

Isaiah

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[0 : 0 0] We're grateful, Father, for this occasion that brings us together, and we look forward to the truth of your word, and we pray for a facility of explaining, appreciating, understanding it, not only in its meaning, but in its implications as well.

Thank you for the presence of each one here. We ask for hearts and minds to be open and receptive to your truth. We pray that you'll give us discernment and the ability to express the truth, that you'll protect us from error, particularly mine, and enable us to see the burden of the prophet Isaiah, what you laid on his heart.

In Christ's name we pray. Amen. A couple of years ago, I guess it was, I preached a message here at Grace on a Sunday morning entitled, What Everything is All About.

And I know that sounds like a rather comprehensive title, and I suppose it is, but it is a truism nonetheless, because we continue to examine what everything is all about, and what everything is all about is incorporated between the pages of Genesis 1 and Revelation chapter 22.

That's what it's all about. And what it's all about is paradise begun, paradise lost, paradise regained. And the poet John Milton had it right.

[1 : 2 0] That simplifies everything. And what everything is all about is that which is moving inexorably toward the establishment of the kingdom of heaven come to earth, over which Jesus Christ himself will be ruling and reigning, a kingdom that he will establish shortly after he returns to earth in his second coming.

Sometimes this is referred to as the millennium. Sometimes it's referred to as the earthly reign of Christ. And there are other terms given to it, technical terms, but those two will suffice for the time being.

This is most significant because it is going to result in a damaged, broken world full of damaged, broken humans to be fixed, to be resolved.

Things are going to be made right. And it is not going to be made right through any political process, no matter what political party is in the White House or dominates Congress or whatever, whoever is in Parliament or anything.

These are all just human solutions to human problems. The only real solution to human problems is a divine solution. And that is all wrapped up in the person of Jesus Christ and what he's going to accomplish when he returns to this earth.

[2 : 5 0] So, in preparation for examining this time, we are trying to develop various aspects of prophecy without going into the kind of details that we will be explaining on Sunday morning because I don't want there to be a repetition between these sessions that we have monthly and the weekly.

And, by the way, the weekly will not start for probably another two or three weeks after we... Well, it will be right after we deal with the World War II Holocaust with the Jewish people, which is our most significant example of Jewish persecution to date.

And right after that is concluded, then we're going to go into what we think is the next item on the agenda. And that's commonly described as the translation or the rapture of the church and so on.

So, what we are trying to do in these monthly sessions is give you content that relates to the prophetic picture, but in such a way that we trust will not be repetitive of what people will...

what you all will be getting on Sunday morning. And yet, I want to maintain the theme. I want to stay within this particular milieu because I hope that what you get on a monthly basis, like the first Tuesday of each month, will also help you pull the Sunday morning stuff together and you'll get a more comprehensive and full package.

[4 : 29] So, what we're going to do now is look at the major prophets and what they have to say regarding this millennial, thousand-year reign of Christ that is yet to come.

And we find this incorporated in what the prophets have written. And no one has written more definitively about this than the four major prophets.

And that's why we're going to begin, at least in this session, with what is commonly referred to as the prince of the prophets, at least among the Jewish people, and that is the prophecies of Isaiah.

So, in looking at the critical and strategic role of the prophet, which was nothing more than God's voice, a biblical prophet is a teller-forth, in addition to being a foreteller.

We ordinarily think of a prophet or prophecy as having something to do with predicting the future. And it does. But that's only one meaning of the word prophet or prophecy.

[5 : 39] It has to do with... Actually, it's like a synonym for preaching. And when God told Isaiah or Ezekiel or Daniel, Go to the children of Israel and prophesy unto them, Thus saith the Lord.

And the message may have something to do with prophecy, or it may have something to do with a warning of judgment that he is delivering. So, sometimes prophecy was just simply preaching.

The prophet is utilized and established by divine authority simply because God was willing to utilize human instruments. He did not need fallible men whom he's going to raise up as prophets to deliver his message.

God could do it by writing on the sky. He could do it by dropping leaflets out of heaven. He could do it any number of ways. But God, in his grace and condescension, he has chosen, not that he needs to, but he has chosen to use human instrumentality to carry out his plan and purpose.

And we see that going all the way back to Noah and the use of human instrumentality with Noah and with Abraham and with several others. So, prophets were raised up to deliver correctives to behavior that was unacceptable and headed for divine judgment.

[7 : 06] Now, this is really significant, and we need to keep it in mind. Because were it not for human misbehavior and human sin, the prophetic office probably never would have been necessary.

And yet, it is established as an item of the grace of God because it becomes the vehicle to warn people who are going in the wrong direction.

And it is a gracious intervention on the part of God to tell them, warn them, that there are going to be severe and negative consequences if they do not turn from their evil ways.

And that is the commission that God gave to Noah. Of course, nobody listened. Nobody paid any attention, but his own family. And you know, that is one of the sad realities.

Matter of fact, when you stop and think about it, the only prophet that had any real success in his ministry didn't even want it.

[8 : 14] And that was Jonah. And Jonah preached the message, Forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown. And the people of Nineveh believed his message and repented, and God spared the city of Nineveh.

But in most cases, the warnings are not heeded. And that is so sad. But what it does is once the warning has been delivered and isn't heeded, then the culpability increases because they've been told.

They've been warned. They'll never be able to say, but we didn't know. We didn't know. Yes, God sent prophets to warn you. And you did not heed them.

So prophets were raised up to deliver correctives to behavior that was unacceptable and headed for divine judgment. Prophets were God's gracious gift for warning the people so as to motivate them to turn from behavior and repent.

Only, seldom, were those warnings heeded. Terry? Were the prophets performing miracles so that the people would say, oh, gee, this is somebody special and we ought to pay attention?

[9 : 31] Because how else would they know that what they're saying is true? Because there's a lot of kooks out here. Well, that's true. That's very true. And there are occasions where God endowed prophets to perform miracles.

And we find that especially in the ministries of Elijah and Elisha in 1 and 2 Kings. There are a lot of miracles in connection with their ministry. But they were not always there.

Sometimes it was just a sheer warning. We don't have any record of Noah performing any miracles. We know that he warned the people for many, many years that judgment was coming and that they needed to repent of their sin.

And of course, they just blew it off as a fanatical old man. But I don't recall his accomplishing any miracles. So sometimes they did.

Sometimes they didn't. I don't recall any miracles that John the Baptizer performed. He had a very significant ministry.

[10 : 37] But it doesn't strike me that I can recall any miracles that he performed. So sometimes it was just thus saith the Lord.

Prophets often delivered repetitive messages over a period of many years of warning and rebuking. And especially will we see this here in Isaiah and also in Jeremiah.

Jeremiah is going to preach for years to the southern kingdom, the two tribes. And he even told them who their enemy was going to be and what the enemy would do.

And they all dismissed it. They all just wrote him off. They all ridiculed him. When his scroll was given to the king to read, the king cut it up, had it cut up with a knife and burned it.

And God told Jeremiah to write it again. And he wrote it again. And we have the prophecy of Jeremiah. So these men in their ministries often spanned several years.

[11 : 44] And each year they were preaching essentially the same thing. Trying to warn people. They were trying to recruit people for righteousness. And most of them just turned up their nose at it and dismissed him.

Much like secular America is doing to its pastors and preachers today.

You do not find a great deal of recognition or credibility given to anyone who has anything to say of a spiritual significance.

It's often dismissed as well one religion is as good as another and who are you to judge and so on and so on. So a prophet's audience frequently usually resented the prophet and his message often to the degree of rejection of the man and his message that could lead to persecution emotional and physical abuse and sometimes even death.

Before we look at a passage in Isaiah come for just a moment if you would to the New Testament Matthew chapter 23 I just want to show you probably the most concise and compelling example of this that we've been talking about in connection with the prophet and that is in Matthew chapter 23 and I'll just jump in here with verse 29 if we may.

[13:18] Remember when Christ came on earth for his three year ministry the Old Testament scriptures had been completed approximately 400 years earlier so there is a 400 year time gap when there was no additional word coming from God in other words God was not inspiring anyone to write scripture during these 400 silent years and Jesus in his comments here when he refers to your fathers he's not talking about necessarily your fathers one generation removed he's talking about your ancestors which would include your fathers but it goes all the way back so beginning in verse 29 Jesus says woe to you scribes and Pharisees and he's got this audience in front of him he's facing these people and it must have been a very tense situation because he was of course just one and they were there were many we don't know how many there were but there were multiple people there and they belonged to these different groups woe to you scribes and Pharisees hypocrites for you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous what is he what is he saying here he is acknowledging the fact that they are the ones who built and funded the memorials in memory of these various prophets wasn't that a nice thing for them to do they acknowledged historically the contribution that these prophets had made and it's almost as if they expect some kind of credit for that and Jesus is acknowledging that yeah this is what you did yeah you you made the place really nice you set up a real nice memorial made it very fancy and it's engraved and everything and this is how you've honored the prophets but and you say you say if we had been living in the days of our fathers we would not have been partners with them in shedding the blood of the prophets consequently you bear witness against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets and by the way

I don't know if you're aware of this or not but the biblical use of the word sons when it's used in a context like this conveys the idea that you are the same ass and often when a speaker in the bible wants to identify someone because of their personality traits or their behavior or whatever with a certain entity or a certain well known thing they refer to them as the son of Jesus referred to Judas as the son of perdition remember that the apostle Paul referred to Barnabas as the son of consolation comfort in other words that was his forte that was what Barnabas was all about he was a comforter an encourager Jesus referred to

James and John as sons of thunder these guys were boisterous and loud and dynamic and always out in front and hard drivers he called them sons of thunder what do you think of when you hear thunder you think of racket and noise and commotion and power and he identified them as sons of thunder now when you use the term son of God same as same as meaning that the son of God is comprised of the same essence character nature and makeup as his father enabling Jesus to say I and the father are one so this expression the son of and here Jesus says you bear witness against yourselves that you are sons of those you are just like those who murdered the prophets fill up then the measure of the guilt of your fathers you serpents you brood of vipers by the way

Jesus was not politically correct I think this is a rather sterling example of it isn't it how shall you escape the sentence of hell therefore behold I am sending you prophets and wise men and scribes some of them you will kill and crucify of course that would be applicable to himself and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city how about beginning with Stephen whom they will stone in Acts chapter 7 and numerous others that upon you that is upon this generation that Jesus is addressing may fall the guilt of all the righteous blood shed on earth from the blood of righteous Abel hey how far back is that going kind of all the way isn't it to the blood of

Zechariah the son of Berechiah whom you murdered between the temple and the altar truly I say to you all these things shall come upon this generation and in this powerful verse Christ says oh Jerusalem Jerusalem who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her how often I wanted to gather your children together away a hen gathers her chicks under her wings and you were unwilling hold your house is being left to you desolate wow this is really this is and I can just see these guys wincing and chafing under this kind of condemnation and they had already before even before this encounter they had already made up their minds that Jesus needed to be eliminated and of course this is just adding to it all right let's come back now if we may to

[20:12] Isaiah chapter 1 now we are engaged in an extensive consideration of the content delivered by the prophets in both the Old and New Testament and their message was always the same it always began with bad news in other words God never raised up a prophet and said I want you to go to the children of Israel or to Judah or to Israel and I just want you to tell them everything's just great that I'm really pleased and I couldn't be happier with the way they're behaving you'll never find a prophet delivering that message because prophets were raised up of God in response to something that was taking place that was unacceptable and in Israel's case it was usually idolatry or graft or corruption and the corruption is going to be through and through and you know like we said last

Sunday corruption is man's greatest problem and the seed of corruption of course is sin itself so the message is always the same judgment is forthcoming because of your sin but that's the negative aspect the prophet also had a positive aspect to deliver and I'm sure he enjoyed that a whole lot more and the positive is blessing and forgiveness are available upon repentance and this is a glorious thing to be able to preach because this and this alone is what gives man real hope you've strayed you've sinned you've erred you've defied God but there is a way back you don't have to stay in that mood you don't have to follow that until it takes you out you can repent you can change your mind you can utilize your will and change directions and if you don't this is what's going to befall you if you do this is what will befall that and then it is blessing and benefit and beneficence and everything that is good you see this thing called repentance is

God's silver bullet he is the God of the second chance and man can always reverse himself through repentance and when he repents he acknowledges his wrong if he is wrong and he is acknowledging what he is doing but coming in line with truth the truth of the matter he is freely admitting it and let me tell you God loves nothing like he loves truth he is the God of all truth he is the God of reality and when man repents of his sin he brings himself into a position of truth through repentance and that delights the heart of God he is always there with open arms willing and eager to receive and restore and forgive but it is contingent upon man coming to himself this is the prodigal this is the prodigal in

Luke 15 went to a strange country wasted his living and when he came to himself after down there rooting with the pigs and eating the pigs food the text says he came to himself he had a wake up call it was good grief what have I come to what am I doing what is wrong with me why have I that text that is just beautiful it says and when he came to himself he said I will arise and I will go to my father and he made a little prepared speech and I will say to my father father I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight I am no longer worthy to be called your son would you make me as one of the hired hands and you know the answer of the father the father saw him coming afar off embraced him kissed him the robe the ring the fatted calf and all the rest that's how

God regards the repentant sinner but if a man doesn't come to himself there will not be that so what this does is once again it points out the power and the importance of human volition nobody will ever be able to say well repent but I just wasn't able to yes you were too yes you were and this is going to be the basis for our being held accountable it is what we do with the will the power to make choices that God has given us it's a powerful thing when the prophet delivered his message it was a negative corrective message of warning coupled with a positive message if the negative message was about that very concept and that's all salvation is that's really what salvation is it is the delivering of a negative message that promises judgment and it also promises forgiveness whereby the negative can be overcome through repentance and embracing of

[26 : 11] God's provision and this is why as I've often said this is a major reason that Christians have such difficulty in personal evangelism in sharing the gospel with someone else because if you do it and you do it right you've got to deliver bad news because if you don't deliver bad news there is no need for the good news and the bad news is all have sinned and come short of the glory of God and that includes you and me and that's bad news people don't want to hear that people want to hear how good they are they don't want to hear how bad they are but if you tell them how good they are you won't be telling them the truth you have to deliver the bad news because the good news doesn't make any sense without the bad news and the bad news is we have all sinned the good news is

Jesus Christ died for our sin and we can be saved through him that's the good news but let me tell you something don't succumb to the temptation to just try to preach the good news and leave out the bad news because the good news without the bad news makes no sense why should I why should I turn my life over to Jesus Christ what's your answer going to be well because it would be a nice thing to do no it's because you desperately need him we all desperately need him he is God's provision for our sin and if we do not receive Christ we remain in our sin that's bad news I've often said when people hear the gospel the first time they very often get angry get mad most people get mad before they get saved but the truth can wear on them and they can see themselves as God sees them and then repent and the two aspects of the same message could diverse cursing versus blessing both for individuals and for national entities we are right now as we speak dealing with a situation of extreme gravity right here in the

USA we are at a crossroads we do not know which way this nation is going to go we know the direction it is going in now and the greater percentage of the American population that has been polled has said they don't like the direction the nation is taking it doesn't seem to be the right way that's the majority opinion that's the feeling of people polled all across the nation the question is whether anything is going to be done about it because the principle is the same for an individual as it is for a nation and that is when you are in the wrong you have an opportunity to write yourself as an individual or as a nation but first of all you have to know you're in the wrong and that's why we have evangelists and pastors and teachers and prophets it's to tell people they're in the wrong and let me tell you something that can be a pretty thankless task this is one reason why a lot of preachers don't get into this

I remember the late Robert Schuller Crystal Cathedral you know he's passed off the scene now but he was being interviewed one time by Larry King and this was a number of years ago and Larry King said you preach your messages much along the lines of Norman Vincent Peale do good be good kind of theology and he said yes I do and Norman Vincent Peale is one of my heroes and he says you don't get into this thing about sin do you and Schuller says no I don't and he says why don't you and he said because people don't want to hear about sin right on he's right people don't want to hear about sin give me something to make me feel good don't tear me down by telling him I'm a sinner I don't want to hear that and you know something by and large that's where we are give people what they want to hear

Paul wrote to Timothy about this and said a time will come when people will surround themselves with teachers who will tickle their ears that means with teachers who will tell them what they want to hear and that keeps the accolades coming that keeps the offerings and the money coming that keeps everybody feeling good but it's got nothing to do with truth people need to be torn down before they can be built up but who wants to do that that's a tough call that's a tough call you'll be labeled judgmental hellfire and brimstone where's the love that's what you'll hear people want nice they want nice they want feel good stuff and you know what so do I so do

[32 : 03] I I would much rather hear something that feeds my ego and builds me up and makes me feel good about myself but the only question that really matters is what's the truth of the matter what's the truth of the matter my oh my let's go to some examples for this Isaiah chapter 1 Isaiah chapter 1 bear in mind if you will Isaiah wrote around 700 BC this is about 7 centuries before Christ came on the scene and one of his great burdens is the behavior of the nation of Israel and what lies in store for them if they don't reverse themselves and Isaiah is going to preach an unpopular message but he's going to be able to follow it with a popular message but the popular message will be dependent upon the right response to the unpopular message see what I'm saying got to deliver bad news but if the response to the bad news is right then there's good news coming and if it isn't right then there's judgment coming but in either case they've been warned and that's the whole ministry of the prophet vision of

Isaiah the son of Amoz concerning Judah and Jerusalem which he saw during the reigns of Uzziah Jotham Ahaz Hezekiah kings of Judah that means this man Isaiah had a prophetic ministry that extended across the reigns of all of these kings in other words he saw kings come and go come and go and he was still ministering and still prophesying listen oh heavens and hear oh earth for the Lord speaks sons I have reared and brought up but they have revolted against me who's he talking about you know very well who he's talking about the first verse says concerning Judah and Jerusalem that's his audience and then he delivers this in verse 3 an ox knows its owner and a donkey its master's manger but Israel does not know my people do not understand now this is not exactly a good way to start off with your audience by comparing them with a couple of dumb animals and in this case it's an ox and a donkey what he is saying in essence to his audience of

Jerusalem and Judea is you people are worse than a couple of dumb animals these animals an ox and an ass they have not been empowered with this thing called volition you know what I gave them I gave them something called instinct instinct and these animals just act kind of automatically in connection with the instinct that I programmed into them and an ox knows its owner and a donkey knows its master's manger these we commonly refer to as poor dumb animals but these poor dumb animals know more than you do they have not been blessed with a volition with a will a capacity you see an ox and an ass they just do what comes naturally the way they're programmed but man is able to say you know

I don't think I want to do that I think I want to do something else well an ox or an ass they don't have that ability they just do what they're programmed to do they don't have the free moral choice in fact they are not moral beings at all they do not know right from wrong animals were never endowed with that so they have no sense of guilt or shame I don't know who it was but some philosopher years ago said that man is the only biological creation of God that has the ability to blush or the need to do so yeah so you know when you see one of these nature programs and here is this lion in pursuit of an antelope and he catches it and brings it down to the ground and he sinks those massive teeth into the neck of that antelope and strangles it and then he proceeds to have lunch but you'll never you'll never see him return thanks before he eats that meal and you'll never hear him offer an apology oh God

I'm sorry I killed that antelope I don't know what came over me I just no he was just acting like what he is acting the way he's programmed we have a volition we don't have the right to say you know I don't know why I pulled that trigger to kill that person it was just something that came over me and I no no you had a choice you had a choice Scott did sin program the lion to kill like that because that wasn't the original you're right you're right and it's going to be reprogrammed it's true and we're going to see that right here in Isaiah if maybe not today but it's it's it's coming up but this programming is in here and you know that's part of the fall because as as we've noted before animals preying upon other animals was not the original intent and Isaiah is going to address this very thing because he's going to talk about during this earthly reign of

[38 : 57] Christ when he returns the lion and the ox the lion will eat straw like the ox and I suspect that if you have a caged lion in the zoo and you throw in a bale of straw he'll probably die of starvation before he'd eat that straw because he wants flesh he's a carnivore he wants meat but it wasn't always that way and yet after the flood that's going to change before the flood God said I've given you every green herb for food that was for animals and for man all animals and all men were vegetarians before the flood and afterwards and I'm not exactly sure why God changed it then but he did and animals then began preying upon other animals and man is eating flesh so here in Isaiah 1 he is delivering this this is an indictment look at verse 4 alas sinful nation he's not calling them a great nation he's calling them a sinful nation and as I read down through this

I see parallels to the USA and I don't like that because I love this country and yet honesty compels us to admit it sinful nation people weighed down with iniquity offspring of evil doers sons who act corruptly they have abandoned the Lord do you see the USA there they have abandoned the Lord get God out of the schools get God's name off the coins get God out of the pledge allegiance to the flag get God out of this get God out of that abandon the Lord they have despised the Holy One of Israel the word despised means to look down your nose at to hold in contempt disgust rejection they have despised the

Holy One of Israel they have turned away from him not only the USA but there are a whole lot of other nations that could be plugged in there as well but Isaiah is talking about his own beloved Israel and he's telling them the truth are they going to be receptive to it surely you just you aren't going to be receptive at all where will you be stricken again as you continue in your rebellion the whole head is sick and the whole heart is faint from the sole of the foot even to the head there is nothing sound in it only bruises welts and raw wounds not pressed out or bandaged nor softened with oil in other words you're a mess you're a real mess spiritually emotionally and every other way your land is desolate your cities are burned with fire your fields strangers are devouring them in your presence it is desolation as overthrown by strangers and the daughter of

Zion that is Jerusalem another name for Jerusalem the daughter of Zion is left like a shelter and a vineyard like a watchman's hut and a cucumber field like a besieged city now these things these terms descriptions don't mean much to us at all but if you can go back in your mind's eye to ancient Israel these were everyday scenes in the mind and experience of someone living there in and around Jerusalem this shelter in a vineyard they would go out the vine dressers and those who would pick the grapes would go out into these huge vineyards because wine was a real staple in Israel and they would build a real simple rickety kind of lean to just out of branches and limbs and things like that and put some kind of a top over it simply to protect them from the sun because they would be out there for hours on end picking these grapes in the vineyard and after a while the heat would start getting so they would go over to these makeshift lean-tos that were worth next to nothing they were just propped up and made on spur of the moment and the thing is just a picture of desolation they would use it until they no longer needed it for shade and move on and eventually the wind would blow it down or the rain would knock it over or whatever it was just a pathetic looking kind of thing and this is what he's saying that Israel has been turned into and like a hut and a cucumber field like a besieged city unless the

Lord of hosts had left us a few survivors we would be like Sodom we would be like Gomorrah hear the word of the Lord you rulers of Sodom now he's not talking to people actually of Sodom Sodom is off the scene dead and buried under who knows how much rubble in Ash and everything else hundreds and hundreds of years before in connection with Lot and his wife that was the end of Sodom and Gomorrah but what he is saying is that this modern city modern in his day to which he is preaching has allowed itself to be reduced to the level of Sodom and he calls them Sodom or Sodomites you people of Gomorrah what are your multiplied sacrifices to me says the Lord I've had enough of burnt offerings and rams and the fat of fed cattle

[45 : 01] I take no pleasure in the blood of bulls lambs or goats when you come to appear before me who requires of you this trampling of my courts bring your worthless offerings no longer their incense is an abomination to me new moon and Sabbath the calling of assemblies I cannot endure iniquity and the solemn assembly you know what the solemn assembly was that was the religious occasion of the year that was a big deal and all of these sacrifices that God is rejecting let me ask you who requested these sacrifices who demanded them God did why then is he not pleased with them because they were offering them as nothing more than pure unadulterated ritual and habit and that was it and then they prided themselves on that and God is saying listen when your heart isn't in it don't bring me this junk it's not going to avail anything you think your repetitive rituals and the motions you go through is somehow magical and is going to somehow appease me forget it forget it that is just so much hypocrisy here

Isaiah is reading out the religious establishment listen do you think these people on the receiving end of this were not chafing under this that they were not saying things like how dare he speak to us like that doesn't he know who we are why we do this and we do that and we offer this and he is rebuking it all this man is not going to be popular I hate your new moon festivals and your appointed feast they have become a burden to me I am weary of bearing them so when you spread out your hands in prayer and what will that be it will be nothing but plain old ritualistic prayer just going through the motions just doing it because this is the way we've always done it and God is saying it's worthless if I don't have your heart don't give me your hands not interested

I will hide I will you multiply prayers I will not listen your hands are full of bloodshed I don't know anybody's hands that are more full of bloodshed than SCOTUS you know who SCOTUS is it's an acronym for the Supreme Court of the United States talk about bloodshed on people's hands they've legalized it your hands are full of bloodshed wash yourselves make yourselves clean how are you going to do that you will not wash yourself morally spiritually purify or cleanse yourself unless you have a radical change of mind you are going to do it learn to do good seek justice reprove the ruthless defend the orphan plead for the widow now that's that's the anathema that's the cursing that's the judgment that is delivered and I want you to notice the abrupt change it is remarkable what

Isaiah is now going to say listen I've just delivered a doomsday message and I told you how God feels about all your religiosity now let me tell you something it doesn't have to be that way come now come now let us reason together verse 18 let us reason together says the Lord though your sins are as scarlet they will be as white as snow though they are red like crimson they will be like wool what's it going to take to make that happen next verse if you consent and obey you will eat the best of the land but if you refuse and rebel like you have been doing up till now you will be devoured by the sword truly the mouth of the

Lord has spoken do you see grace here coming to the rescue saying this is the lay of the land this is the way it really is but you can change that you can change that this is the upbeat part of the message this is the good news that follows the bad news and it is all of the bad stuff that Isaiah gave earlier that makes this good stuff look as good as in fact well my time is gone we'll have to bring this to a close but I just want to remind you in this book of Isaiah these 66 chapters scholars have for years and years and I'm talking about mainly liberal scholars have proposed the idea that Isaiah was not the sole author of this book in fact some of the liberal scholars say Isaiah didn't even write it it was written by two unknown individuals we don't have any idea who they were and one wrote the first part of

[51 : 14] Isaiah the first 39 chapters and the other wrote the last part of Isaiah chapter 40 through 66 and it's called Deutero Isaiah or the two author Isaiah and what they base that on is that there is such a radical departure beginning with Isaiah chapter 40 from the first 39 verses because I mean the first 39 chapters because the first 39 chapters in the main are judgmental they are punitive they are declaratory they are negative and then all of a sudden when you open chapter 40 you get some of those immortal words from Handel's Messiah comfort ye comfort ye my people saith the Lord and the message is radically different it's upbeat and it is a picture of the

Messiah in the millennium and Israel is the recipient of untold benefit and blessing it is a direct reversal and those last chapters in our next session when we get together again the Lord willing that'll be the first Tuesday in March we'll explore some of these differences and it is a wonder to behold it's so encouraging and I can promise you this also you'll gain a new appreciation for portions of Handel's Messiah because he built some of that from this book into Handel's Messiah and it is just absolutely glorious questions or comments anybody anyone yes kind of related to what you said this morning about the United States and so

I've been thinking of that as you were talking and I'm thinking we really are at a big crossroads right now with the election and all of that and I think so many people think well we're mostly good and if we do this and this and we we're church people and we believe in God and well whatever it takes to win the election he'll forgive us if we are no good as long as we do good after that and I just think we really need to pray about where we're at and how we're headed even those who pretend to be conservative whatever Christian quote unquote whatever that means yeah yeah well yeah well you know I I I don't know

I am I'm certainly not opposed to the American political process for sure there's absolutely nothing like it in all the world no no question about that nothing like it in all the world and and it has in some respects it has served this nation well but you know both parties both parties are so subject to corruption to corruption and the kind of behavior that has put us where we are today and let me just say this the long and the short of it is this for the sake of the stability of the nation we certainly cannot abandon the political process and nobody is advocating that especially when you think that probably probably the only alternative is anarchy and we certainly don't want that but let me just say this with as much emphasis as I can our nation's problems will not be and cannot be solved by politics

I don't care what your politics are they are not the answer to what this nation needs any more than the human problem cannot be solved by good nutrition what is needed in the case of the human as well as in the case of the nation is a spiritual solution there are spiritual answers to our problems not political answers but don't wait for the cows to come home before the nation is willing to employ spiritual solutions because they're not interested in that and the moment anybody would say anything about you know what this nation needs is some spiritual solutions first thing you'd hear is separation of church and state we can't have that you know and no I'm not advocating that congress passed laws requiring everybody to go to church and all of that nonsense like some are accusing evangelicals of pushing for but all

[56 : 44] I am saying is our problems are spiritual and moral problems they are not political problems they are spiritual and moral problems and putting the so-called right people into office from whichever party is not going to really solve those problems and yet who and how are you going to convince anybody other than a small contingency of committed Christians that that's the real answer to our problem is spiritual the vast majority of the world would just laugh at you you can imagine what the media would do with something like that you know so but and this is why this is why man's problems are insurmountable they are insurmountable I don't care who you put in office and I don't care even if the guy is a Christian that's not going to solve our nation's problems because we are adrift morally and spiritually and that's the only thing that is going to really rescue us so what we need is something that neither political party can provide and that is a genuine heaven sent revival and I don't see one in the offering but

I don't think there is any other solution anyone else John looks like in the end times all the country all the nations are going to come against Israel and Israel the only salvation is Christ's second coming is the United States included in that are they are we not mentioned we are not mentioned but I don't know as you know I'm a great one for taking the Bible literally unless the context indicates that it is clearly not intended to be taken literally and usually when the context indicates that it makes it pretty clear so I guess I would focus upon the verse of scripture Zechariah I can't give you chapter and verse but I'm pretty sure it's

Zechariah where the Lord says I will bring all nations together against Israel in the land and I have a difficult time not including the US in that now I don't also I don't know that that requires how many nations do we have according to the UN what is 160 nations or something like that I don't know that it means he's going to bring 160 nations but I get the idea that I think the scriptures speak very strongly to the idea that Israel as a nation is going to be alone all by itself when that time comes and of course we're talking about the Armageddon conflict and the plain of Israel and the valley of Jehoshaphat we'll be looking at that later but okay would you read it please yeah okay thank you thank you that's

Zechariah 14 2 yes yes Israel says there's 196 countries in the world 196 okay well the armies for the Armageddon campaign are going to merge there in the plain of Israel and this is that huge expanse I remember I can't think of the name of the mountain we were standing on at the time this is in 1990 and we looked over the plains of Israel and this area there in Megiddo is commonly referred to as Israel's bread basket it kind of reminds me of expansive huge land in like Kansas and Nebraska big flat lands where we grow so much wheat and I remember reading a quote by Napoleon Bonaparte when he brought his armies in through Israel and he stood on the same mountain that we were on and looked over the plain of Esdraelen and Napoleon was heard to say what a magnificent battlefield the battle won't actually be there but the armies are going to mass there and the battle will be in the valley of

Jehoshaphat it will be front and center to the city of Jerusalem because the valley of Jehoshaphat is the same as the Kidron valley it's just another name for it and that's where Jesus crossed over when he went up to the Mount of Olives fascinating time this world is in for something I tell you it's going to be amazing well yeah I'm already over on my time so I didn't want to disappoint you so I went over on my time hope you can make it for the first Tuesday in March we'll continue this and we're going to have to do something to get more input from you maybe I'll just have to stop every 10 or 15 minutes and go silent and let you say something and then I'll go on yeah really it's going to be hard remind me that I need to do that yeah need a time clock okay okay thank you for your patience and for your attendance I appreciate you being here