

Christ in Isaiah

Part 5

Speaker	J.S. Blackburn
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[00:00:01] The subject this afternoon will be the Anointed One and our reading will be from Isaiah chapter 61 verses 1 to 3, the book of the Prophet Isaiah chapter 61.

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek. He hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to [00:01:03] the captives and the opening of the prison to them that are bound, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord and 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 of 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. Chapter 63 verse 1. Who is this that cometh from Edom with thy garments from Bozrah, this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in [00:02:04] righteousness mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine-fat? I have trodden the wine-press 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 stay in all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come. And I looked, and there was none to help, and I wondered that there was none to uphold. Therefore mine own arm brought salvation to me, and my fury it upheld me. And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth. [00:03:04] And lastly one verse in chapter 57 and verse 15. For thus saith the High and Lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy. I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones. Those of you who have not been here at earlier meetings may be surprised to find that we are considering this afternoon the subject at first announced for this evening, that is, [00:04:04] the Anointed One, the Messiah, in chapters 61 and 63. And this involves the fact that the section which we shall be studying this afternoon is chapters 58 to 66. I did take the liberty of announcing this at the beginning for no better reason than that I felt most urgently pressed upon my spirit that we should bring our meetings to a close on the subject of Isaiah chapter 53, which so strongly speaks to our hearts now and always. So if this is a surprise to you, I trust I shall be forgiven. Another thing which I haven't mentioned before is that I would like to draw my remarks to a close early enough this afternoon to allow time for questions or for [00:05:11] comments, as the case may be. I mention it now so that you could at least give some thought to it as you are listening in the meantime. But quite a number of questions have been addressed to me during the week, and I would only ask if possible that the questions should not lead us away from Isaiah, but be directed towards helping us to open up the book and to find in it our Lord Jesus Christ. Now we have, for the purpose of this afternoon's meeting as I have said, we have omitted the section which begins

with chapter 48, 49 rather, and ends with chapter 57. We shall speak [00:06:05] about these, if the Lord will, this evening, but we all understand how they complete the marvelous picture begun in the earlier chapters when the Servant of the Lord appears, and this ultimately turns out to be one of the most heart-moving representations of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, that the Word of God contains. And it brings us, after this confession and repentance by God's earthly people, it brings them once again, as they've been brought many times in the promise of the prophet, to the kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Now the chapters that we have read, from which we have read this afternoon, and which we shall be considering, that is chapters [00:07:01] 58 to 66, it will be necessary for us to do as we have done for previous sections, and that is consider what is the background to them. We saw that we took a great deal of care to see what were the backgrounds to the sections composing the first 39 chapters, that is book 1 of the prophet Isaiah, and we gave quite a deal of care yesterday to seeing what was the circumstances, the background, lying behind the first nine chapters of the book of Isaiah, Isaiah book 2. And it's necessary to ask this question about this section also. And the answer is that as we read it through, we find that it is almost entirely independent of background circumstances, except for one particular verse or couple of verses, it might have occurred anywhere within the times [00:08:02] covered by the prophet. And that one section, that one little collection of verses, which perhaps supplies us with the means of saying what kind of time these verses are to be understood to refer to, is chapter 64, verses 10 and 11. Thy holy cities are a wilderness, Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation. Our holy, our beautiful house, where our father's praise be, is burned up with fire, and all our pleasant things are laid waste. Perhaps we would not be surprised at the general air of sadness and intense longing and prayer that permeates these chapters if we were to take it, that they apply to some part of the time when Israel were captive in Babylon, [00:09:08] and their holy and beautiful city lay desolate and burned with fire. Many words are addressed by the prophet to the people who would be willing to listen to him, who were captives in Babylon, and this is a part of them. Now from this point we must plunge straightaway into an attempt to go through these chapters from chapter 58, and once again I would ask you to open your Bibles and bend your heads and put your eyes on the page, and because I shall not be able to read many of the passages concerned, we are going to go through these chapters together and try to seize the general import of them, and the general message which comes through to God's people of those days, [00:10:06] with all the time words that can be applied directly to ourselves, and words which present to us the Lord Jesus Christ. I see this is in fulfillment of our declared objective of opening up the book of Isaiah, and in particular to find therein that which will feed our souls and cause our hearts to burn the things concerning himself. So we begin with chapter 58, and in chapter 58 we find that the Lord is denouncing amongst his people a spurious superficial observance of fasts and sabbaths in a manner which does not please him, because it is with the spirit that [00:11:01] elsewhere spoken of as being they are drawn near to him with their lips, but their hearts are far from him. Verse 2, He seek me daily and delight to know my ways as a nation that did righteousness, and forsake not the ordinance of their God. Verse 3, Wherefore have we fasted, saith they, and thou seest not? Wherefore have we afflicted our souls, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours. Behold, ye fast for strife, and debate, and to smite with a fist of wickedness. Ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high. Is this a fast that I have chosen? And so on the Lord is remonstrating with his people, but they are devoting themselves to the superficial observances of religion, whereas their hearts were far from him. But on the other hand, when the time comes that their light breaks forth as the morning, in verse 8, in the end, then they will truly keep [00:12:04] his sabbaths, and they will truly devote themselves to obedience to his law. Verse 13, If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable, and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, and so on, then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord. If they, with their

hearts in subjection to him, and seeking his will, if they kept his ordinances, then they would delight themselves in the Lord. What a wonderful promise to them. In chapter 59, once again, the Lord denounces the fact that the fact that they are in oppression and desolation is not because the Lord's hand is shortened. Whenever the people of God feel under it, feel overcome and defeated, [00:13:04] and cast down and desolate, it is not because the heart of God has changed. It is not because the heart of the Lord has changed, but it says here, your iniquities have separated between you and God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear. The Lord, whatever may be the covenant relationship between himself and his people, can never tolerate acknowledged, known iniquity and sin amongst his people. It must be the cause of separating them in heart from himself. There is in fact an extremely vivid picture here, which I think forms the background to the armour of God, the whole armour of God in Ephesians chapter 6. It begins in verse 14, and the Lord is describing the way in which their behaviour is hateful to himself. It's a [00:14:04] vivid picture of a city, and people watching at the gate. Verse 14, judgment is turned away backward, justice standeth afar off, truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter, truth faileth, and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey, and the Lord saw it and so on. Now you see there, once again, very vivid, these things, in a very vivid way, these qualities that the Lord requires in his people in all times are personified. And when the people have allowed themselves to be separated from God by their iniquities, then these things are turned away from the city of God and the community of God's people. Justice is turned away, judgment is turned away, truth lies wounded in the street, and equity cannot get in, and truth faileth. Now what a deplorable situation this is amongst the people of God. But when we [00:15:07] come to a little later, verse 17, after there is deploring that there was previously no intercessor, therefore the Lord's arm brought salvation unto him, and his righteousness it sustained him. Verse 17, what does the Lord do when these qualities that he loves are excluded from his people? He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head. He put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak, according to their deeds, accordingly he will repay. Fury to his adversaries, recompense to his enemies, to the islands he will repay recompense. So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and his [00:16:02] glory from the rising of the sun. Now this is a very wonderful picture of the Lord coming in with the armor of light on the right hand and upon the left. The qualities that go together to make his name and his fame, he's armed with these. And this ensures that evil will be put down, and the kingdom of light and truth will be established. And I suppose we are clearly to take this verse 17 as being the real background of the armor of God. If we want to be with God, and like him, then we also shall want to put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation upon heads, and so on. In the case of God, they had to come first, as we shall see a little later, vengeance, but then the restoration of those who feared his name. In chapter 60, we have a song of [00:17:03] Zion and its future salvation, right through. Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. Whenever the Lord comes, when the time comes for him to put on these weapons, this armor, and intervene, and that time will result in a time of real blessing for the Lord's people. Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising, and so on, right through to the end of the chapter, it deals in this way. And then in chapter 61, there is the fulfillment of a verse at the end of chapter 59 that says, and the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob saith the Lord. Now this, is the verse quoted in Romans chapter 11, but in chapter 61, it's not surprising that we have the [00:18:07] person of the Messiah introduced here. And he speaks, the Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek, and sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, and so on, as our brother read to us. Now, the two passages that Mr. Bajer read to us are joined together, as we can easily see, by the recurrence of a phrase, which you've already heard, in the middle of verse 2, the day of vengeance of our God. So the predominant character is that this Messiah, who had brought such good tidings and

comfort for the mourners, has now come for the day of vengeance. And we have the same expression, when the day of vengeance is more clearly here, in chapter 63, verse 4, the day of vengeance is in my heart, and the year of my [00:19:06] redeemed is come. Because in the circumstances of his people Israel, the time of vengeance, the answer to the cry that the blood of Christ arouses for vengeance upon such deeds, it is also the time of liberation and salvation for the people of God. In between, we have one of the marks of these closing chapters, which present to us the spirit that the Prophet, and the Lord God by the Prophet, wishes to leave with his people in response to all the wonderful things that have been disclosed to them. And that is in chapter 62, the most fervent prayer by the Prophet, in view of the blessing that's to come. For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation [00:20:03] thereof as a lamp that burneth. And it goes on to speak of the time that is being prayed for. Verse 6 is a very special verse I hope to come back to. I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day or night. Ye that make mention of the Lord keep not silence, and give him no rest till he establish, until he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth. So the Prophet, for the people, is praying for the moment when by the intervention of God, salvation comes, and the righteousness of Zion shines forth as the morning. In the latter part of chapter 63, beginning at verse 15, we have another most intensive outburst of prayer. You see, I said [00:21:03] already that the people are reminded, those who are the Lord's remembrances, those who make mention of the Lord, they're not to keep silence. And we have this wonderful example of the deep and burning intensity of the desire that these things are awakened in the heart of God's people. This is the kind of spirit that such things are intended to arouse in the spirits of the people of God. The burning intensity of this prayer could never be surpassed. Verse 15 of chapter 63, Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness, where is thy zeal and thy strength? Verse 16, Doubtless thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not. Thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer. Thy name is from everlasting. And then right on to the end of chapter 64, the first verse of chapter 64, All that thou wilt render heavens. Every one of the children of God in all ages who have prayed [00:22:07] in times of difficulty have sometimes felt that the heavens are as brass, and the heavens are like a closed door preventing access. But of course this isn't true, there is access. And this prayer asks that the Lord will burst the dome of heaven and appear as a savior. Thou wilt render heavens, and thou wilt come down, that the mountains may fall down at thy coming. And then the prayer, the person praying, reminds God of interventions in times past. Since the beginning of the world, men have not heard nor perceived by the ear. Neither hath the eye seen, O God, besides thee what he has prepared for them that waiteth for him. I just pause to say that this is the verse quoted in 1 Corinthians chapter 2. But in verse 8, But now, O Lord, thou art our [00:23:03] Father, we are the clay. Verse 9, Be not wroth, very sore, O Lord, neither remember our iniquity forever. We beseech thee, we are all thy people. Verse 12, Wilt thou refrain thyself of these things, O Lord? Wilt thou hold thy peace, and afflict us very sore? Now, surely one of the great lessons, and I repeat, I hope to come back to this, of such a passage as this, is the deep intensity of desire after the Lord, and after his intervention, for the putting down of every four of his people, and for their bringing them into the full light of their blessing. That spirit is represented for us here in this prayer of the prophet for the blessing of God. And then, in verse chapter 65 and 66, the last chapters, we have the Lord's answer to that prayer. [00:24:01] I am sought of them that ask not for me, I am found of them that sought me not. We know also that these verses are quoted in Romans. But the Lord still explains to them that it is not with him that there's been the distance. I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good after their own thoughts. A people that provoketh me to anger continually, and so on. But, although there are, verse 7, your iniquities, and the iniquities of your fathers together, which have burned incense upon the mountains, and blasphemed me upon the hills, therefore will I

measure their former work unto their bottom. But in the end, God would intervene. Verse 13, Behold, my servants shall eat, but ye who persist in resisting the [00:25:02] Lord, ye shall be hungry. My servants shall drink, that ye shall be thirsty. My servants shall rejoice, that ye shall be ashamed, and so on. Now the only striking thing here, because the great subject of the first 18 chapters of the book of Isaiah, is the single person called the Servant of the Lord, who has undertaken on behalf of the Lord this great work of salvation, and has carried it through. He has borne the sins of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. He's the Servant of the Lord. He replaced Israel as the failed Servant of the Lord. But the wonderful thing about the end of this book, is that the character of that person is reproduced in those amongst the people who hear his word, and are before the Lord in humility and contrition. And that applies to us. Quite clearly, we had the verse yesterday, in 2nd Timothy, chapter 2, [00:26:04] the Servant of the Lord must not strive. Now I could not be persuaded myself, that there isn't a direct reference in that expression, 2nd Timothy, to the Servant of the Lord in Isaiah. Especially when it said, he should not strive, nor cry, nor lift up his voice in the streets. The Servant of the Lord must not strive, but be up to teach, in meekness instructing them that oppose themselves. In other words, for those who do heed the word of the Lord, for those who really are converted to him in repentance and faith in his people, they are given the privilege of replacing the character, representing the character of that great Servant of the Lord, and continuing his character, representing it here upon earth. This, the remnant of Israel separated, my servants should be blessed, but ye who refuse should be outside. And then right on into the New Testament, where we know [00:27:04] very well that the remnant of Israel was the nucleus of the church, so we have the Servant of the Lord must not strive. It's therefore our privilege, when we read of these chapters, it is our privilege to recognize ourselves in some tiny measure as being, representing the character of the Lord Jesus, as being the Servant of the Lord. In verse 17, we have the most remarkable part of the promises of the Old Testament, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. That is to be an absolutely new beginning for the earthly blessing of those who have, who are receiving the blessing of God in a new heavens and a new earth. And at that time, there will be the kind of blessing that has been promised throughout this book. The wolf and the lamb, verse 25, shall feed together, and the lion [00:28:04] shall eat straw like the bullock, and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord. When we think of the days in which we live, and you and I might be sometimes tempted, as I confess I am, and I expect you are, and I've heard many people, truly the people of God, who are tempted to turn aside to do something about the frightful corruption that's involved in the horrible violence of the days in which we live. Should we be tempted to turn aside to do nothing, to do something? No indeed. No indeed. Our work is to present the gospel of Christ, the power of God unto salvation, that gives men and women a new life, and sets them with Christ apart from the world. Does that mean we are careless about the needs of the world? It does not. But we are absolutely certain that the time will come when [00:29:01] the nations will beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. We are quite certain the time will come when the nations will learn war no more, but we leave it to Him, our Saviour. In His good time He will put all things right, and in the meantime it's our privilege to represent His message by the gospel. When His time comes, when we think of our world, think of these words, they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain. In verse 2 of chapter 66, there is an echo of the verse in chapter 57 that Mr. Beatty read for us, to which I hope to come back. Very striking verse, appealing to the hearts of the saints, I'm sure. In verse 2 in the middle, to this man will I look. For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those [00:30:02] things have been, saith the Lord. But to this man will I look, even to him that is a poor and contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word. And so on we have the time of blessing brought, and I sometimes think as I contemplate the end of this book, although at the very end we have a reminder, as we have in the book of Revelation at the end, that the punishment, the fire that falls upon the ungodly is

everlasting fire. Yet we have a wonderful representation of what it's all directed to. Just go back in thought for a moment to Isaiah chapter 53, which we haven't yet considered in detail. By his stripes we are healed. That's what the remnant of God's people in the future day will say. By his stripes we are healed. And in the end, those people who are healed are sent out into all [00:31:04] the world with a new gospel to preach. Verse 19, I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to tarshish, pull, blood, that draw the bow, and so on. They shall declare my glory among the Gentiles. Those who have been healed and blessed, they are sent out into the world. What's the end of it all? Is that going out with the gospel that belongs to their time, declaring the glory of the Lord, is that the end of the matter? No, the true end of the matter is in verse 23. It shall come to pass that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord. The true worship of Jehovah is the end to which all the disclosures and all that we have about God and his Christ, [00:32:02] the true end of such revelations is, that they should be spread abroad amongst all flesh. The true worship of Jehovah in his holy mountain of Jerusalem. And so it is with us. We are to be devoted to the gospel. We are to be like those whose feet are swift and beautiful upon the mountains with the gospel of peace. If we have forgiven, been forgiven, then it's our privilege to declare the message of forgiveness through the Savior's blood to all the world. But this is not the end of the matter. This is not the end in itself, but just as all the wonders of this book end in all flesh, worshiping Jehovah at the holy mount of Jerusalem, so so far as we are concerned, in our time and place, if we are cleansed and forgiven, we are indeed sent out into all the [00:33:01] world to preach the gospel. But let us never forget that the end of the matter is that the Father seeketh those who will worship him in spirit and in truth. And we can easily read our own Christian New Testament truth into these words when we find that the end of it is that all flesh comes up to the holy mountain of Jerusalem to worship Jehovah. Now let us turn back to, just for a few minutes, to one or two, what I have previously called one or two highlights, and in particular the verses that we have, from which we are given a title to this afternoon's meeting, in chapter 61 and chapter 63. The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the Lord hath anointed me. Now we often use the term Messiah, and we have given a title here, the Anointed One, [00:34:08] but here we have the Messiah, because as we all know the word Messiah means the Anointed One. The Redeemer who has come to Zion is the Messiah. And it's a very remarkable the way, even though the activity of the moment, so far as the setting of these chapters is concerned, even though the activity of the moment is the day of vengeance of our God, is it possible that God should altogether overlook the fact that the hands of wicked men have been placed upon his beloved Son? He has been scorned and despised and crucified and cast out of the world. Well, first of all, that precious blood of Christ speaks better things than that of Abel. It speaks mercy to all who will hear and repent and believe. And we can thank God that most of us here today have [00:35:06] indeed heard that the blood of Christ has spoken to us better things than the blood of Abel. But when in God's long-suffering love has lingered over the world and the day of salvation is complete, be assured, and let all the world be assured, that the day of vengeance will come. And in that one who spoke these words in his own city of Nazareth in Galilee, the time will come when the day of vengeance will be in his heart. The first verses certainly specify the person and the grace of that person. I've often thought of the dramatic situation in Nazareth of Galilee that day. Now, Jesus, the carpenter of Nazareth, he wasn't only the son of the carpenter of Nazareth. I think it is in Mark that he is called the carpenter of Nazareth. Jesus, the carpenter of Nazareth, [00:36:03] went into the synagogue, and they delivered him the book to read. And I have every reason to believe that the portion designated in the ordinary course of reading for that day was this verse from Isaiah chapter 61. And the very words of the Messiah himself uttered these words, the Spirit of the Lord God is upon me. Who would have thought, when we asked the question in Isaiah 61, why is it the first person? Why does the Messiah speak? Because the time would come when he would take the very words

upon his lips and say, the Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because he has, oh, beautiful words, he has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, the opening of prison to them that are bound. We are told that he delivered the book up again and sat down. And then we can [00:37:04] imagine the blank incredulity with which these faithless men heard the words, this day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears. There isn't the slightest doubt in anybody who reads this Bible how these words were fulfilled. They were fulfilled at that very moment in Nazareth of Galilee and the synagogue when Jesus, the carpenter of Nazareth, said, this day are these words fulfilled in your ears. And he proceeded to manifest forth in words of grace and deeds of mighty power. He proceeded to demonstrate the good tidings to the meek and the binding up of the brokenhearted by his word, and the proclaiming of liberty to the captives, and the opening of prison to them that are bound. It was then the acceptable year of the Lord. But you see, it is in the light of our knowledge, after the event that we know, that all the long extent as it has turned out of the church period [00:38:07] comes between the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of vengeance of our God. Don't let us forget that day of vengeance of our God was the manner and the moment of the liberation of God's people from Sodom. That day of vengeance was upon those who held them captive. That day of vengeance was upon those who had persecuted them and destroyed them. And therefore, the day of vengeance of our God was not only the day of vengeance, but it was the day of salvation and the day of liberation for his people. And we have to reckon, and it is very well indeed that we have to reckon with the fact that God's arm is not shortened, that God can deal with the evil, the violence and corruption that's in the world. It's a heartbreaking thing to contemplate, but on the other hand, what a stabilizing thing it is to contemplate that God will and can, can and will deal with the violence and corruption that's in the world. We look around and we see it [00:39:08] in our own country and we see it in other countries. How is it possible to find a person wise enough to know how to reconcile in the seemingly equal claims of conflicting parties? Where's the wisdom going to come from? And if it's done, who's going to have the power to put in an execution? And who's going to be able to rule with judgment and with equity? Well, we have it all here. Our Savior is the wonderful Counselor and the mighty God, as well as having the compassion of the Everlasting Father, and he is the Prince of Peace. And therefore, we shouldn't be stumbled or amazed at the fact that he is here represented as treading the winepress of the wrath of God upon earth in order that the guilt of man might be avenged and that his people might be liberated. [00:40:05] The figure of the winepress, as we all know, which comes alongside the figure of the grain harvest in the Revelation, the grain harvest is a discriminating judgment. It's so presented to us by the Lord Jesus Christ. There will be gathered out that which is good and there will be the destruction of that which is evil. But the winepress is the casting of the whole mass into the winepress and it's trampled with judgment. And that's the figure that's given to us here. In chapter 63, it is as though you have a watchman at the gates of Jerusalem. And he says, who is this who is coming from Edom with dyed garments from Bozrah? Edom, we have already had, and Bozrah, in chapter 34. We won't take the time now to refer to them, but we have had them. Edom and Bozrah, these are the places where the enemies of God's people in the immediately [00:41:08] surrounding countries will be brought down and trampled on the foot and brought to acknowledge that the Lord is God. Armageddon is the place where the Western powers and their head will be brought to nothing. The valley of Jehoshaphat, the valley of decision, may be the place where the king of the North or the Assyrian is brought down. But here in Edom and Bozrah is the place where these nations immediately surrounding Palestine, who have been so treacherous at various times to the people of God, it's there that they in the end will be brought to destruction. And he comes from Edom with dyed garments from Bozrah. Who is this glorious in his apparel, traveling in the greatness of his strength? Although the moment is one of judgment, doesn't the majesty of the words appeal to us, describing the majesty of our Saviour? Who is [00:42:06] this that is glorious in his apparel, traveling in the greatness of his strength? The answer, the answer, I that speak in

righteousness, mighty to save. That reminds us that this destruction is a destruction to result in salvation. We often take those two words and use them for our salvation. He's mighty to save, we say, and we do it rightly. But in their setting, it means that he's mighty to save his earthly people by the destruction of their enemies by his righteousness and his judgment and his equity and truth. I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. I'm the one who's coming from Edom. Verse two, wherefore art thou red in thine apparel and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine fat? Answer, I have trodden the wine press alone and of the people there was none with thee. Verse four, for the day of vengeance is in [00:43:07] my heart and the year of my redeemed is come. Verse six, and I will tread down the peoples, not the people, the peoples who immediately surrounded the land of Israel. I will tread down the peoples in mine anger and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth. How much on the one hand we must rejoice at the fact that violence and corruption and evil will ultimately here upon this earth be dealt with by our Savior. But it's all in order that he may go on to speak of the loving kindness of the Lord. Now I have just two other points that I want to draw your attention to. I've mentioned them already. In chapter 62, verses six and seven, this is part of the call to prayer. But in verse six, it says, [00:44:13] I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day or night. Now let us read the margin. Ye that are the Lord's remembrances, keep not silence and give him no rest till he establish and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth. Well, this is a most striking call to prayer and a most striking indication of the kind of rationale, the true spiritual rationale of prayer. We must not think that we can change the mind of the Lord by our importunity, that we can fix our minds on some particular thing and decide to pray for this and [00:45:01] change the mind of the Lord. The Lord's remembrances, those who really continue steadfast in prayer in this day, the Lord's remembrances were the people who knew what God desired to do and entered into fellowship with him by giving him no rest day or night until his purposes are established. And although the matter comes to us in a more spiritual guise, yet did it not strike you that this is a very lovely word to us? Ye that are the Lord's remembrances, keep not silence, give him no rest until he establish, until he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth. Of all the verses, and there are many verses, and there are difficulties, as no one knows better than I do, there are difficulties about the rationale of prayer. We don't need to worry too much about [00:46:05] being able to understand them, but it seems to me that one of the most striking lights upon prayer is the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, if ye abide in me and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done for you. In other words, the conditional prayer is given us, we shall certainly ask what we will, but it supposes that we are abiding in Christ. And if we are abiding day by day and moment by moment in Christ, and his word is abiding with us, then what we will will be what he wills. And this great miracle will have taken place that God has produced in my heart and your heart, in the ordinary details of life, a request that is according to his will. And then we are to remind him of that request. Whatever we may think about the rationale of this, ye that are the Lord's remembrance, keep not silence until he make [00:47:04] Jerusalem a praise in the earth. And one of the great messages that I suggest that we might take away from this prophet Isaiah is this verse, ye that are the Lord's remembrances, keep not silence. Let us read over, when we go away, the burning intensity of desire that is in this prayer of chapter 60. For all that thou wouldst rend the heavens and come down, now that dost deliver thy people in days of old, all that thou wouldst come down and deliver us now, ye that are the Lord's remembrances, keep not silence. About all the details of what the Lord has promised us in our individual daily lives, of all that the Lord has established and given us to understand about his will regarding the church in the present and in the future, we must never weary in prayer. In the old and new testament, for the people of God in all ages, when all is said and done, it comes back to a call to prayer. No Mohammedan Muezzin from the minaret of the mosque ever gave [00:48:07] a more constant call that comes to us from holy scripture, in answer to the things that God has revealed, ye that are the Lord's remembrances, keep

not silence, and he will make Jerusalem a praise in the earth. Now finally, you see I'm casting a side eye on the clock this time. Finally, I want to put together these two verses in chapter 57. I'll read it again because it's so short.

Thus saith the high and lofty one that inhabited eternity, whose name is holy, I dwell in the high and holy place with him that is of a contrite and humble spirit. And the second verse of chapter 66, so closely parallel, to this man will I look, even to him that is of a poor [00:49:07] and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word. One of the things that I failed to mention, of many things that I failed to mention, is that one of the predominant names of God used by Isaiah is this, the holy one of Israel.

It's used about 30 times altogether, almost equally divided between books one and two, and one of the marks that they were both written by the same prophet Isaiah, although the subjects are so widely differentiated in time and in subject. The holy one of Israel, and here he speaks to himself as the high and lofty one that inhabited eternity, whose name is holy. I suppose the root idea of God's holiness is the fact that he's separate. Separate in the [00:50:06] incomparable majesty that he has declared, for example, in the 40th chapter. Separate in his utter rejection and distance from all that is unclean and evil. This is the God revealed from cover to cover of the book of God. He's the holy one. He inhabits eternity. I read a very striking sentence about this, which I will endeavor to give to you verbatim. Man might be said to inhabit three score years and ten. Call on him during that time when you will, and you may find him at home. But then he is gone, and his place knows him no more. But Jehovah dwells and is alive from everlasting to everlasting. I am the high and lofty one. I dwell in eternity. There never will [00:51:08] be a moment when God is inaccessible to us. We may knock at the door of our closest friend and find that they're not available. And in the end, a man's place knows him no more, and those who have looked to him for help cannot find it. But here is one of whom he says in this context that he inhabits eternity. But there's one other place where he dwells. One other place where he dwells. Be it that we take into account all the truth about the dwelling place of God in time and eternity, all the truth about the church in which dwells God by the Spirit, this remains true. There's one other place that God dwells in, and that is with him who is of a humble and contrite spirit. If you and I desire to take anything away from [00:52:02] this book which is really of God, and we want to be close to him and realize his dwelling with us, then that which ever comes to us from all parts of scripture is that God resists the proud. Oh, how much of pride, how much of self-importance is mixed in with the very best that is in our hearts as the fruit of the Spirit. You know, we are creatures of such terribly mixed motives. One sometimes tries to analyze the action of ourselves or another and say, he did it for so-and-so, he did it because of so-and-so. The fact of the matter is not only is it impossible for us to analyze the motives of others, but nothing is ever done from a pure motive. Nothing is ever done, so long as we're here in creatures of flesh and blood, with the very best of motives in our hearts, there will always be that whisper of pride and self-importance. But God, by the example of him who was meek and lowly in heart, he took the lowly place and he [00:53:08] did not resist when others gave him the lowly place. By the contemplation and the feeding upon him who is meek and lowly in heart, we shall by this means and no other be of a humble and contrite spirit. And if we turn over to chapter 66, what else does it say? What have we got to do about this word that we've been reading? How often we might be satisfied with being informed in our minds and having a clear outline of truth and a proper understanding of the skeletal structure of the truth presented by the Word of God. All this is good, but amongst many other manners of response and manners of reception that is here suggested and enforced to us is this, that we tremble at this word. If God is going to deal with evil, if God resists and hates evil, [00:54:08] he hates it in you and me. And it's therefore necessary for us right to the end of our days that we go on as well as begin in what the scripture truly means by the fear of the Lord, and we want to be amongst those who tremble at the Word of God. This is what God

says, and we'll leave it at this for this afternoon. I am the holy, high, and lofty one that inhabits eternity, but with this man also who is of a humble and contrite spirit and trembles at my word.

Now, as far as I understand what I said to the sisters who asked me what time to have tea, there is at least 20 minutes or so when we could deal with questions relating to any part of the book of Isaiah. I said to you at an earlier stage, there are very many things I don't understand [00:55:08] about it, and more than ever I feel the danger of exposing myself to questions, but it isn't only questions, it's contributions of any kind we may have, and we will seek humbly to speak of them together. So please let us spend these few minutes in questions and perhaps suggestions about the prophet Isaiah.

I don't need somebody to give us a start, and we shall never be able to stop.

We've lived, some of us, to see Judea restored and other powers come into existence, [00:56:07] but we don't see much of the Assyrian world. Can you give us any light on that?

I did mention before, and would like to say it again for the sake of those who were not here, that if we remember what we have previously talked about in Daniel chapter 11, which talked to us about the kings of the north and the king of the south, we read there at the very end, before the coming of Christ, of a sweeping invasion from the north, and when we were reading the first 39 chapters of this book, we realized that this is exactly what is said of the Assyrian [00:57:05] in the future day. The Assyrian scourged the people of God in the past, in the days of Ahaz and Hezekiah, but we also read that when the Lord has finished his whole work, he's going to deal with the Assyrians. Therefore, the Assyrian is one of the evil personages of the last days, and we, for the time being, took it that he was synonymous with the king of the north. But he's one of those who will come streaming down upon Palestine for the crisis immediately preceding the coming of the Lord. Now, your question, Mr. Irwin, is that although we see the other nations, many of them, on our maps and on the headlines, that is Egypt and Israel and Syria, for example, we don't yet see the name Assyria on the headlines or in the news.

[00:58:01] That's the particular point it is. Well, the Assyrian area, whether we regard it as being in the time of Isaiah or whether we regard it as being in the time of Daniel chapter 11, when he was first of all speaking, then there was a great arc, a great curve of territory, which began in the east in what we now call Iraq and curved away to the north and then came down from the north onto Palestine. Now, the particular part of that great curve coming over from Syria in the east, Mesopotamia, the particular part of that curve which comes down to impinge upon Israel was from the time between the testaments called Syria. So for our purpose, [00:59:06] the name Syria is the name of that part of the ancient Assyria which actually touches on the people of Israel. So that the present picture that we have of Israel being threatened not only by Egypt from the south but by Syria from the north is the thing that's in line with this. Now, considering that the scripture talks about the king of the north and the scripture talks about the Assyrian and the scripture talks about Gog, the prince of Rosh, Meshach, and Tubal, there are various names that are used in describing in prophetic terms this great power who will sweep down from the north. We already, it is suggested, and I believe it myself, we already see the name Rosh in Russia. We already see the name Syria, and it could very well be that this is the nearest [01:00:06] that we shall ever get to the word Assyria, both historically and in language. They're both very closely associated with each other. It's not the nearest we shall see, but it is possible, of course, just as in so miraculous a way others of these ancient names have reappeared, Assyria may do so. We wouldn't be surprised if it did, but because of the variety of

names used in scripture for this great power, it may be that one of the others will still be the predominant name. The point is this, if we, am I making it clear? I did think of using maps, but I haven't done so. If we think of starting our sight of the map in the upper part of Mesopotamia, coming up in Iraq, [01:01:01] that is the land between the Tigris and the Euphrates, we think of a curve of land coming over and coming down onto the Mediterranean seaboard and impinging upon Israel. Well, both in ancient times and in the times of Daniel, that is the time of Alexander the Great, this was one kingdom, it was one authority, and it was all called Assyria, after the part of it that really originated in Mesopotamia. But for the part of it, immediately in contact with Israel, the name Syria, the Greek name Syria, was invented in the time between the Testaments, taken presumably from the word Assyria, but it was invented to represent that particular part of the ancient Assyrian power which directly impinged upon the land of Israel. So without doubt, both by language and by geography, the two names are very closely associated with each other. [01:02:15] Yes? Yes, there's a confusion here which is easy enough to explain, but you have to take it away and think about it. The Old Testament word Syria, you see, is the word that the translators used because they lived after Alexander's time. But the Old Testament word which is translated Syria is Aram, and we ought completely to forget Syria in the Old Testament in the context of the Syria that is now attacking and is to be part of this Assyrian power. It's [01:03:05] just one of these strange language confusions that the Old Testament word Aram was seen to represent that bit of territory, and therefore the translators called it Syria. But there's absolutely no justification except for the usage of hundreds of years afterwards for doing so. The Bible name for the place where Naaman lived is Aram and not Syria. But that's not an easy point to take, and I think a little bit of reflection upon it will be needed. I should like to ask a question. You referred us in Isaiah 28 to what you said was a covenant which the Jews would make for the Assyrians, the king of the north, under the heading of your covenant with death and with [01:04:02] love. You also made a remark of the effect in these prophecies, you often get a leap forward, and whilst there might have been a partial fulfillment historically of the king of the north and his historical past, would you agree, or would you not, that Isaiah 28 would look on to the day when a treaty should be made between the Jews under the king of the east and the north? Yes, Mr. Anderson, this must have been one of the moments when I was spluttering with eagerness, because you've misheard me, I'm afraid. What I said was that they made a covenant with death, and then in brackets, so to speak, Egypt, not Assyria. They made a covenant with Egypt against Assyria, but the Spirit of God does not say Egypt. All the [01:05:04] surroundings of the passage would give us to understand it was Egypt to which they were looking for help from Assyria. But I believe the very reason why the Spirit of God doesn't say Egypt, it says a covenant with death and a covenant with hell, is because it has not only this reference to the past, but it has a reference to the future. The people were in wickedness and unbelief relying upon a covenant, both in the past and in the future. In the past it was Egypt, in the future, as you say, it will certainly be Rome. And I think that's why it doesn't specify. They were relying upon a covenant, and it's that fact that they were relying upon a covenant or a treaty in a complete lack of fidelity and confidence and trust in the Lord that is the thing deplored, one might say, there. They were relying upon a covenant, a treaty, instead of [01:06:01] trusting in the Lord, when in quietness and confidence they could have had their strength. So with a little bit of explanation of what I'm afraid I must have spluttered out somewhat indistinctly, I do entirely agree with what you say. And the prophetic leap forward is what is given first in beautiful language in Isaiah 25.

Yes, yes. Now, this, Mr. Anderson, I'm very delighted with this point because it's one of the things I had to miss out, and I should love to get you to turn to Isaiah 25 and have a look at what it says there, all of us, Isaiah chapter 25.

[01:07:12] It's talking, of course, about the future kingdom, and it's after the various passages in which

the prophet is dealing with the surrounding nations, and the chapters before it talks about the Lord making the earth empty and the Lord reigning, the last verse of chapter 24, the Lord reigning on Mount Zion. And then the prophet turns to praise the Lord in chapter 25, he praises the Lord on behalf of his people. And in verse 6, in this mountain, now that means the mountain which is the future kingdom, the millennium, the kingdom of Christ, [01:08:04] in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the leaves, and so on. Verse 7, in this mountain he shall destroy the face of the covering cast over all people and the veil that is spread over all nations. Then verse 8, he will swallow up death in victory. First Corinthians 15, the full meaning given to it, he shall swallow up death in victory. The Lord God shall wipe away tears from off all faces. This is twice quoted in the New Testament, and what a lovely statement of the end, one facet of the end to which our God is working, what no other power has ever been able to bring about. There have been comforts here and there in the mercies of God for the sorrowful and the weary, but no one has ever conceived of such a thing except the word of God, that he will wipe away all tears from off all faces. There will be [01:09:08] no more crying, no more tears, no more sadness. The Lord God shall wipe away all tears from off all faces. This is the kind of God in whom we trust. And the prophet puts into the people, the mouth of the people, the response in verse 9, and it shall be said in that day, they will say, Lord this is our God. We have waited for him. You know, without the slightest doubt, this is what we want to say for ourselves. What are we doing about the sadness in the world and the injustice? We are preaching the gospel of peace, the gospel of peace and life and freedom. But we are preaching the gospel of one who is absolutely certainly going to wipe away all tears from off all eyes. And when the time comes with these people, we can well be able to say, lo, this is our God. We have waited for him [01:10:07] and we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation. I think it's one of the most wonderful passages in Isaiah, to think that we can ourselves rejoice in the fact, in the character and the aims and the heart and the power of the God for whom now we are waiting while we seek to please him and to serve him in his gospel and in all the ways that he puts to us. This is our God. We have waited for him and we shall be glad and rejoice in his salvation. I think you're quite right, Mr. Anderson, and I'm very pleased that you have drawn our attention to that very wonderful passage. This is our God. This is the kind of God of whom we shall never have cause to be ashamed, that instead of putting out our own efforts to rectify things in the world, we have waited for him. [01:11:19] Yes, it could be, the veil there could be, the fact that the knowledge of God is hidden from them as well as all these other things, death and tears. Then this could be, I quite agree, connected with the fact that there's a veil over those who don't believe, and it's for this reason that they do not know this God for whom we wait.

[01:12:14] Thank you.

No other question for a last one?

Well, let us close our meeting this afternoon with hymn number 318. O Lamb of God, still keep us close to thy piercing side. It is only there in safety and peace we can abide. With foes and snares around us, and lusts and fears within, the grace that sought and found us alone can keep us clean. Number 318.