thought to be the teaching of the word of God.

Now, I would like for you to notice something else now in verse 8 and 9. For here, the nation’s judgment is set out by the prophet as he listens to this interpretation of the vision. “For thus saith the LORD of hosts; After the glory,” now that is a very difficult expressions. In the Hebrew text it means simply “after glory” or possibly even “with glory.” Commentators debate the significance of it, and there is not reason for me to stop and engage in any kind of technical exegesis of the matter. It’s not the most important thing in the passage. And if you have a version that reads somewhat different, that’s the reason for it. But the latest commentators still differ over the interpretation of “after the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you.” We don’t know whether this means perhaps to obtain glory, that is, after glory in that sense. Or is this the glory of the Second Advent? “After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye.” I would be more inclined to say that was what was in mind, but it’s something of which we cannot be absolutely certain. What we do know is this, that the Lord Jesus at his Second Advent will then deal with the nations of the earth that have fought against him. That is set out finally in Revelation chapter 19, verse 11 through verse 16, and the verse 17 through verse 21, prophesied in many passages of the Old Testament, but specifically set forth there in Revelation chapter 19. So the time is coming when our Lord is to come again, and he will establish his kingdom, but he will overthrow the nations of the earth that have fought against the plan of God.

In the second Psalm there is a very vivid picture there, given by David, of the nations of the earth in the last days, and their antipathy to all things biblical. Listen, David writes, “Why do the heathen,” the nation, “Why do the nations,” or put it this way, “Why do the Gentiles rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his

anointed,” that is his Messiah, “saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.” How often have you found the great leaders of the nations in the 20th century in the midst of their counsels, and in the midst of their meetings say, “Now let’s devote a day or two to find out what the Lord God has to say about this problem that faces us.” I think the last person who comes into consideration is the Lord God until the decision has been made, and the leaders turn to their PR men and say, “Oh by the way, put in a phrase there about God having a part in this.” And that’s about the way it is done. But when it comes to the things that really are going to happen on the earth, it is what God’s will is that will determine what is going to come to pass.

I love that expression that is described in verse 8, applied to Israel, “for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye.” The apple of his eye; the eye, as you know is a very sensitive part of your body. The apple of the eye is the pupil of the eye. The pupil is the eye is an expression; incidentally, the pupil is a word that comes from the Latin word pupillus which means “a little boy,” and is related to the fact that when you look into the eye, you see very small images. And so, the diminutive image reflected on the contractile aperture of the iris of the eye. In the Hebrew it’s the gate of the eye, and that’s the expression that is referred to here. So this is an expression of extreme sensitiveness and extreme tenderness. Israel is the apple of his eye. There are two other places in the Old Testament where Israel is referred to his way. The language is slightly different in the Hebrew text, but the sense is just the same. Israel is extremely important to the Lord God. He’s very sensitive about Israel, and he looks upon the nation very, very tenderly. He even uses figures of speech like “A mother may forget her sucking child, but I will never forget you.” Do you believe a mother would do that? Yes they do. If you read the newspapers in Dallas through the year, you’ll find a number of mothers who will give up their little infant. I just have in my notes here from the past, several instances right here in the city of Dallas where mothers have given up their children. But God will not give up the nation Israel, for she is the apple of his eye.

So, the nations are going to experience judgment. He says in the 9th verse, “For, behold, I will shake mine hand upon them, and they shall be a spoil to their servants: and ye shall know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me.” Now, that’s striking isn’t it? “The Lord of hosts hath sent me.” I thought that this was the Lord of hosts speaking. If you look back a few verses here, it says, verse 8, “Thus saith the LORD of hosts; After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye. For, behold, I will shake mine hand upon them, and they shall be a spoil to their servants: and ye shall know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me.” So, the individual who is shaking his hand over them and causing this judgment to fall upon the nations is the one who now says that the Lord of hosts has sent him. Isn’t that striking? In other words, in the very same context the term “Lord of hosts” suddenly becomes not simply the person who is doing something, but the person who is being sent by the Lord of hosts.

How can you understand something like that? Well, if you are familiar with the Bible and familiar with the Gospel of John, you’ll recognize some of this language is very much like the Gospel of John. Listen to chapter 8, and verse 42 and 43, do you remember the Gospel of John? If you’ve been here over the past three or four years, we studied it for eighty-eight Sundays. I know you got tired, but still you may have remembered this. Verse 42, “If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.” Now, turn over to chapter 17 and verse 21. In the high priestly prayer, the Lord Jesus prays “That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.” And then in verse 23, “I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.” It’s almost as if our Lord were studying the Book of Zechariah and were gathering from the Book of Zechariah some of the things that were going to happen to him, and were praying to the Lord God as a

result of this. So when he says that the Lord God has sent him, I'm inclined to think that this is another indication of the plurality of the Godhead in the Old Testament.

Now, we do not have in the Old Testament any place where we can say there are only three divine beings. In Isaiah chapter 48, there are three divine beings set out there. I guess one might conceivably say that there might be a fourth. But we do have indication of plurality in the Godhead. From the beginning, when we read, “Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness,” plurality. The fullness of the doctrine of the trinity awaits the full revelation of the New Testament. That's one of the first lessons we learned in discussing the trinity in systematic theology, that we do not have a fully developed doctrine of the trinity in the Old Testament. It's not until the New Testament that we have that, because divine revelation is progressive through the centuries. More and more is added to it. Just think if Adam had been given the whole Bible in the Garden of Eden. What would he have thought? Well, he might not have even been able to read. He certainly would have been overwhelmed by the fact that he was given this great book, sixty-six different books, and if the Lord were to say, “Now, keep the things that are written in that book,” that would be overwhelming.

Now, notice verse 10, Messiah's coming and presence are referred to, “Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the LORD.” Now, this is the one who has just said, “The Lord of hosts has sent me.” And now, “Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the LORD.” So, evidently since this is the Lord of hosts that comes when he shakes his hand upon the nations, and it will be a spoil to the servants of God. This is not the first coming that he's referring to, it's his second coming to which he refers. “For, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the LORD.” Israel, of course, did not understand these things, because they did not study the Scriptures as they should have studied those Scriptures. But in the Old Testament, his first and second comings were set out, and I think sufficiently distinguished for the spiritual minds to understand.

The nation's union and salvation is referred to in verse 11, "And many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto thee." So, not only is the salvation of Israel and Jerusalem, or Judah and Jerusalem to come to pass, but the nations of the earth are to be blessed as well.

Remember the Abrahamic promises. God promised Abram a name. He promised him a seed. He promised him a land, but he also said, in the 3rd verse in the Book of Genesis, chapter 12, "And in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." This is the fulfillment of the Abrahamic promises as they pertain to the Gentile nations. So, the nations' union in salvation is expressed here. They are drawn to him, and in being drawn to him they are drawn to the nation. But Israel has preeminence among the nations of the earth. The knowledge of Messiah's mission is given. They know that God has sent him. So, they know the significance of the coming of the Messiah. They know their relationship to Judah and Jerusalem. The Gentile nations know that while they are blessed Israel is preeminent in the city of Jerusalem. That has puzzled a lot of people through the years. John Dryden, in a work on Absalom and Achitophel said, "The Jews, a headstrong, moody, murmuring race as ever tried the extent and stretch of grace. God's pampered people, whom debauched with ease, no king could govern, nor no god could please." That was some objection against the teaching of the Old Testament.

Then Judah's inheritance and the choice of Jerusalem is described in the 12th verse, "And the LORD shall inherit Judah his portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again." Now, that would indicate that Jerusalem will abide under the judgment of the times of the Gentiles, but Jerusalem shall again be the place where God puts his name. And Judah shall be his portion in the holy land. Notice, by the way, it is called the holy land when the Lord Jesus is there personally. We say, "We're going to visit the Holy Land. But it's not the holy land now, maybe the sacred land in the sense that it has great sacred associations for us. It's no holy land now, but it will be a holy land when the

Lord Jesus has come. And he shall choose Jerusalem again. There's the doctrine of election again. [Laughter] And you think I could ever pass by that without saying anything? Well, I am.

The final verse says, only because our time is about up, "Be silent, O all flesh, before the LORD: for he is raised up out of his holy habitation." Now, when he says, "Be silent, O all flesh," he is calling upon the tumultuous nations that have been persecuting Israel, who have been rebellious against the will of God. He's calling upon them to be silent before the Lord. In other words, to have their mouth shut, be silent. And notice, its "O all flesh." Flesh, of course, lays stress upon the weakness of human nature. God may appear to be sleeping. People may think that he doesn't really care what is going on on the earth. He doesn't really care what kind of a city San Francisco is, or what kind of a city Dallas is, or whatever kind of place Washington is. And he doesn't really care. This is the age of God's silence, his longsuffering is very long, but the time is coming when judgment is to come. And it will come.

I wish I had time to refer to the fact that Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse used to like a great deal over the fact that many of our churches use, in their Sunday morning service, "The Lord is in his holy temple, let all the earth keep silence before him," as if that text is a statement that lets you know that it's time for the church service to begin. Whereas, in the context of Habakkuk, it is a verse that speaks of the fact that the Lord God is in his holy temple, and he is now behind his desk as the judge of the universe, and he is rapping his gavel. And he's now going to execute judgment on all who stand before him. That's the thought of verse 13, "Be silent, O all flesh, before the LORD: for he is raised up out of his holy habitation."

Well, there are only two responses to such promises as these. One is the response of belief, and the other is the response of unbelief, or rejection. And notice the two imperative clauses that indicate these two responses. Verse 10, "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come," and then the response of unbelief, "Be silent, O all

flesh, before me." Stop all of your rebellious activity for the time of judgment has come. We've been talking about the fact that today things are happening in Israel. It is true that there are some rather interesting things that are happening. Many of you know of the Jews for Jesus. Their address, by the way, is 60 Height Street, San Francisco. I bet you they are having a good time out there this week. I'll be interested in hearing what Moishe Rosen has to say when all of this is over. That's an organization that you might well support, because they are very bold. They are very unorthodox. They do not care to whom they speak, but nevertheless they are busy speaking for our Lord Jesus Christ.

Many in Judaism today do not have any sense of faith at all. Listen to some of the things, and I'll close with this, but I think it's so illustrative of what exists in Israel today. "We may still speak of ourselves," declares Rabbi Nathan Baruch as a religious people. The fact is, we were, we no longer are. Many of us look back nostalgically to our religious days. Our longing does not restore them. Obviously one is religious neither by the routine observance of Jewish customs, nor by the mere attendance at Friday evening services. There can be no religion without faith and feeling. We lack both elements. Any sincere layman will immediately admit the fact. To open-eyed rabbis, it's a painful reality in the pursuit of their daily duties. Today, most Jews are no longer able to pray. Our people do not pray, because they cannot. One prays to God not by addressing him verbally, one must know in one's heart to whom he prays. We do not."

And speaking of the absence of genuine spiritual experience in the present day Jewish life, Nathan Glazer, a very prominent Jewish intellectual has said, "I think I do not exaggerate when I say there is nothing in American Jewish literature," and many rabbis have written their autobiographies, "that might possibly find a place in any anthology of religious experience. I once asked one of our leading authorities on American Jewish history whether he knew of any autobiography published or in manuscript by rabbi or layman that described in detail a spiritual or religious experience, whether a conversion or loss of faith. He could think only of the autobiography of a Jew who had been converted

to Christianity. In the biographies of American Jews," Glazer continues, "And of the rabbis too, one will find passion engaged by the passions of Zionism, by politics and reform movements, by the conflict of different organizations within Jewish life. But the category of spiritual experience, as ordinarily defined, is absent."

That is why we have such a great opportunity in speaking to Jewish people. If we are Christians, and if we do have an experience of relationship to our Lord Jesus as the Messiah of Israel, and Savior of our souls, we have something to convey and to share, which Israel largely does not have today; but fortunately, for which there are signs, that some may be seeking. May God help us not to lose our opportunities. Let's bow in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for these magnificent promises from the word of God. How marvelous to know that Israel is as the apple of Thine eye. And we know too, Lord, that being in Christ we are said, by the great apostle, to be precious, accepted in the beloved. Oh God, help us to be faithful in our day to proclaim him. For Jesus' sake. Amen.