

Studies in Isaiah - Part 6

by Harry Ironside

The sermon emphasizes the importance of faith in God's grace, rather than trying to achieve righteousness through one's own efforts.

Duration: 46:32

Scripture: Proverbs 16:7, Isaiah 15:9, Isaiah 40:3, Isaiah 48:22, Isaiah 49:6, Isaiah 58:1, Isaiah 60:1

Topics: "Expository"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of having a clear understanding of the outline of the Bible. He mentions that the book of Isaiah can be divided into three parts: chapters 40-48 focus on God's controversy with Israel regarding idolatry, chapters 49-57 address Israel's attitude towards the Messiah, and the rest of the book (chapters 58 to the end) emphasizes the ministry designed to exercise the conscience in view of the coming glory. The speaker also emphasizes the importance of studying and memorizing the outline of each chapter in order to have a comprehensive understanding of the book. He shares a personal practice of going over a book repeatedly until he can recall the leading theme of each chapter with ease.

Transcript

This is the material that makes the most beautiful clothing, will cover people wonderfully, whereas the other is just a bit of foam that soon passes away and disappears, and when men and women are trying to work out a righteousness of their own, when they're hoping to placate God by religious observances and attendance upon forms and ceremonies and by their own good work, they're just like people trying to close themselves with the result of a spider's web. The spider's web gives them nothing that's substantial. A number of years ago in Los Angeles, I don't know whether there's still a big store there called Hamburgers, there used to be anyway, a great big department store, and one time when I was in Los Angeles years ago, it was announced in all the newspapers that a human fly was going to go up the face of Hamburgers store.

I think it was about a four or five story department store, something like that. And so thousands of people gathered down there, I think it was on Broadway, I believe it was Broadway, but one of those main streets, to see this human fly go up the face of the building. He had come from city to city and he had accomplished this feat in many, many places.

And so here they watched. The man came out, dressed in tights, and he began to go up the surface of the building. He'd go from one little ledge to another and reach out and get hold of something, and up he'd go, and the people just watched him breathlessly.

There were pictures of it in the newspaper. Sometimes he'd have to stretch in order to get hold of something he could grasp and something he could put his toe upon. But up and up and up he went until he was up about the fourth or fifth story, whatever it was.

And then he stood upon a ledge, a window ledge, and he was looking now, he must have had to get to the top, and he evidently he saw what seemed like a jutting piece of stone, the stone facing the building. And so he waited a moment and then he reached forward and left his footing in order to grasp that. And the next moment he fell to the floor and was broken all the pieces, right before the public.

And you know, when the police hurried through to get him, they found in his hand a spider's web. What he thought was gray stone was just a spider's web. And he reached out to take hold of that and down he went.

Well, it'll be just that way with people who trust in their own work and in outward religiousness for the salvation of their souls instead of in the precious gospel of the grace of God and the work that our Lord gave us to accomplish. Now the closing part of this chapter, there's a lot in this chapter that I'd like you to, in fact I'm so sorry that I didn't have sense enough to order some copies of a little book of mine. I have a sermon on this called Adder's Eggs and Spider's Webs, Moody Press Publishers.

I'd like to have given you one each so that you'd get a sample of at least one poor sermon in your collection. But I didn't think they'd bring it. I forgot that I had it on my side.

But there's a lot in this chapter that makes a good gospel message. Then the latter part you have the delivered, the coming glory. I could read verses 15 and 16 at the present.

Praise truth faithless, and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a presence, and the Lord saw it, and he was pleased. He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor. Therefore his arm brought salvation unto him, and his righteousness, and the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from sin.

For me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord. My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of any of the Lord, from henceforth and forever. So all hope for a guilty man, for Israel as well as for the nation, is in the man of God's right hand, and it's the Lord Jesus Christ who speaks here.

There was no intercessor, there was no deliverer, so he said, my own arm brought salvation. And for his coming, the people were waiting. He came in grace the first time, coming again to bring in the glory.

As we go on to the last part of the book, we have a great deal of detail in connection with the glory, but we have still certain things to notice in connection with the state of the people. We'll consider ourselves. We're coming near the end of our study of the book of the prophet Isaiah.

We have just seven chapters left to consider, and this period, and then tomorrow morning, and then examination will be on the last, second hour tomorrow. Now, I think that I should just briefly review a few things before going right into the portion for today, because I want your minds to be clear and fresh in

regard to the things that I think need to be emphasized, and concerning which I'm more likely to ask you some questions than otherwise. First, I think it's well that everyone should have a clear outline of this book.

I don't mean in detail. That you have to work out in after years for yourselves, if you're studying the book or giving addresses on it. But the simplest thing, as you look at this book, is just to note that it's divided into three parts.

First, the chapters 1 to 35, consisting of a series of prophecies delivered by Isaiah, leading up to the dispersion of the people of Israel, but with promises of regathering eventually. Then you have the historical interlude, giving the account of Hezekiah and God's dealings with him. It's well, I think, to have those four chapters clearly in mind.

In chapters 36 and 37 really go together, Hezekiah and the siege of Jerusalem, and God's deliverance from the Assyrians. It's important to remember that at the time that Isaiah gave these messages, Palestine was like a buffer state between Assyria on the one hand and Egypt on the other. Ahaz, for instance, in his desperation, was looking to Egypt for help against the Assyrians.

But God eventually dealt with the Assyrians, as finally in the last days he will deal with Israel's great enemy. In the third chapter of the interlude, that is chapter 38, you have Hezekiah's illness and recovery. And then in the last chapter, the visit of the ambassadors of the king of Babylon.

And don't forget those two letters that come before us there, the letter of blasphemy and the letter and a present, remembering the way in which they were dealt with. Then in the last part of the book is divided easily into three sub-provisions. In these last prophecies from 40 to 46, the great outstanding theme is the coming glory and Messiah's kingdom and steps leading up to it.

But it divides into three parts. In chapters 40 to 48, you have Jehovah's controversy with Israel concerning idolatry. In chapters 49 to 57, Jehovah's controversy with Israel concerning their attitude toward the Messiah, the Redeemer that he was to send into the world.

And then in the rest of the book, from 58 to the end, you have ministry designed to exercise the conscience in view of the coming glory, which is most graphically brought before us. So to outline something like that in your mind is helpful. I've always felt that studying any book of the Bible, I wanted to get the outline of it before my own mind, clearly.

In fact, I've always gotten this principle. I like to know what's in every chapter. I generally have made it a practice in studying any book to just go over it and over it and over it until I could sit down, shut my eyes, and then just remind myself that thought was the leading theme of every chapter.

Now I'm getting old, I can't do that so well. But when you're young, it's easy to fix these things in your mind. And then try to keep in mind some of the outstanding things.

Isaiah's ministry. When did it begin? In the year that King Uzziah died. That's the date that's given for the beginning.

He ministered through the reigns of four kings, under Uzziah, Joseph, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. I think he epitomizes God's dealings with Israel in that parable of the vineyard, in which he shows that God brought a vine out of Egypt and planted it in the land of Palestine, hedged it about, did everything possible for it,

then looked for it to bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. A picture of God's care and Israel's answer to it.

Instead of responding in loving obedience, they acted willfully, and instead of God finding the fruit that he had a right to expect, they just brought forth fruit to themselves. Then there are other features that are important to keep in mind. I would try to fix in memory, if I were you, some of the outstanding prophecies in regards to the coming Savior.

Suppose that one were to ask you to name a dozen prophecies from Isaiah, without giving chapter and verse, in regards to the Savior, what would you think of? You'd naturally think, I suppose, of a virgin shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Immanuel. That would be one. You'd think of, unto us a son is given, unto us a child is born, and so on.

That would be two. You would think of the branch of the Lord, who shall be glorious. That would be three.

You'd think of a king shall reign in righteousness. That would be four. You'd think of the wonderful prophecy concerning the coming and rejection of Christ in Isaiah 53.

That would be five. You'd think of the Redeemer come to Zion. That would be six.

You'd think, who is this that cometh from Eden, the Avenger? Seven. Oh, you go on and find ever so many of them. Far more than I can think of, of course, if you were asking.

I think if you fix a few of these things in your mind, you'll not have any difficulty at all when it comes to examination. Well, those are just a few ideas to remember. Now, we come to chapter 60, isn't it? Chapter 60.

I don't know how I could ever forget that chapter. What fixed my mind years ago was the first verse. Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon me.

People often ask me what my life verse is. Well, I don't know that I ever actually selected a life verse, but that is the verse that I suppose I've inscribed beneath my signature in literally thousands of Bibles. Personally, I'd like to get the fellow that first started that signature business and lock him up in the penitentiary.

But you couldn't even then stop the effects of it. I often wish we could. It's all right, though, as long as I tell people, as long as they'll pray for me every time they look at it.

I don't mind putting my signature in their Bible. But that's the verse that's appealed to me so much. Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon me.

And the prophet goes on to show the need for that light, the darkness. I wish you'd read a few of those verses here. I think it'll fix it in our minds.

And there, as the chapter goes on, you'll find restored Israel brought into the forefront of God's plan of blessing for the whole earth, the kings of the earth bowing down to them, the nations that once persecuted them, coming to them and acknowledging that God is with them and seeking to enter into fellowship and communion with them. It's a wonderful chapter. Read it through.

And remember, it's to be taken literally. God is going to deal thus with his people Israel, and he is going to bring the nations that once antagonized and persecuted them into this blessed harmony in the last days. of many generations.

And then 19 and 20. The sun shall be no more thy light by day, neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee, but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. The sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself, for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.

What a day that will be for Israel, after long centuries of suffering that they've gone through, and the days of their mourning shall be ended. This carries us right on through the millennial glory, and I think right into the eternal faith, for God's never going to give up this people. They shall always have a separate place in his mind, just as the church will have a separate place.

God has various groups, all of whom have their place in his counsels, all redeemed alike by the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now when we come to chapter 61, we have the portion that the Lord Jesus directed attention to. You remember when he went into Nazareth, he had been after his baptism in the Jordan and his temptation in the wilderness.

Then he came up through Judea, he gave the word to stay in Judea, then came on into Galilee, and entered into the city where he'd been brought up, into Nazareth. From there we're told that as his custom was, on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue. That's very significant, isn't it? We have, as I said the other day, we have so little information as to the early days of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Men have tried to imagine what may have taken place between his childhood and his 30th year, when he went forth to be baptized by John, as he consecrated himself to his great work. And all sorts of vain imaginations have been indulged in. Some years ago a Russian wrote a book which he professed to be a translation of a record that he had found in Tibet, in the way up north of India.

He said that he found this in a Lama monastery, and it was supposed to be a record of the journeys of Issa. And it was taken for granted that Issa was to be identified with Jesus, and that Issa came from Palestine to India and went up from India to Tibet. And there, among the Lamas, he learned the secrets that enabled him to perform miracles, and so on, and eventually went back to Palestine to begin his work, but was suspected by the Jewish leaders of trying to subvert their teaching, and so eventually was crucified.

Well, people hailed it at first as a wonderful discovery, and thought it might add to our knowledge of Jesus. Finally, the writer of it himself confessed that it was just a forgery, that he had written it himself as the product of his own imagination. People have tried to imagine what Jesus may have done during those years.

The scripture says that when some of his townspeople came to hear him, they said, isn't this the carpenter? Isn't this the carpenter? They'd known him as a carpenter. And then it says here that, it says in Luke, that on the Sabbath day he went as his custom was into the synagogue. It shows that the Lord Jesus submitted himself to the ordinary, not only to obedience to the laws divinely given, but to the ordinary regulations of the rabbis.

And he attended the synagogue service, and apparently took part in it, for he was recognized as one who had right to go up to the dais and read from the holy scriptures. So there, in that synagogue at Nazareth, it was handed to him the book of the prophet Isaiah, and that's this book, this last part, too, of this book, remember, and it's called the prophet Isaiah. And he began to read these verses that you and I are familiar with, but let's hear them again.

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the needy. He hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captive, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. Now let's do what he did.

He got that far, and then you remember what happened? He closed the book. Now that's in the middle of a sentence. He closed the book.

Why didn't he go on? Because those verses tell what he came to do with his first coming. His first and his second comings are intimately linked together in this passage in Isaiah. He came to preach the liberty to the captives, to give sight to the blind, to open the prisons to those that are bound, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

There he stopped at what we would call a comma, and he put this whole dispensation in which you and I live into that comma. It's the acceptable year of the Lord still. We haven't moved one eye over beyond that point where he closed the book.

Why did he close it there? Because the rest of the sentence would carry us on into the day of the Lord after this present age has come to an end. So now is the accepted time. Now is the day of salvation.

When he comes again, then he'll open that book once more. I'm speaking metaphorically, of course, but then he'll take up the rest of this passage, and it will all be fulfilled to the letter. Let's read it.

"...and the day of vengeance for thy God, to comfort all that mourn, to part unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, to all that joy for mourning, the dawn of the praise of the Spirit of heaven, that they might be called treated with righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified." So then there's a lynching of the first and second comings here. He came to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. He's coming again to declare the day of vengeance of our God.

And God is going to destroy all those who are found in red-handed opposition to himself, and to destroy the enemies of his people Israel. It'll be the time of the Lord's vengeance. And then he's going to bring comfort and blessing to those who have suffered so much, to comfort all that mourn, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for the Spirit of heaviness.

I think the figures here are those of a funeral and a wedding. At a funeral service they put ashes upon their heads and mourned and lamented. At a wedding they put beautiful bridal wreaths upon their heads.

And so he's going to appoint unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for the Spirit of heaviness. Israel's long centuries of mourning will be over, and she'll enter into the joyousness of her marriage to Jehovah and all the blessings that are attendant upon it. And they'll be called the priests of the Lord.

The nation of Israel will be a nation of priests who will go into God on behalf of all the other peoples of the earth, and will be God's messengers to the other peoples of the earth. This brings before us what I have called in a book of mine that some of you have seen, the great parenthesis. That is, I've tried to point out

that we are living in the parenthesis, in the period between the 69th and the 70th week of Daniel.

We are living between the beginning of the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of vengeance of our God. There's other passages that can be examined and found to contain the same thought. For instance, the Apostle Peter speaks of those who would see good days and so on, and let us speak decently to it.

For the face of the Lord is against them that do iniquity. And he stops there, where you go back in the Old Testament, it says, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. But that day hasn't come yet.

God's face is still against wickedness and corruption, but the day hasn't come when he's going to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. We're still preaching the gospel of the grace of God and offering salvation to the worst, to the vilest, to those who have done the very worst, God is offering his grace. So that we are living in this period between the first coming of Christ and the second coming, one having to do with the fulfillment of these early prophecies, and the other, the later ones, all linked up with the restoration of Israel and then the blessing of the whole Gentile world.

Well, that's the outstanding message of chapter 61. Did I, did we select something else I wanted to read? I have to use my wife's memory, you see, because now it's gone. Verse 6, that ye shall be made the priests of the Lord.

Men shall call you the ministers of our God. Ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in God's glory shall you boast yourselves. Verse 10 and 11, I will greatly rejoice in the Lord.

My soul shall be joyful in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation. He has covered me with the robe of righteousness. As a bride will he dress himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorning herself with her jewels.

As the earth brings forth her blood, and as the God who causes the things that are stolen in it to spring forth, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and pleasure to spring forth before all the nations. Well, those are wonderful promises these are. How much they should mean to God's earthly people, and how much we should be interested in them.

How blessings are heavenly. Theirs to a great extent will be earthly, and yet their salvation is just the same as our salvation. He has clothed me, they'll be able to sing in that day, with the garments of salvation, with a robe of righteousness.

And isn't that true of us today? We who at one time were trying to piece out a covering for ourselves with the filthy rags of our own unrighteousness, have cast that to one side, and now we can say he has clothed us with the garments of salvation, with the robe of righteousness. God has provided a righteousness for men and women who have none of their own, and in that coming day Israel will learn this precious truth. They'll give up all pretension to human righteousness, and rejoice in the righteousness of God, which will be bestowed upon them.

The prophet Jeremiah, referring to this time, says, and this is his name, whereby he shall be called Jehovah Sidkenia, the Lord our righteousness. And then a little farther on in his prophecy, speaking of Jerusalem and its restoration, he says, and this is her name, whereby she shall be called Jehovah Sidkenia, the Lord our righteousness. So that recognizing that she has no righteousness of her own, the day will come when the people of Israel will find their righteousness in the Lord God himself.

What a blessed thing it is when we've learned that lesson even now. So many people never have learned it. I remember years ago when we were first, if you'll allow a personal reference, we were first starting the colored school, and my son was here in Dallas carrying on.

It wasn't an easy thing. We couldn't seem to get any help financially, and nearly all the finances I had to raise myself would be responsible for. And as I went from place to place and tried to interest people in it, finally I just began to wonder whether it was worthwhile trying to do anything for these colored people down here or not.

And so I, after a third year, I came back, came down here to lecture, and as usual I went over there to give an address one night, and I said to my son, I don't know, Ed, it costs us so much a year to run this, and you're giving your very life for it, and I don't know whether it's really worthwhile or not. And he looked at me rather strangely, and he said, well, Dad, why don't you ask the men what they think about it? So that night before giving my lecture, there were about, just about 30 in school in those days, I said, I told them what was in my mind. I said, I'd like to know what you men think of it.

Is this a worthwhile investment? Are you getting enough out of it? And you know, for, oh, I don't know how many minutes, there wasn't a syllable. They just sat there with downcast faces and didn't say a word. Finally, one man got up.

You know, some of these Negroes are real orators when they get going, and they're very capable. And he got up and he said, I have been wondering if I heard it right. Did I understand that this school may be closed? If this school is closed, then I shall feel that the last bit of light for us poor colored people in Dallas has gone out, and we're just to be left in the dark.

He said, let me tell you how I was in the dark. I was a pastor of a church for 13 years. I didn't know the gospel.

I didn't know how sinners were saved. I preached, and the people come together, and I baptized them, and they joined the church, and they shouted, and they went on, and I thought if I put on plenty of rousements and got them all going, that that was the power of the Holy Spirit. He said, I heard about this school, but I was kind of prejudiced when I heard a white man was running, because I thought there must be something queer about it.

But finally, I came one night, and he turned to me, and he said, your son that night was speaking on the first three chapters of the Epistles of the Romans. And he said, that night he took away from me all the religion I'd been building up for 13 years. I just sat there in a daze as he tore off one filthy rag after another, until I stood there naked before God.

I had no righteousness in my bones, and I thought I had so much. I thought I was doing so well. He said, you know, I went out of the class that night and went home, and I said, what am I going to do? All that I've tried to do to fit myself for heaven is gone.

I haven't anything left. He said, I could hardly wait for the next class, which was two nights later. He said, when I came, that night he began in the middle of the third chapter of Romans, and he went on to show that God had a righteousness for men who had none of their own.

Oh, he said, I can't tell you what that meant to me. I found out that night I didn't have to provide my own righteousness. God had provided one, and if I just trusted the Lord Jesus Christ, I was made the

righteousness of God in him.

He said, you know, from that day to this, I've been preaching the righteousness of God, and my people have been learning to see this great truth. And he said, brother, don't close up this school. It's the only place I know where they open up these things, Dutch common folks.

But you know, there's a whole lot of white folks haven't learned those things. They're just trying to build up a righteousness there, and poor Israel is doing that. The Apostle Paul says, they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God.

But in this coming day, everything will be changed. They'll have their eyes opened, and they'll see in Christ their Redeemer, and they'll be able to sing with gladness, he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, with the robe of righteousness. Well, that was chapter 61, wasn't it? Then we turn to chapter 62.

For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof goes forth with brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that brings. And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory, and thou shalt be called by my name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name thee. Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God.

How precious this is. You can understand how these words, even today, would naturally fill the heart of every redeemed Hebrew, as he thinks of his people still wandering in the darkness of unbelief, and he prays for the peace of Jerusalem, and looks forward to the day when all will be brought unto this knowledge. And so in that coming day, in the very beginning of tribulation period, a remnant will be called out, and they will be the ones who will carry this message to all their brethren, and there will be an intercession to God, looking to him, to hasten the day when Jerusalem shall be made a praise throughout all the earth.

And as the chapter goes on, it tells of the Lord coming in, and in grace, restoring Israel to himself, and bringing them into all the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant. Behold, the Lord hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Praise ye to the daughter of Zion. Behold, thy salvation coming.

Behold, his reward is with him, and his weight 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.

But the doors will be when all this is fulfilled. These words hardly require comment, they are so clear and so plain. Then we turn to the next chapter, chapter 63.

In this chapter we have the wonderful picture, the gray picture, of Israel's Redeemer, with garments red with the blood of their enemies, coming up from the east. You see, their enemies generally came from the east. Assyria was pressing upon them at this time, and Assyria would come to them through Moab and Edom, the lands of Moab and Edom.

So now as they look on for the last days, to the time of their grave trial in the tribulation period, Isaiah depicts the mighty conqueror coming toward the land, driving his foes before him, taking vengeance upon Israel's adversaries in order to redeem his chosen people. He had looked for someone to help. There was no one to do it.

And so he came to do it himself. Just as he came himself to die for their sins upon the cross, so he himself is to be their final deliverer from the power of their enemies. It's a majestic passage.

Let's note it carefully as it's read. Who is this that cometh out of the garments from Bartholomew? This that is glorious in his apparel, traveling in the great eye that speaks in righteousness, mighty to save you. Remember, the salvation here is salvation from their enemies, deliverance from every power that has oppressed them, the bringing them in, the blessing in their land.

For therefore I am also red in thine apparel, and thy garments, like him that treadeth in that hath trodden the wine for my fury, and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, for the day of vengeance is in my heart, and the year of my redeeming is come. And I looked, and there was none to help, and I wondered that there was none to uphold me. Therefore mine own arms upheld thee, and I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring their strength to the earth.

I think this passage has often been misapplied. Take the words, I've trodden the winepress alone. I've heard that applied very often, you know, to our blessed Lord, going through the agony of Gethsemane's garden.

And of course there is a sense in which one might think of him there as treading the winepress. But the whole context here shows it's treading the winepress in judgment on the foes of Israel. And it links with that passage in the book of Revelation, where we have the vintage, and the vine of the earth is fully ripe, and is cast into the great winepress of the wrath of God.

It's the eastern figure, you know, they gathered their grapes, and then they threw them into a great winepress, and then the people took off part of their garments, and with bare feet the young man got right into the wine vat and trod out the grapes. I think probably gave a special flavor to the wine. And they would become all spattered with the red blood of the grapes, the garments they still wore, and their own flesh, and so on.

But it was always a time of great rejoicing. Among the Greeks, for instance, it was a festival in honor of the god Bacchus, or Dionysius. But among the Hebrews, too, there was this treading of the winepress annually.

And the picture here is God putting into the winepress all the enemies of Israel, all of those who have sought to destroy his own chosen people, and then looking for someone to tread that winepress. And there's no one to do it. And so he says, I'll do it myself.

I looked for some, but there was none. So I came. I have trodden the winepress alone, and of the people there's none to help me.

So he says, I'll stain all my raiment. His garments are looked upon as stained with the blood of Israel's foes. I think this is different to what we have in the 19th of Revelation.

In Revelation 19, where we have the wonderful vision of the Lord descending from heaven, where he's pictured as a mighty warrior astride a great white charger, it said there that he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood. That, I take it, is his own precious blood, the blood that poured from the wound in his side, and that naturally would stain his vesture. He's clothed with a vesture dipped in blood.

It's the symbol of his love for his people. But here his garments are stained with the blood of his enemies. It's the day of vengeance of our God, of which we've just been speaking in connection with the previous chapter.

When that day comes, all those that are found in opposition to God will be destroyed. You know, if you look carefully into the prophetic word and link it up to the book of Revelation, it's evident that there are two different characters of judgment upon the world at the time of the Lord's second advent. There's what you might call the warrior judgment, when the nations will be gathered together and the Lord will descend in power from heaven and destroy them.

That's the treading of the winepress that we have here. And then there's what we might call the sessional judgment, when the Son of Man shall come in his glory and all his holy angels with him. Then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations, and he shall separate them one from another as a shepherd, divide up his sheep from the goats, and so on.

There he's not dealing with the nations that have been vicious, have maintained a vicious attitude toward God and his people, but the nations as such, and they'll be judged in that day according to their attitude toward his messengers, these messengers of Israel, as they've gone through the world proclaiming the coming of the King. We need to distinguish these two aspects of judgment. In the one, there's no separating one from another, but the Lord Jesus is revealed in flaming fire, taking vengeance from those that know not God and that have buying off the gospel, those who have had every opportunity to be saved and they've refused it and have taken the place of enemies of God and his people.

Whereas in the sessional judgment, it's the nations as such, many of whom, to many of whom the gospel message had never before gone, and they are judged according to their attitude toward his people. It isn't that the sheep, for instance, are saved because of what they did toward his people, or that the others are lost because of their bad treatment of them. It's a question in either case of whether there was faith in Christ or not, but if there was real faith, it would be manifested by their treatment of his messengers.

Where there was no faith, it would be manifested by their indifference to his messengers. But judgment is always according to works, and so he speaks of their attitude in each instance toward those who carried the message. Inasmuch as you did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, you did it unto me.

Inasmuch as you did it not unto the least of these my brethren, you did it not unto me. Here in the 62nd of Isaiah, the treading of the winepress, it's the warrior judgment when all the enemies, those who are found in definite, open opposition to God and his people will be destroyed when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in flaming fire. In his pity he redeemed them, and he bared them and carried them all the days of old.

On the precious portion, and of course this applies to God's care over all his people in any dispensation. While here it's primarily dealing with the suffering saints of the last days and also those who might be suffering for truth's sake in Isaiah's own day. Yet it may be taken home, taken to heart by God's afflicted people at any time because he's always concerned about his saints.

You remember that beautiful translation of Weymouth's in the New Testament, casting all your care upon him, for it matters to God about you. So here in all their affliction he was afflicted and the angel of his presence saved them. God is not an unmoved spectator as he gazes upon the sufferings of his saints.

His heart of compassion goes out to every one of them, and if he permits the suffering to go on, it's because he sits as a refiner of silver, waiting to purge them from all dross that his own countenance may be fully manifested in them. What a comfort a passage like this will be to the remnant of Israel in the last days, when their sufferings are terribly under the beast and the antichrist, and waiting for the manifestation of the king. And he will come, and their sufferings will come to an end, and they'll enter into all the blessing here predicted.

His airplanes were the fulfillment of it, and told us that now the time of the end had actually come. Well, you see, that's over 30 years ago. So often history shows the fallacy of a lot of our interpretations.

I don't know exactly the meaning of this bird flying with the Lord to deliver Israel. It might have reference to an air campaign in the last days. I don't know.

But the real deliverance is coming when the Lord Jesus himself, with all his holy ones, descends from heaven, and his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives over against Jerusalem in the east, and the Mount of Olives will be the center. That will be the time when, as birds fly, the Lord will deliver Israel. You see, Isaiah looks forward to the deliverance from the power of Samacharab, as set forth more fully in this chapter, if you read it carefully.

But he looks at it as a little picture of the complete deliverance of Jerusalem in the last days, when the Lord himself will intervene on their behalf at the time when their foes are surrounding the city, when the word has been fulfilled that says,

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