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Warfare, Judgment and Redemption



Isaiah: A Topical Look At Isaiah - Steve Gregg

In this discussion, Steve Gregg delves into the book of Isaiah, focusing on its themes of warfare, judgment, and redemption. He examines the use of Exodus imagery in relation to the salvation of Christ, and argues that Jesus' personal victories are a manifestation of spiritual warfare. Gregg also highlights the importance of understanding the historical and natural context of the language of war and conquest in Isaiah, pointing out that not every Jew in Egypt was godly. Ultimately, he asserts that salvation was accomplished through the cross and Christ's personal victory over his enemies.

Transcript

To a certain extent, our lectures on Isaiah being topically arranged are... Well, there's a certain randomness to our selection of topics in order, but not entirely. It's not entirely random. There's a sense in which we are going to try to build on, you know, earlier things we've talked about, and move from there into some other related things that follow naturally to consider.

I don't know to what degree you'll see a continuity between what we said last time and what I have to say today. It's not necessary to. Each of these lectures can stand individually as a consideration of individual topics.

But there is something of a flow, it seems, from some of these topics to the next. Last time, we were observing how that Isaiah uses a number of symbolic ways of speaking about the nations. And one of the things we saw was that he would, for example, name individual nations, when in fact the prophecy's fulfillment may not involve those specific nations, but they represent all nations, or Gentile nations in general, or whatever.

And there are some things that are similar to that and grow out of that recognition in what we want to talk about today. I want to talk, depending on how much time we have, there's more than one branch of what I want to talk about. I want to talk about several things if I have the time.

First of all, I want to discuss a term that Isaiah uses frequently and try to explore its actual meaning. And that is the term, the arm of the Lord. We will find reference to the

arm of the Lord at least a dozen times in Isaiah, it seems to me.

I'm sorry, that's not true, nine or ten times. But still, that's fairly frequent reference for such an unusual expression, the arm of the Lord. I want to talk about that first, and then from that, I want to talk about the manner in which we are to understand the battles and the victories that are described in Isaiah.

Certainly they all are described in terms of natural, ancient warfare. However, what I'd like to explore and hopefully demonstrate is that in many cases at least, these are relevant to spiritual warfare and the warfare of the New Testament. Not the physical warfare, but the victory that God gives over spiritual enemies and the ongoing warfare of the church against the powers of darkness.

Although the language of Isaiah is all that, it's all cast in the mode of actual war with actual nations and actual weapons and things like that. I don't want to jump to that conclusion. I want us to reach that conclusion by consideration of the data.

That will be the second thing we want to do. If time allows, I'd like to move from there to talk about the theme of God's redemption, which is related to the previous two. God is said to redeem by his arm.

The arm of the Lord is that which redeems. Furthermore, his redemption is generally described in terms of military victories and deliverance. The deliverance that God accomplished of Israel from Egypt in the Exodus.

The deliverance of the Jews from Babylon. I've mentioned in an earlier lecture that these two historic deliverances in Isaiah and in the Prophets and in the New Testament, I believe are frequently seen as types of ultimate deliverance, ultimate salvation. Spiritual deliverance of his people from spiritual bondage.

And this too is described because it is described in terms of the Exodus and of the deliverance from Babylon. It is described in terms of geography. It's described in terms of political warfare and victories and God redeeming the Jewish people out of the hand of the Egyptian oppressors and so forth.

Of course, that wasn't through actual war, although God made war with the Egyptians. In the case of the redemption from Babylon, it was through war. It was through the Persians conquering Babylon that this redemption was accomplished.

But in any case, what I want to show, and I'm hoping to take these things in a logical order so that one thing builds on another, is that the redemption motif in Isaiah, though generally either looking back for its imagery to the Exodus or taking imagery from the predicted deliverance from Babylon, that in Isaiah's day was still future, these motifs always are used, or at least most of the time used, as a way of introducing the concept of God's redemption which finds its fulfillment in Christ. And in many cases, the very

prophecies that talk about redemption from Babylon or refer to the Exodus are in fact looking beyond those historical events to the spiritual redemption. I think that can be demonstrated by appeal to the passages in Isaiah which we will look at.

Now that's three general headings we want to cover. I think we may get that far today. If I surprise myself and get further, we're going to start looking more specifically at the many times in Isaiah where the Exodus imagery is used to speak of the salvation that is in Christ.

If we don't get to that today, we'll get to that in the next lecture after that, and there's more. But I'm trying to be realistic and not bite off more than I can chew in a single lecture. Let's start out by exploring the meaning of this expression, the arm of the Lord.

Now, we're not just going to look at the first occurrence and the second occurrence and so forth. I want to take this under three subheadings. There are times when the arm of the Lord is quite clearly a reference to His judgment, His arm stretched out, His hand stretched out in judgment.

If you'll look, for example, at Isaiah 30 and verse 30. Isaiah 30 and verse 30 says, Now, this is in the context of God judging the nation of Assyria for their affliction of the land of Judah and of Israel. So, God is going to judge us here, and it talks about the descent of His arm crashing down, lowering the boom, as it were, coming down with His arm upon them in devastating, crushing judgment.

So, here the arm of the Lord is clearly within a context and with reference to judgment. Likewise, in Isaiah 48 and verse 14. Isaiah chapter 48 and the 14th verse, it says, Now, Babylon and the Chaldeans are parallel.

They're the same thing. There's not two different races here. Babylon and Chaldea are the same.

It's Hebrew parallelism here because of the poetic structure of it, but the point here is that because God loves Israel and plans to redeem Israel from Babylon, God will bring His arm down upon Babylon. That is, we know that the deliverance of the Jews from Babylon was the upshot of the fall of Babylon. Basically, when the Persians conquered Babylon and destroyed that empire, the Jews, as a consequence, were permitted to go back to their land.

So, the deliverance of God's people is connected with the judgment of their oppressors. And His arm being against the Chaldeans, His arm coming down on the Assyrians in the earlier passage, are places where we can easily see that the arm of the Lord in Isaiah, at least in some places, speaks strictly of judgment and little else. We saw earlier, in an earlier lecture, that the hand of the Lord in Isaiah frequently has that connotation because back in chapter 5 of Isaiah, in verse 25, Isaiah 5, 25, the second clause in that

verse says, He has stretched out His hand against them and stricken them.

So, His hand or arm is stretched out to strike. And we see at the end of that verse, 25, for all this, His anger is not turned away, but His arm or His hand is stretched out still. I called attention to this before.

I won't look at all the cases now again. But later on, in chapter 9, there's a prophecy in four stanzas. Each of them end with that statement.

In chapter 9, verse 8 through 10, 4, we have in that space four times that it says the exact same thing. For this, His anger is not turned away, His hand is stretched out still. His hand, His arm being stretched out, coming down, is, in these places, a reference to judgment on the enemies of Israel.

Now, it's interesting, or in some cases, on Israel themselves. In the case of these, His hand is stretched out still, it's of Israel. Now, I don't know whether there's any significance in this fact that I'm about to observe.

In fact, I haven't studied it out far enough to know whether it's entirely true. This would be something for you to take tentatively, if at all, and explore for yourself. But it occurs to me that the judgment of Israel is spoken of as God's hand, whereas the judgment of Assyria and Babylon is God's arm.

And I'm not sure if that is significant, but that God's hand is like a father's hand disciplining his child. But His arm is a crushing blow. And so, when God judges Israel, it's His hand stretched out against them.

When He judges their oppressors, His arm comes crashing down upon them. And it's, like I say, I haven't studied it out. This would be something, if it interests you, that you could do on your own and see whether this holds true throughout the book.

But, just off the top of my head right now, it occurs to me that that might hold some significance. Now, going on with this matter of the arm of the Lord, not only does the arm of the Lord judge the wicked, but it is in order to bring salvation to His people that He judges the wicked, their oppressors. And the arm of the Lord is seen in that connection, for example, in Isaiah 52.

Now here, I'll tell you where I'm going with this. I believe that ultimately we find passages where the arm of the Lord is essentially synonymous with Jesus in Isaiah. Not in every case, but there are passages where it would appear to be so.

And so here's how I see the development of the thought. There are passages where the arm of the Lord is His judgment on the oppressors of His people. Related to that is where the arm of the Lord is seen as the salvation of His people by the judgment of their oppressors.

Going further is that the salvation of His people is personified in Jesus. And this is a concept a little bit like the servant of Jehovah that has some development, I think, of thought. In some cases it just means Israel.

Other places it means Jesus. And the assumption is that Israel was first called to be the servant. Israel failed, and Jesus was raised up to replace that servant.

So with the arm of the Lord. It's not so much the same kind of development, but it starts with one idea. The arm of the Lord is God's judgment on His oppressors.

But then it develops to, and this judgment is the salvation of His people. And that develops to, and this salvation is personified in Jesus ultimately. So we move now from the passages where the arm of the Lord just refers to God's judgment on the oppressors of His people to a place where it's specified that His arm is the salvation of His people.

In Isaiah 52 and verse 10 it says, The Lord has made bare His holy arm in the sight of all the nations. All the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God. Now, God has made bare His arm.

Can either refer to His, for example, if this were seen in the context of the salvation of His people out of Babylon. Then His arm could be seen as the judgment upon Babylon. Which results in the salvation of His people out of Babylon.

Or His arm against Egypt when the ten plagues of Egypt came and the strike of the first one. That was God making bare His arm against His people's enemies. And resulting in their deliverance or their salvation.

It is possible, however, and I only put it forth as an alternative. That His arm in this case is the same thing as salvation. That is salvation is not the upshot of what His arm accomplishes.

But salvation is His arm. His arm is salvation because to bare His arm. And this is the first place we read of Him baring His arm.

Does that not convey the image of somebody rolling up their sleeves? You know, somebody about ready to do something. A person rolls up his sleeves to go to work or to fight maybe. You know, I mean, taking off his coat.

You know, baring his arms so he is not restricted or showing his muscle as it were. And this muscle is seen in the twin actions or the related actions of His crushing those who imprison and oppress His people. And the resultant salvation.

His arm is mentioned here in connection with the whole world seeing the salvation of our God. And likewise, in Isaiah 59, 16. 59, 16.

There is a verse very much like this also in chapter 63. In fact, practically the same verse

is mentioned twice. Isaiah 59, 16 says, He saw.

Well, let's read the previous verse. Then the Lord saw it, and it displeased Him that there was no justice. He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor.

Therefore His own arm brought salvation for Him, and His own righteousness it sustained Him. He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation on His head. Now you can see immediately that is where Paul got the imagery of the helmet of salvation, the breastplate of righteousness, in his discussion of the armor of God in Ephesians.

Now, what this indicates is the one wearing the armor is God Himself. Or possibly the one who is the arm who brings salvation. Because there was no man who could do this.

God marveled that there was nobody around to make intercession for the people. There was no one around to really stand up for God and reinforce God's standards. And therefore He said, well, I guess I'll have to do this myself.

And His own arm brought salvation. Now His arm, of course, can be a metaphor simply for His own strength. By His own power He did it, not by the power of any man.

However, when it goes on to say, He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and so forth, this sounds as if He could be the arm of the Lord who brought salvation for Him in the absence of everyone else. Which begins to suggest or hint at the possibility of the arm of the Lord being a veiled reference to Jesus Himself. If you look at Isaiah 63, this is the place where I said there's practically the duplication of the same verse.

Isaiah 63, 5. I looked, this time it's not He looked, but I looked. God is speaking. But there was no one to help, and I wondered.

And there was no one to uphold, therefore my own arm brought salvation for me. And my own fury it sustained me. Now, God again finds nobody else who will save.

And so His own arm brings salvation. The arm of the Lord is salvation. Now, we can possibly begin to read hints of Jesus being in here.

Though, even if we do not, we can see that the arm of the Lord is connected with salvation. Whether it's identical with Jesus or not, it is the concept of the saving strength of God. It's not only the judging strength of God against the enemy, it is the saving strength of God toward His people.

And then there are a number of passages, four in particular in Isaiah, that strike me as being most naturally understood. By the arm of the Lord, you could substitute Jesus. And it would seem to make perfectly good sense.

In Isaiah 51, 5. Isaiah 51, 5 says, My righteousness is near, my salvation is gone forth, and my arms will judge the peoples. The coastlands will wait upon me, and on my arm they will trust. Now, here we have a combination.

My arms shall judge, and the nations will trust in my arm. Now, once again, the most basic meaning of the symbol of the arm would be His muscle, His strength, His power. And it could be that this passage is to say nothing more than, By my power I'll judge the nations, and the nations shall trust in my power.

But, in particular, this is predicting the Gentiles coming to Christ. And there's little occasion to doubt that this is what this prediction is about. In which case, the arm in which the Gentiles trust, the exhibition of God's strength, is Christ Himself.

If you'll notice, just a couple chapters later, in Isaiah 53, the opening verse, and we know what Isaiah 53 is about, it's about Christ. But the opening verse of Isaiah 53 is, Who has believed our report, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant. Now, He is Christ, in verse 2. What is the antecedent to He? Well, it's either the Lord or the arm of the Lord.

You know, He is either the Lord, in which case it's interesting, because the Lord in Isaiah 53 is Jehovah. You can see it's all capital letters, which means that Jehovah God is the Lord spoken of. If He, in verse 2, is the Lord in verse 1, then He, who is clearly Jesus growing up before Him as a tender plant, is Jehovah.

Which we know to be true, biblically, but that would be a case that could be argued for the deity of Christ, like so many other passages. But it is possible that it's not so much that He is to be understood as the object of the preposition, but the subject of the prepositional clause there in verse 1. The arm of the Lord, that is, you know, He could be the arm of the Lord, not just the Lord who has the arm. And so that, to my mind, points in the direction of an identification of the arm of the Lord with Christ there.

If you look all the way back at Isaiah 40, which is, of course, the beginning of the book of comfort in Isaiah, Isaiah 40, verses 10 and 11, it says, Behold, the Lord God shall come with a strong hand. His arm shall rule for Him, and His work before Him, and He will feed His flock like a shepherd. He will gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those who are with young.

Few Christians, I think, would have any problem saying that verse 11 there is the prophecy of Christ, the Good Shepherd. Although we could say it is God, the Good Shepherd. David said, Jehovah is my shepherd.

But if Jehovah is gathering the sheep, He's doing so with His arm. He gathers them with His arm. Jesus said to His disciples, I have other sheep you do not know of.

I must go to them also and bring them also. He's gathering His sheep. He's gathering

God's sheep.

And God gathers His sheep with His arm. It does say His arm shall rule for Him in verse 10. We know that Jesus is ruling at the right hand of God, the Father.

So, again, I don't want to get too firm or too dogmatic on the suggestion that the arm of the Lord may mean Jesus Himself. There's clearly a very close association in the concepts here. It may well be that the arm of the Lord means little more than just the power of God, but it is indicating that the power of God is clearly embodied in, or entrusted to, or manifest through Jesus, the one who is the shepherd and who gathers the sheep of God.

One other place where the expression occurs is in Isaiah 62. In Isaiah 62, verse 8, this particular verse doesn't help us a great deal in identifying the meaning of the arm of the Lord, but partly, Isaiah 62, 8 says, The Lord has sworn by His right hand and by the arm of His strength. Now, here there's, in the poetic Hebrew parallelism, His right hand and the arm of His strength are in parallel, implying either identity or close association of the two.

Either the right hand is another metaphor for the same thing as the arm of the Lord, or else the two are just very closely connected. Now, what he goes on to say that He swears is not particularly relevant to our study at this point, but he simply says that He swears by the arm of His strength. Now, that reference, arm of His strength, you know, I should make this clear.

There's a certain Hebraic form of speech that we will find again and again. To say the Holy Spirit, the Hebrews would sometimes say the Spirit of Holiness. That would be, to say Spirit of Holiness is another way of saying Holy Spirit.

The arm of His strength would be another way of saying His strong arm. That of His strength, or of holiness, or whatever, is another way of attaching the adjective to the noun. But it's a typically Hebraic way to do it, and it's often done both in the Old and New Testament.

That is, the portions of the New Testament that have Hebrew influence, like the Gospels and the book of Hebrews and places like that. I just make that statement in passing. But His strong arm would be, in fact, I would suspect that if you have a modern translation, which I don't have one in front of me, I would be not surprised at all, for example, if the NIV simply said His strong arm, rather than the arm of His strength.

Maybe someone could verify. His mighty arm, is that the NIV? Okay, see, that's the same thing as His strong arm. So, what the NIV translators have done, they recognize, as any scholar would, that that's a Hebraism.

Arm of His strength means His strong arm, and they've translated it that way. Or, I

should say, paraphrased. But, I mean, they get the right idea.

Now, one thing I would point out, is that in the book of Hebrews, it points out in chapter 6 that God, when He makes oaths, is not capable of swearing by anyone greater than Himself. And typically, it's an understanding with the oaths among Jews, that one must swear by something greater than Himself. Because, otherwise, the idea of swearing by something is to invoke the superior virtue of the thing by which you are swearing.

Maybe you don't think I'm an honest guy, but I swear by Jerusalem. Well, Jerusalem's sacred. So, I mean, if I'm lying now, I'm desecrating the name of something holier than me.

And therefore, people would assume, well, the fear of God would prevent you from doing that, if you're going to break your oath. So, you must be telling the truth. And the writer of Hebrews says that.

In fact, this particular place is better than most in the Bible to tell us how the Jews understood the whole issue of oath-taking. Because, in Hebrews 6.16, it says, For men, indeed, swear by the greater, that is, something greater than themselves. And an oath for confirmation is for them an end of all dispute.

Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of His promise the immutability, which is the unchangeableness of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have this great hope. Actually, I should have started reading earlier, because he says in verse 13, For God made a promise to Abram, because he could swear by no one greater, that is, greater than God Himself, he swore by himself. Because he's referring to the fact that in Genesis, God said to Abram, By myself I have sworn, that in blessing I will bless thee.

He said this on the occasion when Abram offered up Isaac. And so the writer of Hebrews is saying, God had to swear by Himself, no one else can do that, because typically you swear by something greater than yourself. But there's nothing greater than God, so the best He could do is swear by Himself.

Now, with that in mind, this passage in Isaiah 62, 8, which says, The Lord has sworn by His right hand, and by the arm of His strength, or by His strong arm, suggests that His right hand and His arm are Himself. And if there is grounds in some of these other passages to say the arm of the Lord appears to be Jesus, it's another way of identifying Jesus with God Himself. Jesus is Jehovah, God.

Anyway, I felt that this term appears often enough in Isaiah that we ought to get a grasp of how it's probably intended and how it is used. Initially, there are cases where it simply seems to mean nothing more than God's power of judging the bad guys. But then there are passages where the thought develops slightly to, and as a consequence of His

judgment of the bad guys, the good guys are saved.

They're delivered. And then it seems to even move to the ultimate concept of God, the ultimate manifestation of God's arm is in Christ Himself. He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant in a dry place to whom the arm of the Lord has been revealed, which, as I mentioned, was Isaiah 53, 1 and 2. Now, we can move now from that.

We're still considering a related topic, related to this issue of God's deliverance and salvation of His people. I want to show you some of the places where Isaiah talks about this, God fighting the battles for His people, winning the battles for His people, conquering their enemies and so forth, which is the prerequisite for their salvation, or it is the means of their salvation. Now, what I want to show you is that the language in such passages is cast in the imagery of ordinary war, ordinary ancient war.

But I want to show you from the context where some of these places occur that the only reasonable explanation of them, maybe not the only reasonable, but the most reasonable explanation of them would be to see this as spiritual battles. And in virtually each case, the battle of Christ and His church against the powers of darkness, the satanic, the demonic forces. There are two different ways in which these battles are seen in the book of Isaiah.

In some cases, it's the Messiah Himself fighting the battle against His enemies. In other cases, it's the battles of the church and the victories the church acquires through their warfare. Now, to understand these passages, I think, as we should, we need to understand the fulfillment of them and basically what happened.

Jesus on earth was a peaceable man. He was holy, harmless, separate from sinners, it says in Hebrews. And, you know, He was a guy who wouldn't hurt a fly, it would seem.

But He'd hurt the Lord of the flies. He'd hurt Beelzebub real bad. Because while He was acting gently and seemingly harmlessly on earth, His very earthly actions were accomplishing something in the heavenlies which amounted to severe violence against the powers of darkness.

And I believe that this concept is depicted for us graphically in Revelation 12, in a graphic vision, if you would turn there for a moment. I'll have to summarize rather than read all the verses. Excuse me.

In Revelation 12, in the first three verses, there's a cast of characters introduced. There's a pregnant woman, and there is a dragon, and then there's the child that is in her womb. The dragon is later in verse 9 identified beyond question as Satan.

The woman has enough features in her description to help us to identify her with almost 100% certainty to be Israel, or some would say the faithful Israel, the remnant of Israel. The child in her womb is Christ. Now, this is not the only interpretation available, but to

my mind the most sensible one and certainly the one most widely held among scholars.

And I frankly think that I've considered alternatives that just don't make an awful lot of sense, don't have much merit. That Israel is the woman. She's pregnant with Christ, who came from Israel.

And the dragon is the devil, and he's waiting to devour the child as soon as it's born. So the time frame of this vision looks back at the birth of Christ. Israel is travailing throughout her Old Testament periods, her captivities, her afflictions, her oppressions that she goes through.

This is like the travail of a woman, travailing to bring forth salvation in the person of the Messiah. Finally the Messiah comes, but the devil, who has known of this arrival in advance, has postured himself to destroy the baby as soon as he's born. And we can see the fulfillment of that, of course, in Herod seeking to wipe out Jesus through the slaughter of the infants of Bethlehem and perhaps other historical surrounding information around the birth of Christ.

But the baby is actually born. In verse 5, she bore a male child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron, which to my mind clearly identifies the child as Christ, since that is a repeated biblical theme stemming originally from Psalm 2 in verse 8 and 9, where God says that Jesus will rule the nations with a rod of iron. So the child is to rule the nations with a rod of iron, and her child was caught up to God and to His throne.

So the entire ministry of Christ is passed over in this vision from His birth to His ascension to the throne of God, where He is now. So we see basically the time frame of this vision has to do with the birth of Christ followed by His ascension into heaven. And then the rest of the chapter has to do with the consequences of Christ's glorification at the right hand of God.

Now, there's another vision in verses 7 and following where there's a warfare seen in heaven. It says, Now, let me summarize what we just read there. There's this warfare seen in heaven.

Michael and the good angels fight against the dragon and the bad angels. As a result of this warfare, Michael wins. The dragon loses.

The dragon is cast out of heaven and apparently has to confine his efforts to earth. He is also called in this passage in verse 10, the accuser of the brethren, suggesting that his presence in heaven was largely that of an accuser. He accused the brethren before God day and night in the heavenly sphere.

But something, the casting out of the dragon, results in the elimination of his opportunity to do this. He can no longer accuse the brethren before God. He's now restricted from that activity.

All of this is, to my mind, and I won't try to prove it to you because I don't care if you agree or not, to my mind, this is all in symbolic pictures. But the question is, what is the symbolism? What is it talking about? Well, many people think this is going to happen during the tribulation period or something else, but the birth of Jesus earlier in the chapter hardly encourages us to see it as something future. It's connected with the birth of Jesus and his ascension.

In fact, it seems to be either concurrent with the ministry of Jesus or immediately following it. Now, I would like to suggest to you that we can understand what this war in heaven is and when it took place best by identifying its completion. When the dragon is cast out, that's the end of that warfare in heaven that is described.

That doesn't mean there will be no more wars, but just the particular warfare described in verse 7 and so forth ends with the casting of the dragon out of heaven. Is there any way of knowing when that occurred? Well, the author who recorded this vision is the same author who gave us the only other reference in Scripture to Satan being cast out of heaven. Although, and that's John, of course, in John chapter 12.

Now, Luke also records a statement of Jesus that has a similar concept, but the actual wording of Satan being cast out, as we have it here, is found also in the other major book of the same author, John, who in John chapter 12 and verse 31 records Jesus saying, as he is anticipating and predicting his own crucifixion, he says, Now is the judgment of this world. Now the ruler of this world, which is Satan, will be cast out. Now, the word now is helpful because it sets a time frame for us.

Now, not later. Now. Now, Jesus made this statement just immediately prior to his own crucifixion.

I mean, within days earlier. And he's speaking with reference to that event when he says, Now the prince of this world will be cast out. The same author who records the statement of Jesus records the vision in Revelation 12 and says, I saw the devil cast out.

I saw the dragon cast out. Now, the fact there's only two references in the Bible that speak of the devil being cast out, that particular word, would at least encourage us to suspect that maybe the devil was cast out, both references to the same event. Now, if you look at Revelation 12 again, you'll note that in verse 9, Revelation 12, 9, the dragon is cast out.

And significantly, verse 10 records the declaration of the hosts of heaven as to the significance of that event. And they say in verse 10, Now salvation and strength in the kingdom of our God and the power of his Christ have come. Well, that means when Satan was cast out, concurrent with that, salvation came.

The kingdom of Christ came. That I take to be also at the cross. Salvation was

accomplished for us at the cross.

Therefore, what I see in this passage is an interpretation, or a revelation, more like, of the earthly life of Christ resulting in his death, which was the casting out of Satan. But if this is so, then that would mean that the battle in the heavenlies, which resulted in the casting out of Satan, must have taken place at the same time that Jesus was on earth ministering. Because his death was at the end of his ministry, and the casting out of Satan at his death was at the end of that battle.

Am I confusing you, or do you understand what I'm saying? I am inclined to the view that the warfare in heaven, described in verses 7 through 9, happened at the time of the earthly ministry of Christ. And that while Christ seemed to be gentle Jesus, meek and mild, who had never hurt a little child, you know, all the while, all the while, he was a great warrior, a mighty warrior, wreaking havoc in the powers of darkness, symbolically described as a great war between the angelic powers and Satan in the heavenlies. Now, let me suggest that there's some support for this notion elsewhere.

In Matthew chapter 12, when Jesus was casting out demons and accused of doing this by the power of Beelzebub, he said, no, you got that all wrong. Satan's not going to cast out Satan. Cast out Satan? Satan's not going to cast out Satan.

Someone else has got to cast out Satan. But he can't do that unless he is first disabled Satan. And he says that in the figurative language of verse 29.

Matthew 12, 29, Jesus says, Or else how can one enter a strong man's house, that's the devil's house, the world, and plunder his goods, which is to say, release the devil's captives from his prison house? How can I take from Satan what he owns when in fact he is a strong man? Unless that person who wishes to do so first binds the strong man. Then he can plunder his house. So binding the strong man must precipitate or must precede the plundering of his house.

Now, I don't know of a Bible scholar who would disagree with this, regardless of their views on other subjects. Virtually everyone who takes this passage seriously and looks at it carefully agrees the strong man in the parable is Satan. The one who plunders his house is Jesus.

And the plundering of his house is in fact the casting out of demons. Jesus is giving an alternative explanation to that which the Pharisees offered for his ministry of casting out demons. Oh, he is doing that by Beelzebub.

He says, no, I must necessarily have bound Beelzebub if I am plundering his house as you see me doing. He is saying essentially that if I am doing what you can see that I am doing, then something you cannot see must have transpired. You should be able to deduce it.

Because am I not plundering a strong man's house? How can you do such a thing unless you disable the strong man first? You must see me as one who has overpowered the devil, reduced him to incapacity to resist, and I am now having my own way in his territory, taking people that he has bound forever and releasing them with a command. Simple as that. Now, what Jesus is saying is that although he doesn't appear to be doing anything violent, he has just won a wrestling match with the devil.

He has overpowered a strong man. Now, if you look at Luke chapter 10, and you say, aren't we supposed to have something to do with Isaiah? Yes, eventually. In Isaiah chapter 10, I mean Luke chapter 10, how silly of me to think we are in Isaiah.

Luke chapter 10, when Jesus sent out the 70 and commissioned them to heal the sick and cast out demons and so forth, they did so, and the thing that impressed them most about their own activities was in fact their success in casting out demons. And after that expedition, they came back and they were boasting, or rejoicing in it at least. In Luke 10, 17, it says, Then the 70 returned with joy, saying, Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name.

And Jesus said to them, I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I give you authority to trample on serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.

Now, Jesus' statement, I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven, has been variously interpreted. On the assumption that Satan is a fallen angel, many have felt that this is a reference to the original fall of Lucifer. As you know, most people would identify Lucifer, who is mentioned only once in the Bible, in Isaiah 14, 12, with Satan, though the Bible doesn't identify him as Satan.

It's a deduction that many people reach from various considerations. And therefore, they say that Satan falling from heaven like lightning is a reference to when Lucifer staged an unsuccessful rebellion against God and was cast out of heaven. Well, that is a possible meaning of Jesus' words.

Tom? No, it isn't. There is no actual reference in the Bible to Satan being an angel or falling. It's an assumption made from some passages, which I don't believe teach the doctrine.

But we're going to look at Isaiah 14 on another occasion. Genesis mentions nothing of the origin of Satan. The only reference to Satan in Genesis is the serpent in the garden, and he's a serpent from his first appearance there.

Never anything better before. Yes. The word Lucifer means morning star or star of the morning.

On another occasion, we'll talk about that whole issue. I don't want to get into it now. I'm simply saying as an aside, many people think that when Jesus said, I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven, that he's talking about a primordial, prehistoric event that happened long before Adam, or maybe in the days shortly after Adam was created or something.

There is another view, and it's held also fairly widely, and to my mind is probably the right view of what Jesus said. He wasn't talking about the origin of Satan here. He was talking about the doom of Satan here.

And what I understand Jesus' words to have probably meant were these. Disciples, you have just been on an expedition where you have seen demons terrified and screaming going out of people at a single command. You see this spectacular demonstration here on earth with your own eyes, but I see something else.

I see something in the spiritual realm. I see what's really going on in the spiritual realm, and it's bigger than what you think. You see this man delivered from demons.

You see this woman delivered from demons. You see this child delivered from demons. You know what I see? I saw Satan falling like lightning from heaven.

In other words, in this ministry of yours, in which you see nothing more than a sensational display of exorcism, I see something much more cosmically significant. I see the downfall, the rapid downfall of Satan's power and his authority and his kingdom in general, and I believe that that had its ultimate fulfillment at the cross when he said, Now shall the prince of this world be cast out. But my understanding of what Jesus said here is that what you see on earth, I see in the heavenlies what's going on the counterpart of it.

Now, I don't have time to spend more time in the Gospels today because we have to get back to Isaiah, but I believe that the New Testament teaches. Now, I do have to give one or two more New Testament references. I'm sorry I can't do justice to what I want to say without pointing them out.

Look at Colossians 2. In Colossians 2 and verse 15, it says of Christ, Having disarmed principalities and powers, demons, the demonic forces, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it. There's an alternate reading. Some manuscripts say in him, and some say in it.

If it is it, it goes back to the cross because the last words in verse 14 are the cross. And therefore, he triumphed over the demonic powers in the cross and made a public spectacle of them as defeated foes. Now, if you look at Hebrews also, Hebrews chapter 2 and the 14th verse there, Hebrews 2 and verse 14, it says, Inasmuch then as the children, meaning those that God has redeemed, have partaken of flesh and blood,

meaning they're human, they're physical, because that was the case, he himself likewise shared in the same.

That is, he became flesh and blood too. He became a human to redeem those who were human. That's what it's saying.

Then it says, So that through death he might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil. Now, this plainly states that through Jesus' death, he destroyed Satan. A very violent act.

Now, the word destroy there, and in a few other places in the New Testament, is a translation of the Greek word, katergeo, which would be spelled K-A-T-E-O, kata, which means down in Greek, and geo, G-E-O. Katergeo. K-A-T-E-O.

That word literally means, to reduce to inactivity. That's the literal meaning of katergeo. It is, in other words, a similar concept to binding, to disabling, to, you know, in some other sense, limiting one's activities.

It says that through death, Jesus destroyed or reduced to inactivity him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. That corresponds well with Jesus saying that he had bound the strong man so that he was not plundering his goods. What I'm saying is that both Jesus in his ministry and the apostles looking back at the effects of Jesus' ministry all agreed that Jesus was conducting a major spiritual warfare against the powers of darkness, which warfare he won.

But just as David won the battle against Goliath, and that settled the question of who was whose servants, the Philistines or the Israelites, yet there were more battles to be fought. The war was won, but the battles of mopping up and enforcing the victory still had to be conducted. So whereas David beheaded Goliath, and that was essentially the official end of the war, the enemies fled and had to be pursued.

The victory had to be enforced, and so the Israelites pursued and spoiled the Philistines as a result of that battle. So also Jesus, as it were, has knocked down Goliath. Jesus has knocked out the devil at the cross.

And that doesn't mean that all the demons have said, okay, fair enough, we submit, we're giving up our activities, we quit, we're retiring, we lose, fair and square, we're men of honor, you know, we acknowledge that you're better than us, we'll stop bothering people. No, they haven't done that. But they are now demoralized.

The demons believe and tremble. The demons are in flight. You know, there's an interesting statement in Isaiah I didn't intend to bring up here, but it's worth bringing up when I say the demons are in flight.

Look at Isaiah 67, 1. This is, to my mind, probably a reference related to the salvation

which Christ accomplished back on the cross. I'm sorry, did I say 67? 27. Did I say 67? I'm sorry, that was... I know there's not 67 chapters in Isaiah, so that was really a strange slip.

Isaiah 27, verse 1. It says, In that day the Lord with his severe sword, great and strong, will punish Leviathan, that fleeing serpent. Leviathan, that twisted serpent. And he will slay the reptile that is in the sea.

The imagery is generally understood to be a reference to Satan, in Christ conquering Satan. But notice the serpent that he destroys is fleeing. The fleeing serpent.

James said, Resist the devil and he will flee from you. James 4, 7. So, what I understand is that when Goliath fell, the Philistines fled, and the Israelites pursued. There was no question of the outcome of the battle.

It was essentially over. It was just a matter of enforcing it, which the Israelites did. Likewise, at the cross, the spiritual warfare didn't begin, and it essentially ended.

I mean, the victory happened. The war is over in one sense, but it needs to be enforced. And the warfare of the church is simply going and mopping up.

I mean, it's not like we could possibly lose this thing. It's already decided. It's just a matter of how quickly we finish mopping it up.

You know, it's not like, you know, it's hanging in the balance of whether the church or the demons are going to win the ultimate war of history. There's no question on the matter. The question is how long are we going to prolong it by our inactivity.

You know, I mean, it is our task to mop up. Well, this I take to be New Testament theology on the subject of spiritual warfare. Now, in Isaiah, as I pointed out, I believe there's tremendous reference to this spiritual warfare, both the warfare of Christ and His victory, and also, subsequently, the victories of the church in her warfare, which would be synonymous with the mission of the church going out and preaching the gospels, making disciples of all nations, driving back the powers of darkness, claiming for Christ what is His, enforcing the victory that He has accomplished.

In Isaiah, let me show you several places where I believe it's talking about Christ's personal victory over His enemies, which would be at the cross and through His ministry. These, however, are all described in terms of physical battle, simply because in the Old Testament, spiritual things were not made clear. Israel was not a spiritual nation.

It was an earthly nation, political. It had geographical boundaries. Its king was a visible king.

We have an invisible king. We have a spiritual Israel, spiritual citizenship, a spiritual

home. Everything spiritual in the New Testament that was physical in the Old, the promised land of the Old Testament was a real land.

For us, it's a spiritual dimension. And so, also, the battles of the Old Testament, the only battles they knew were physical battles. And I believe that we have passages which the only responsible way to understand them would require that we read what looks like a physical battle as a spiritual warfare.

Let me show you some examples here. In chapter 59 of Isaiah, verses 16 through 19. Actually, we already read 16 and 17, the first two of those verses, which was that God wondered there was no intercessors, therefore His own arm brought salvation.

Verse 17 says He put on righteousness as a breastplate and a helmet of salvation on His head. And He put on the garments of vengeance for clothing and He was clad with a zeal as a cloak. Interestingly, Jesus is the one seen wearing the armor here.

Paul puts the armor on us. We put on the helmet of salvation. We put on the breastplate of righteousness, though it is in this passage Jesus who is wearing that armor.

Now, put your finger here and just real quickly look over at Romans chapter 13 and this may tie those two thoughts together for us. Romans chapter 13, verses 12 through 14. The last three verses of Romans 13.

Notice, The night is far spent the day as it had. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness and let us put on the armor of light. Or the armor of God, of course.

Let us walk properly as in the day, not reveling in drunkenness, not in licentiousness and lewdness, not in strife and envy, but put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh. Notice, 12 says put on the armor. Verse 14 says put on the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is in fact Christ who is wearing the armor. It is Christ fighting the battles. We are in Him.

We put on Christ and with Him the armor that He is wearing. The armor that Paul says is ours is really drawn from a passage in Isaiah that says it is Christ's armor. He put on righteousness as a breastplate.

He put on salvation as a helmet on His head. And so forth. And then verse 18, Isaiah 59, 18.

According to their deeds accordingly, He will repay. This is a reference to Christ. Fury to His adversaries, recompense to His enemies, the coastlands He will fully repay.

So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west and His glory from the rising of the sun. Remember what I said about the rising of the sun? It is a metaphor for the east.

Here is a place where it is quite clear.

From the west and from the rising of the sun. It is from the west and from the east. When the enemy comes in like a flood, you may have heard this verse before, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against Him.

The Redeemer shall come to Zion. Well, we will not look at that yet. We are going to talk about redemption later on.

What we see here is God sending Jesus as Savior in verse 16. His arm will bring salvation. This salvation, this ministry of Christ at His first coming is likened to a warrior in armor.

What is He doing? He overcomes His enemies. And when the enemy comes in like a flood against His people, His redeemed, well, the Spirit of the Lord raises up a standard against Him. Interestingly, that the Spirit of the Lord raises a standard.

You could just say the Lord does. Which standard could be some army or something like that? The Jewish army or the Maccabees or whatever. But instead, it is the Spirit of the Lord that raises up a standard, presumably a spiritual standard against spiritual enemies.

Certainly, Jesus did not come and put on real armor, that is physical armor, and go out and slice up His enemies. The Jews wanted Him to, but He would not. That was not His enterprise.

That was not His project. But that does not mean He was not a man of war. He was a man conducting spiritual warfare.

And I believe that this, which looks like the cutting up of His enemies, is a reference to what Jesus accomplished against the powers of darkness. Look at a passage that is somewhat similar. We have seen it earlier.

And we will not go into it in detail. Isaiah 63, verses 1 through 6, that is that one where He comes out of Edom with a garment splashed with blood. And so forth.

We looked at it when we were considering whether Edom might in some cases be conceivable to be a symbol, in this case, for maybe Jerusalem. Or it could be, of course, for all nations. But in any case, remember verse 4 said, The day of vengeance is in my heart.

And I connect that with Jesus saying, These will be the days of vengeance, which was the fall of Jerusalem. But here we have the same thoughts we had in chapter 59. Verse 5 says, I looked, but there was no one to help.

I wondered if there was no one to uphold. Therefore, my own arm brought salvation. And

it says in verse 6, I have trodden down the peoples in my anger, made them drunk in my fury, and brought down their strength to the earth.

Now, this sounds like a physical conquest. And it may be. Here it says peoples.

Do peoples represent the spiritual powers? Possibly so. It is not impossible that the peoples here represent the Jews that came down, that were judged by Christ at His judging of Jerusalem. And that is not an impossible interpretation.

But it is also possible to see this as a spiritual trampling down of His enemies. And if not in that place, then I think certainly in Isaiah 9, we have a case where Christ is conducting battle and winning it. It is described as physical battle, but it must be spiritual.

The verses in question are verses 4 and 5 of Romans 9. Romans 9. I'm sorry, Isaiah 9. What book are we in today, anyway? Isaiah 9, verses 4 and 5. For you have broken the yoke of His burden, and the staff of His shoulder, the rod of His oppressor, as in the day of Midian. Now, Midian is the oppressor that Gideon overcame. So, as in the day of Midian means something like it was not won by military prowess, but by God's supernatural use of what would appear to be an inferior force to overcome, what appeared to be a superior force.

It's referring back to Gideon's victory over the Midianites. It says, For every warrior's sandal from the noisy battle, and garments rolled in blood, will be used for burning and fuel for fire. Now, it looks like there's been a real battle here.

Blood, bloody garments of the dead soldiers, their sandals, they're all going to be burned. It sounds like we're talking about a war here. However, look at the context.

Just before it are those verses, for example, verse 2, The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. Those who dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them a light has shined. Matthew quotes that as being fulfilled in Jesus' Galilean ministry.

Furthermore, look at verses 6 and 7, the verses following the passage we're looking at. For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given. And the government shall be upon his shoulder.

Now, we're talking about the birth of Jesus, the earthly ministry of Jesus in Galilee. We're talking about the first coming, the lifetime of Jesus, is the context of this passage. Therefore, the war, the overcoming of the enemies, the bloody garments and so forth, is all the trappings of a description as of a physical battle.

But certainly, we know from the way history progressed and how Jesus really conducted himself, that in his ministry, he didn't really make people bloody. He made himself bloody. But he did overcome the powers of darkness.

And I suspect that this is the kind of passage that led the Jews to expect the Messiah to be a military guy. They thought the Messiah was going to come and lead armies because of this kind of passage. But Jesus made it clear they were thinking all wrong about that.

Now, some people would say, well, they weren't really wrong. Their timing was just wrong. Because he came first to suffer, but next, when he comes again, he'll come to do military victories.

Well, even if this be true, it's hardly justifiable to say that verses 4 and 5 of Isaiah 9 are about the second coming of Christ and his military victories at that time, when it's sandwiched between two passages clearly about his birth and his earthly ministry. To me, it's more sensible to say we have here the spiritual victories of Christ over his enemies depicted as, well, in the terms of Gideon's victories over Midian. This is essentially what it's compared with.

So, we can expect at times to find in Isaiah language as if of war, but really implying or best understood to be of spiritual victories and spiritual war. Likewise, the thing is true of the victories of the church and the warfare of the church. See, these passages we have looked at are Christ's victories, his personal warfare and victory, but that which he gained victory in, of course, we follow on in the same train.

In Isaiah 11, verses 14 through 16, I don't know if we need to read quite that far, but it says, But they shall fly down upon the shoulder of the Philistines toward the west. Together they shall plunder the people of the east. They shall lay their hand on Edom and Moab, and the people of Ammon shall obey them.

The Lord will utterly destroy the tongue of the sea of Egypt. With his mighty wind he will shake his fist over the river and strike it in the seven streams and make men go over dry shod, etc. Now, here we talk about God's people flying upon the shoulder of the Philistines and the people of Moab and Edom.

Now, you should already know what chapter 11 is about because we've looked at it half a dozen times already, different aspects of it. It is one of the first long kingdom passages in Isaiah and one of the more characteristic ones drawn heavily on from the New Testament. I've told you already, though we'll look at it as a whole eventually, that it is, to my mind, a picture of the church age in great symbols.

But if so, one could say, well, the church then is here seen as conquering physical enemies in war. But one can hardly take it literally because the church will never fight any wars against the Philistines, Moab, or Edom, since such nations don't exist and ceased to exist before the church was in existence. Therefore, the warfare is in some measure symbolic, and in my mind entirely so, and speaks rather of the church carrying on the victory, the victorious warfare of Christ.

And it does seem to be more a reference to the church's warfare than that of Christ himself, since it says they will fly down on the shoulder of the Philistines. Together, they shall plunder the people of the East. But see, plunder is what you do after the war has been won.

You still go out and plunder the tents. You still go out and bring in the spoils. And so the church's warfare is that of following on a victorious conquest of Christ, we go out and do the plundering of the enemy.

But here it's described in terms of actual plundering of actual nations in a real battle. Certainly that's not the kind of war the church is involved in. And therefore, I see that as a reference to spiritual warfare.

One other place like this that we can take time to look at is Isaiah 54. Isaiah 54, from verse 15 to the end of that chapter, that's verses 15 through 17. Isaiah 54, 15 through 17.

Indeed, they shall surely assemble, but not because of me. Whoever assembles against you shall fall for your sake. Behold, I have created the blacksmith who blows the coals in the fire and who brings forth an instrument for the work, and I have created the spoiler to destroy.

No weapon formed against you shall prosper. And every tongue which rises against you in judgment you shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is from me, says the Lord.

Now, there's not an awful lot of battle imagery here, but there is a reference to enemies gathering, assembling against you, besieging you, bringing their weapons that they form against you. The idea is that there's a warfare here. Now, to my mind, there's two possible ways of seeing this.

One would be, talk about the demons and their warfare, their attempt to resist us. They're seeking to besiege us and so forth, in which case the warfare is entirely spiritual. The other possible way also refers to spiritual warfare, but a spiritual warfare that manifests in physical aggression against the church, persecution against the church.

That, too, is spiritual warfare. When the church is persecuted by the people of the enemy, that is still part of the warfare of the church. We know this because we read a moment ago in Revelation 12, 11, that when the accuser of the brethren was cast down, that the brethren nonetheless overcame him.

You know, he attacked them, but they won. But how did they do so? Through the blood of the Lamb, through the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives even to the death, it says. Many of them died.

The martyrdom of Christians is a part of their warfare and victory over Satan. Revelation 12, 11. So, this passage could refer to, you know, all the nations gathered against the church to destroy the church.

They won't succeed. No weapon that they bring will succeed. Sometimes they may even use real weapons.

Other times it may be the pen, which is mightier than the sword, or, you know, something else. Just persecution that is designed to wipe out the church could be what is in view here. Or simply your warfare against demons that are trying to pervert you and get you to fall and things like that.

In any case, those are two sides of the same kind of warfare. The devil attacks you through direct temptation and through physical violence. Those are two things the devil has always used, and I believe that we have here a reference to spiritual warfare.

By the way, Pentecostal people have used these verses, you know, like the one we read earlier, when the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him. And this one, no weapon that is formed against you shall prosper. As long as I've been aware of Pentecostalism, they've used these verses of spiritual warfare.

But I must say, Pentecostals sometimes do use verses in a way that isn't right. I'm simply here to say I think they're justified in applying these verses that way here. This is the warfare of the church that is in view.

Okay, so what I want you to understand as you read through Isaiah is that you'll read a lot of warfare imagery, a lot of warfare stuff. But in so many cases, if the context calls for it, we're talking here about spiritual warfare. Now, there are cases where literal warfare is in view.

The Assyrians coming in and wiping out Israel. The Babylonians coming and plundering Jerusalem. That was literal warfare.

And we're not being arbitrary here. It's not just, well, when I want it to be, it's spiritual. When I want it not to be, then it's not spiritual.

It's not that arbitrary. It's entirely determined by context. When you find passages like this in a context which is describing the earthly ministry of Jesus or the career of the church, it seems clearly to be referring to this spiritual warfare.

When it is talking about the historical judgment upon Israel or Judah, we know that that was accomplished through physical warfare. It is not inconsistent to take passages which use a type of language and say that's physical warfare and then take other passages that use the same kind of language and say, but that's spiritual warfare. That's not

inconsistent.

The context determines it. And to my mind, it's quite legitimate to do that. Now, let me move on to the third point I wanted to make, and I think I can possibly get it done.

If so, we're doing great. And that is the theme of redemption in Isaiah. Redemption is a word that means buying back, literally.

You know about redeeming coupons and redeeming green stamps and stuff like that. Redeeming means to purchase something back, for the rightful owner to reclaim something, usually at a price. Typically in the Bible, it would refer to the ransoming of somebody taken hostage or the purchasing back of a slave or of somebody out of slavery.

If a man fell on financial hard times in Old Testament times and had to remedy a situation by selling himself into slavery, and this was not uncommon, he'd become a slave forever or at least until the seventh year, unless at some point some family member was good enough to redeem him or buy him out of slavery. These are some of the things that redemption means in the Old Testament. Likewise, the Exodus where God brought Israel out of Egypt, out of slavery there, and later when he brought them out of Babylon.

Both of those events are referred to in the Scripture as God redeeming his people, buying them out of captivity. Let me, for example, show you some verses. Not all of these are in Isaiah.

I just want to show you how the Old Testament looks at the Exodus and the deliverance from Babylon as the redemption of God, redeeming his people. In the Psalms, well, even before that, in Exodus chapter 15, which is the song of deliverance and redemption that the Jews sang when they came through the Red Sea successfully and saw their enemies drown, knowing they'd never be slaves again because of what God had accomplished there. In Exodus 15 and verse 13, in singing about this, it says, You in mercy have led forth the people whom you have redeemed.

You have guided them in your strength to your holy habitation. Now, they're speaking about themselves. They are the people that God has redeemed.

The event they're referring to is the Exodus, that he brought them safely out of slavery into freedom. He has redeemed them from slavery. In the Psalms, likewise, Psalm 106 speaks of the Exodus as God redeeming his people as well.

Psalm 106 and verses 9 through 11, Psalm 106 verses 9 through 11 says, He rebuked the Red Sea also, and it dried up. So he led them through the depths as through the wilderness. He saved them from the hand of him who hated them, that'd be Pharaoh, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy.

Redeemed. The waters covered their enemies and not one was left. There's no question about what event in history is being described here, but notice what it is interpreted as God buying them out of slavery.

I think it's in Jeremiah or Ezekiel, I don't remember which prophet says it, but God mentions that he gave the Egyptians as a ransom for his people. He paid the price of their freedom by sacrificing the Egyptians in the Red Sea. A price was paid.

It cost something, but he was glad to do it to get rid of them and to get his people redeemed. Well, here the salvation of Israel out of Egypt is called God redeeming them. Likewise, in Psalm 107, since we're already at Psalm 106, might as well just look one page over, Psalm 107 verses 2 and 3 says, Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he has redeemed from the hand of the enemy, and gathered out of the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and the south.

Now, there's a sense in which Christians have always taken these verses as their own. God has redeemed us out of all lands. Christians come from all nations.

And we are the redeemed of the Lord. And truly, this is true, but only in a secondary sense in this verse. God's having redeemed the people out of every land speaks of when they were scattered in the Babylonian exile and drawn back.

This is a psalm of rejoicing and thanksgiving over God's redemption of them out of Babylon. I mean, the context requires this, but it's not the redemption from Egypt because they weren't in all lands at that time. They were all in Egypt.

But when they were scattered by the Babylonians, they were in fact scattered into all lands. They didn't just go to Babylon proper, but they were dispersed among all the areas that Babylon had conquered, which is virtually all the countries in the region. And the Babylonian exile and the return of the exiles from Babylon, in Jeremiah especially, is frequently referred to as God bringing them back from all the lands where he has scattered them.

So it's clear that Psalm 107 verses 2 and 3 is talking initially, primarily, about the return of the exiles from Babylon, but it is called the redeemed of the Lord. They are redeemed. So the exodus and the return from Babylonian exile are both referred to as redemption.

And as I said in an earlier introductory lecture, the redemption motif is picked up in Isaiah, sometimes using the imagery of Exodus, sometimes the imagery of the returning exiles from Babylon, but in each case pointing forward to the redemption that we all celebrate in Christ. Now, having said that, let's look at some of the Isaiah passages relevant to it. In Isaiah 48 and verse 17, it says, Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, I am the Lord your God, who teaches you to profit, who leads you by the way that you should go.

God is here the one who redeems there. Earlier in the chapter, verse 14 says, All of you assemble yourselves in here. Who among you has declared these things? The Lord loves him.

He shall do his pleasure on Babylon, and his arms shall be against the Chaldeans. So the Redeemer here seems to be a reference to God redeeming them out of Babylon, which simply confirms what I said earlier. Also, it seems confirmed by verses 20 and 21 of the same chapter.

Verse 20 says, Go forth from Babylon. Flee from the Chaldeans. With a voice of singing, declare, proclaim this, utter it even to the end of the earth, says the Lord.

Says the Lord has redeemed his servant Jacob. And they did not thirst when he led them through the deserts. He caused the waters to flow from the rock for them.

Now this goes back to the Exodus motif. He also split the rock and the waters gushed out. So it mixes the idea of the Exodus, or it actually basically recalls the imagery from the Exodus in talking about the redemption from Babylon.

But the redemption from Babylon is called just that, redemption. God is the one who redeems them. Now, it moves from that thought to the idea of being redeemed from sin, which is, of course, the spiritual redemption, the spiritual salvation.

And Isaiah has much to say about that, too, though often in veiled words. If you look at Isaiah 59, Isaiah 59, the last two verses, which are 20 and 21, says, The Redeemer will come to Zion. And to those who turn from transgression in Jacob, says the Lord.

As for me, says the Lord, this is my covenant with them. My spirit who is upon you, and my words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your descendants, nor from the mouth of your descendants' descendants, says the Lord, from this time forevermore. Now, the reason I read both verses is because the first line of verse 21 says, This is my covenant with them, says the Lord.

What? That the Redeemer will come from Zion, and to those who turn from transgression in Jacob. Now, basically what he's saying is, The Redeemer will redeem those who turn from transgression. Those who turn from transgression, the Redeemer will come to them and redeem them.

So this is a redemption related to conversion, to repentance from transgression. And by the way, these verses are quoted by Paul. These two verses, at least the verse 20 and the first line of verse 21, are quoted by Paul in Romans 11, 26, where it applies to Jesus having come and saved us.

So he sees the fulfillment of this as our spiritual redemption from sin. Those who turn from sin are redeemed by Christ. Romans 11, 26.

Paul quotes these verses. So there's no question, unless we question Paul's authority, which I do not, there's no question that these verses are talking about Jesus, the Redeemer. And the redemption he provides is not from Babylon, but from sin, and for those who turn from sin.

In chapter 52, Isaiah 52, verse 3, it says, For thus says the Lord, you have sold yourselves for nothing, and you shall be redeemed without money. Now, I mentioned the other day, we looked at this verse, and I cross-referenced it to 1 Peter 1, 18. It says you were redeemed, not with corruptible things like silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb, without blemish and without spot.

So being redeemed without money is a reference to what Christ has done. We've been redeemed by the blood of Christ. That is also confirmed by the general context.

This chapter is about the Messianic age, and that's clear, for example, from verse 7, where it talks about the good news, those who bring the gospel, which verse, by the way, Paul quotes in Romans 10, as being about the gospel of Christ, the beautiful feet that bring the good news. Paul quotes that verse in Romans 10, 15, and says that's about preaching the gospel of Christ. So the context of this chapter is New Testament salvation, and therefore the redemption without money is the New Testament redemption through Christ.

If you look at verse 9 then, in chapter 52, verse 9, break forth into joy, sing together, you waste places of Jerusalem, for the Lord has comforted his people, he has redeemed Jerusalem. Now, the redemption here is in Christ. The Jerusalem here is the church.

I cannot take the time to try to prove that to anyone who might be skeptical whether Jerusalem is the church. I doubt that there's a great deal of skepticism in this room, but there are certainly people who would chafe at my suggesting that Jerusalem here is the church. They would say, no, Jerusalem is Jerusalem, the church is the church, two different things, never the twain shall meet.

And they would say, this is a prophecy about the end of the age, perhaps the millennial age, when physical Jerusalem is restored and redeemed in Christ and so forth. I think not. I don't think that's the context of the passage.

It's about the church age. And therefore, I am of the opinion that this redemption is in Christ and the redemption of Jerusalem is the redemption, in fact, of the new Jerusalem, the church. In Isaiah 61, which I like to read two verses and compare them with a verse in 63, which is like it.

By the way, these are also verses we looked at briefly before. I just want to now bring them up in this context. In Isaiah 61, 1 and 2, the Spirit of the Lord God is upon me

because the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor.

He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to those who are bound, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn. We'll read a little further. To console those who mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the Spirit of heaviness, that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified.

Now, since we looked at this the other day briefly, and since you probably have read the New Testament, this verse is familiar because Jesus indicated this verse is about Him. He read the verse in the Nazarene synagogue in Luke chapter 4, and then He said, this prophecy has been fulfilled in your hearing. That is to say, He is the one who is proclaiming the liberty, who is proclaiming salvation, and so forth.

He read part of this, not all of it, but the point is it does apply to Christ. But the other point is that if we hadn't heard Christ say so, we would imply that it applies to Isaiah. It certainly is true of him also.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon him. He is a prophet. And the Lord had anointed him to proclaim a message of deliverance from Babylon.

The day of vengeance of God upon Babylon and the year of salvation for His people. That is, deliverance from that captivity, the acceptable year of the Lord. We can see then that in one sense, Isaiah is the messenger and has a message of these contents.

But Jesus is the ultimate messenger, and He says so Himself. And He's got a spiritualized version of this message. It's a spiritual deliverance, a spiritual freedom and liberty that He offers here.

But I would point out, and I did before, verse 2 says, "...to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of the vengeance of our God." If you look two chapters over to 63, verse 4, Isaiah 63, 4, "...for the day of vengeance is in my heart, and the year of my redeemed has come." If you compare those two verses, Isaiah 61, 2, and Isaiah 63, 4, you'll find that both make reference to the day of vengeance, and they both make reference to a year. In Isaiah 61, 2, it's the acceptable year of the Lord. In Isaiah 63, 4, it's the year of my redeemed.

So, here we have the redemption mentioned again in Isaiah, not from Babylon, but the redemption of Christ. Because it's the year of the redeemed that is proclaimed here by the messenger. And, in fact, this acceptable year of the Lord is the year of the redeemed.

Isaiah 61 says it is proclaimed by Isaiah with reference to the redemption from Babylon, but of Christ, Luke 4 tells us, with reference to the redemption that He brings. Obviously,

a double meaning here. One thing standing for the other.

The deliverance from Babylon being a type of deliverance from sin accomplished through Christ. One other verse, and then we're done here. Isaiah chapter 1, and verse 27, it says, Zion shall be redeemed with justice, and her penitents with righteousness.

Penitents, literally, is returners, those who repent. Those who are redeemed are redeemed by repentance. Not every Jew who came out of Egypt was godly.

Not every Jew who came back from Babylon was godly. But the redemption that is here is a redemption of the godly, those who have repented. Therefore, it has to be a reference, it seems to me, to the redemption that is in Christ, which is a redemption only of those who are spiritually turned, that they're penitent.

That means they repented. And so, in Isaiah, what we find is God's crushing victories over His enemies, the consequent deliverance of His people, have in the Old Testament history certain precedents. The Exodus, and the Babylonian exile ending with its crushing under Persia and the release of the people, these images, the image of God redeeming His people, of His saving His people with His right arm, His victories, the warfare, and His conquest over His enemies, these are all, in my understanding, in so many contexts, references to spiritual battle, spiritual victory, spiritual enemies crushed, and spiritual people spiritually saved, spiritually redeemed.

Isaiah is a very spiritual prophet in that he has, we pointed out earlier, that he has more things, he says, that find echoes in the New Testament than any other prophet of the prophetic books of the Bible. And the reason for that is because he spoke about spiritual things that came to reality in the New Testament. So, as you read through Isaiah, you'll run into all this language of war and battle and conquest and deliverance and so forth, and realize there was a historical, natural context to this.

There is a sense which this spoke of something to the people at the time of God's redemption of them ultimately from their physical oppressors. But all of that had a second meaning that probably eluded them, but is brought out more in the New Testament, and that is that was a precursor and a type of what God would ultimately do in crushing his spiritual enemies and redeeming his spiritual people through Christ. So Jesus is implied, if not directly referred to, in all of these passages.

All right, we're done with those ideas then, and we'll move on to others next time. Are there any questions?