

## **Dr. John Oswalt, Isaiah, Session 26, Isa. 54-55**

**© 2024 John Oswalt and Ted Hildebrandt**

This is Dr. John Oswalt in his teaching on the book of Isaiah. This is session number 26, Isaiah chapters 54 and 55.

Well, it's good to see you here. You could be out mowing the lawn and you decided to come to Bible study. That's wonderful. I'm very, very impressed. Thank you.

Let's begin with prayer. Thank you, Father, for this, another chance to gather around your word.

Thank you for each one in this room. Thank you for the great variety in our personalities, in our interests, and yet, on the other hand, the great uniformity in our desire to know you through your word. And so that's our prayer this evening, that you will indeed manifest yourself to us.

Help us as we think about words and syntax, sentence structure, paragraphs, all of these things that you chose to use to reveal yourself. Help us to see through them and beyond them to your face. Help us see your challenge to us, for we recognize that we are not different from those people to whom you were writing.

Sometimes it's easy for us to feel a little bit superior, but in fact, in our deepest hearts, we know that's not true. We are they and they are us, and we pray that you will help us to hear the challenges, to hear the comfort, to hear the encouragement, to see the vision, and we'll thank you in your name. Amen.

All right, we are looking at the last section of this subdivision that I have called Grace Means of Servanthood. We saw in chapters 40 to 48 how grace was the motive for servanthood. As we came to the end of chapter 39, we recognized that the case had been proven without a doubt, God can be trusted.

But then the question is, what will motivate us not to repeat Hezekiah's fault, the one-time trust, rather than a life of trust, and we said that the unconditional grace that God bestowed on his people, even in captivity, would be a motivation to trust him. But then we asked the question, but how? How can God simply ignore their sin and act as if they had done nothing and say, you're my chosen servants? And the answer that we're seeing here in this section is the servant. As we saw in 49, in 50, and then last week, especially in chapter 53, the servant makes it possible for our sin to be forgiven and God to extend this free grace, this undeserved grace to us.

Now tonight, we're looking at the conclusion of that section, chapters 54 and 55. Chapter 54 begins, Sing, O barren one who did not bear. Break forth into singing and cry aloud, you who have never been in labor.

For the children of the desolate will be more than the children of her who is married. Enlarge the place of your tent. Let the curtains of your habitations be stretched out.

Don't hold back. Lengthen your cords. Strengthen your stakes.

And then we go to chapter 55, verse 1. Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters, he who has no money. Come buy and eat. Come buy wine and milk without money, without price.

So, the first question here is, in 49 to 52, 12, the dominant note was Yahweh's encouragement to believe that he was going to deliver them. What's the dominant note here and in the rest of chapters 54 and 55? You have been delivered. It is now that sense, anticipation has now changed to invitation.

Come and take part in this which is yours. So then, what we see is this anticipation in 49 to 52, 12, and then the revelation in 52, 13 to 53, 12, and now the invitation in 54 to 55. So, this rather strange poem there that we looked at last week is just central to this whole thing.

How can anticipation be turned into an invitation? And the answer is because of what the Servant, capital S, has done. Now, what is God promising here in these verses of 54, 1 through 10? What's the figure of speech that's used and how does that relate to how Zion had previously seen herself? Fruitfulness versus barrenness. Right.

If you remember, we said that in several places in those earlier chapters, she is described as a widow whose children are dead. So, she has no hope of ever having any more children. Now add to that a barren widow.

Whatever the issue is, even if she were to get married again, she could have no more children. And God says, no, no. The children of the desolate will be more than the children of her who is married.

Verse 3, you will spread abroad to the right, to the left. Your offspring will possess the nations and will people the desolate cities. Now how does this relate to the fears of the people in exile? What were they afraid of? Being eliminated.

Exactly. Being eliminated as a culture, being eliminated as a people, they are simply going to disappear. And remember, what was God's promise to Abraham? Populate the world.

You'll have more children than stars in the heavens. So here we are with an apparently irreconcilable situation with God making these incredible promises and the realities of the situation being the very opposite. And Isaiah says, no, no.

You are going to have children and those children will spread over the world. Sometimes we face situations where everything seems impossible and we need to remember situations like this in the Bible where the impossible becomes possible. Look at verse 4. Do you remember what I've said to you several times about shame in the Old Testament? What's the shame? What's the ultimate shame? Yes.

Yes. I don't know how to phrase the question better. You are shamed when what you have trusted fails you.

So, this is a wonderful chair. This is clearly the best chair I have ever seen. I just know that this chair will not fail me and I drop into it and it collapses.

And what do you do? Laugh. And that's it. That's the world.

Yes, you trusted your God and your God failed you. You trusted your God and you're in exile, aren't you? What does God say here in verse 4? You're not going to be ashamed. You'll forget the shame of the past, of your youth, of your widowhood, of being stripped of your nation and your possessions.

And then in verse 5, there are five terms for God. What are they? What's the first one? Maker. The Lord Almighty, which is literally the Lord of Heaven's armies.

Your husband. What else? Your Redeemer. The Holy One of Israel.

That's separate. Yes. Now I thought there was a sixth one here.

It's God of the whole earth. Is that right? It's like the old Necro-Scripture. I have the whole world in my hands.

So, if he's my maker, what does that mean for me? He knows where I came from. If he's the Lord of Heaven's armies, what does that mean for me? Nobody can defeat him. And if I'm his, nobody can defeat me.

Husband. Protector. The closest bond.

This is so important when we think about God. For too many of us, the primary way we think about God is the one who's sitting in heaven saying you could do better. You're not really trying, are you? I've got some other people that are a lot better at this than you are.

And you don't risk yourself with a judge. You stay as far away from him as you can stay and make it. He's your husband.

Yes. Please do. But this language speaks visibly to communicate to a non-believer.

To find a way to get you back. Yes, Dan. Yes. Yes. The Redeemer has an obligation to this one who is now destitute.

I'm your closest relative. I've got an obligation here. Yes.

Good. Oh, yes. Yeah.

Yeah. The Holy One of Israel. He is to be worshipped.

And how does that relate to these earlier ones? Okay. We worship him because he is these. He is worthy.

These are not just little attributes of a little God. These are the attributes of the one who transcends everything, who has given himself to Israel.

Tony Chen has just finished writing the definitive statement on the Holy One of Israel. So, he could tell you all about it, but I'm not going to give up the podium. But this idea of the transcendent one who is the imminent one.

Not imminent. That means about now. Imminent means immediately present.

And if there is a unique theology of the Bible that is simply not found anywhere else in the world, this is it. The transcendent one, the one who is absolutely other than everything, has given himself to us as a person. Aristotle could imagine the transcendent, but of course, the transcendent could not possibly be a person because a person is affected by what they have brought into being.

And that couldn't be. He wouldn't be transcendent anymore. And the Old Testament says, yeah, you're probably right, but the transcendent one is a person.

And in some senses then, I think this then is the bottom line, isn't it? If these things are all true, then he is indeed the God of the whole earth. He made it. He redeemed it.

He's married to it. So, it's clear that God is trying to make a point. Now look at verses 7 and 8. And what do they tell us about God's anger in contrast with his love and his compassion? Exactly.

His anger is temporary. But his love and his compassion are, I think I've made a point with Mel, hesed. Here's the way I heard this from someone years and years ago, and it has stuck with me ever since.

God gets angry, but he is love. God gets angry, but he is love. Love is the essential quality of his character, unchanging and forever.

And precisely because he loves us, he gets mad. It infuriates him that those whom he loves so deeply could corrupt their lives so badly. If he didn't love us, he wouldn't have to get mad.

Precisely. Just like a parent. If you don't care what somebody does, they mess up their lives, you just sort of say, but if it's your child messing up their lives.

So then, for a brief moment, I deserted you, but with great compassion I'll gather you. In overflowing anger for a moment, I hid my face from you, but with eternal hesed, I will have compassion on you, says the Lord, your Redeemer. Anger.

So, let's turn back to Psalm 30, verse 5. A verse many of us have memorized, and many more of us should memorize. His anger is but for a moment, his favor is for a lifetime. Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes in the morning.

That's good news. That's good news. Now, compassion.

If you look at several different English translations, you'll find a number of different words that are used to translate the Hebrew word. The King James Version originally used pity, tenderness, favor, and compassion. What do all those words tell us about God and God's feelings toward us? He cares deeply.

He cares deeply. He enters into our feelings. He feels what we feel.

The Hebrew word is the same, and I've told you this lots of times, the basic meaning is carried in the consonants. In this case, it's R-H-M. And the noun that is taken from this is the word for womb.

This word typically occurs in the plural. R-H-M. And it is often, in a more literal translation, translated tenderness, softness.

He is tender toward us. Tender with regard to us. Yes? What more can I do? Yes.

Yes. So go on then to verse 10. The mountains may depart, the hills be removed, but my hesed will not depart from you.

My covenant of peace shall not be removed, says the Lord, who has compassion on you. Here it is again. hesed and compassion occur in these four verses.

Hesed occurs twice and compassion three times. I think God's trying to make a point. Now, I ask you to look up this covenant of peace.

And since even Sister Ruth wasn't able to do her homework this week, I assume the rest of you haven't. So, let's look at Numbers 25.12. Phineas, when a Hebrew man brought a woman of Midian, who was a worshipper of Baal Peor, right into the camp to have sex with her, stabbed them both to the ground with a spear. That's taking pretty serious action.

And God responds and says in verse 12, Behold, I give him my covenant of shalom. Again, this is dangerous. I may have to go get out my commercial driving license.

What have I said to you about this word that's translated as peace so much of the time? What's the Hebrew word behind it? Well-being? Yeah, what's the Hebrew word? Anybody remember? Shalom. Yes, yes. So again, we're not just talking about the absence of conflict, we're talking about wholeness.

So, hang on to that. I offer Phineas, who's been radically obedient to me, I offer him a covenant of peace. Now let's go to Ezekiel 34.25. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel.

In case you've forgotten. Ezekiel is now promising after the fall of Jerusalem that they're going to go home again. And so, in 34:25, start with verse 24.

I, the Lord, will be their God. My servant David shall be prince among them. I am the Lord.

I have spoken. I will make with them a covenant of peace and banish wild beasts from the land so that they may dwell securely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods. Now Ezekiel 37.26. My servant, let's start at 24.

My servant David shall be king over them and they shall all have one shepherd. They will walk by my rules and be careful to obey my statutes. They will dwell in the land that I gave to my servant Jacob where your fathers lived.

They and their children and their children's children shall dwell there forever. And David, my servant, shall be their prince forever. I will make a covenant of peace with them and it shall be an everlasting covenant with them.

All right. Now then, let's go to the New Testament. Romans chapter 5, verse 1. Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

And then down to verse 10. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his son, much more now that we are reconciled shall we be saved by his life. So, what is God offering when he offers a covenant of peace to us? Wonderful.

Total and complete reconciliation and shalom. Yes, yes. It's not just an armistice.

It is reconciliation. It is being brought together with our God. Oh my, oh my.

What a promise. Okay, we've already talked about question 6. Let's push on to 54, 11 to 17. What do you think is the point of the precious stones, this description in 11 and 12? Oh, afflicted one, storm-tossed and not comforted, behold, I'll set your stones in antimony and lay your foundations with sapphires.

I'll make your pinnacles of agate, your gates of carbuncles, all your wall of precious stones. What's the point of that? Okay, on the chest piece that the priest wore were 12 precious jewels and also on the shoulder pieces, these jewels. All right, all right.

What's the significance of that? Why describe them as jewels? Beauty? Value? Endurance? It represented the 12 times of Israel and really the temple here is going to be the center of the great messianic place. Uh-huh, uh-huh. It would be better than ever.

Better than ever. Yes, yes. It is surely a way of expressing how precious they are to him.

How enduring this city is and you notice we won't go there but the references that I gave you in Revelation, same thing describing the city coming down from heaven and clearly John the Revelator has been reading Isaiah. The same kind of picture about how precious we are to God. How costly we have been to him and how much he values us.

And then in verses 13 and 14 he moves from that sort of figure of speech to talk I think really about the same thing but in different terms. What's he saying there in 13 and 14? No one's going to hurt them. Particularly in 14 what's going to be the precious quality of the people? Established in righteousness.

Like a diamond set in a beautiful setting, you will be established in righteousness. This of course is the whole struggle that the reformation had over this whole question. And in many ways, we're still dealing with it today in evangelical theology in the United States.

We'll talk about it again really all the way through the final section of the book. And Luther said I can't. John Wesley said I can't.

I try as hard as I can. Do everything I know to do and in the end, I have to say no I've failed.

So for Luther, it was a great discovery when he found the New Testament writers especially Paul saying you can be counted righteous through Christ. What a priceless truth that was for Luther. Oh, thank God.

I can quit this struggle to be what I can't be. I can just know that in Christ I am established in righteousness. It was true for Wesley as well.

But Wesley understood something that Luther missed. And that is I can not only be counted righteous through Christ I am enabled to be righteous through Christ. In a real sense, in a real sense it took John Wesley to complete the Reformation.

And unfortunately today to a very, very large degree in North American evangelicalism we have lost this second vital point. So, I'm counted as righteous through Christ so you can't expect anything of me. Of course, I'll lie on my income tax.

Of course, I'll cheat on my wife. I mean I'm just human. And thank God I'm counted righteous through Christ.

And George Barna says there is no difference no measurable difference between the lifestyle of the lost and the lifestyle of the born again. And I say that is a horrible, horrible thing. Isn't righteousness also in the connotations of a right standing with God? So, the whole idea that it is only in living relationship that this righteousness can even exist anyway.

Yes, I think that's true. Although the judge thing is so dominant as the image the judge declares that you've got a right standing. He simply declares that.

And that's that. But I think that misses the point if he is husband, if he is redeemer, if he is maker, if he's all these other things you're absolutely right. A right standing is impossible without a right relationship.

And a right relationship is living. But that great, great line in righteousness you will be established. The diamond is set in the setting.

That's us. All right, we need to push on. Let's see here.

Yes, we do. Okay. Now this thing gets played out a bit here in translations.

If you look at verse 17, no weapon that is fashioned against you will succeed. You will confute every tongue that rises against you in judgment. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord.

Now, what do your translations say with this last sentence? Their vindication from me. Has anybody got anything different? And their righteousness is from me. The actual word is righteousness.

Now what's going on here is in many places throughout 49 to 55, excuse me, throughout 40 to 55, the righteousness that is talked about is God's righteousness and it is his righteousness in delivering them. God will do the right thing for them and that is to deliver them. It was right for him to send them into captivity.

But for this God, it would not be right for him to leave them there. This God is the Redeemer. And so over and over again through this section.

So, if you look at that verse, this is the heritage of the servants of the Lord and their righteousness, that is their deliverance, which comes from me. But when you say vindication, you miss that whole quality that God does right for us and expects us to live rightly in return. But when you just translate it as vindication, you miss that whole flavor.

This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord and their righteousness from me. And what I'm saying there is that the word is two-sided. What is the righteousness that God gives them? It's deliverance.

But the righteousness God gives them is also a new way of living. And when you translate it only as vindication, you miss this side of it. God's going to vindicate me.

Oh goody, that's great. Now I can live like hell and that'll give him a chance to vindicate me some more times. Yeah, yeah.

Victory is pretty good in that at least it leaves open the victory of deliverance from the enemy and the victory of the new way of living. Yeah. What version do you have? Okay.

All right, good. All right, let's push on. Chapter 55.

What is it that God is inviting them to come and get for free? Salvation, yeah. Let's be more literal though first. Sustenance.

Wine, milk, bread. Listen diligently to me and eat what is good. Delight yourselves in rich food.

Now again, these people have been in slavery. Almost unquestionably they've been in poverty. And so, God invites them to come and have riches.

It is of course no accident that Jesus in the Last Supper used wine and bread. The basics for life. In a situation where most of the water was contaminated, wine was not drunk primarily as an intoxicant.

It was drunk simply as liquid of life. So, he is saying, I'm offering you the basics of life. This is why it doesn't work to have communion with Coke and donuts.

Now that's the basics for some people, but not in general. The point is, that's the basics. And that's what he offers.

Now he says, here's this everlasting covenant language again in verse 3. If you were listening carefully, you picked that up in Ezekiel. And he compares this covenant to the covenant with David. Again, if you were listening closely in Ezekiel, you heard that note there.

How long is the covenant with David? Forever, eternal. And in the same way then, he offers them an everlasting covenant. And the language is, the Hebrew at the end of verse 3, is very difficult to translate.

Because it's the heseds of David and everlasting ones. The same kind of hesed I have shown to David. An everlasting hesed I'm going to show to you.

So, here's this theme again. My anger is temporary. My hesed is forever.

It's who I am. John got it exactly right. And he didn't come up with a new idea when he wrote his letter.

He's understanding what the Old Testament teaches us. Now what was David's function in verse 4? A witness and a leader. Now he says, I'm going to give you the same kind of covenant that I gave to David.

What does that mean for God's people? We've talked about witnesses before. What were they called to do and be as his witnesses? Distinctly different from everyone else around them. Their lives were to be the evidence that he alone is God.

There is no other. The bottom line, is yes. Yes.

And they would then be leaders. And verse 5 tells us leading how? Leading what? Leading nations that you do not know. A nation that did not know you will run to you.

Why? Because of the drawing power. The Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, and what has he done? He has endowed you with what? Glory. Splendor.

Again, I hope I've taught you something. Glory in the Old Testament is solidity. It is significant.

It is reality. It's not the ephemeral passing sunset. You run into the glory of God, you run into a brick wall.

The people couldn't go into the tabernacle because the glory of the Lord filled it. And God says I want to share my glory with you. Jesus, in his high priestly prayer, says, Father, I have shared with them the glory that you and I shared before the foundation of the world.

What does God want to do with us? He wants to make us real. Nations? Yeah, I think it's more general. I think it's the idea of a nation standing for all of them.

And if you go back to chapter 2, verses 1 to 5, remember that's the very thing that was prophesied back there. Let's go back and look at it. Verse 2. It'll come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the Lord will be established as the highest of the mountains, shall be lifted up above the hills, and all the nations will flow to it.

Many peoples will come and say, Let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways, and we may walk in his paths. For out of Zion shall go the Torah and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. Here it is.

And your reality is going to draw people to you. That's why, in many ways, the greatest tragedy of Christianity is when we learn how to be play actors. I can't get out of my mind the image of the recent stuff on the scene and the people lined up in the audience.

Yeah. Yeah. So often, we learn how to play the part because that's easier and cheaper than living the reality.

I've said to seminary students for 40 years, seminary can be the most dangerous experience of your life to your soul because you learn how to appear spiritual without being spiritual. You learn how to pray. You learn how to preach.

You learn how to do these things, and it's all surface. You learn how to talk about God, and you stop talking to him. Now, am I against seminary? No.

It's been my racket for 40 years. But it can be deadly, and it's the same way in the Christian life. We learn how to put the right face on.

Now, sometimes people say, oh, well, I don't want to be holier than thou. I'm really unholier than thou. That's not reality either.

But what is the price that you and I have to pay to know the reality of his glory touching our lives? Well, I think it comes up here next. Verse six. What does while he may be found and while he is near imply? You have to make a step toward him.

What else? That's right. There is a moment when he can be found. There is a moment while he is near.

Don't miss it. Don't miss it. I have no idea whether it's a true story or not, but the story is told that when Aaron Burr was a student at Phillips Andover College, they called it, it was a high school, academy, they had a revival.

He was 17 years old. And it was a movement of the spirit across the school. And God was convicting him.

And he said, God, if you'll let me go, I'll never call your name again. And as the story goes, he never felt a twinge of conviction again in his life. I don't know whether that story is true, but it rings true.

There are moments when God is very near. And in those moments, we must not miss them. Yes? Would it be God is always near, but we aren't aware of it? Yes, I think that's true.

I think that's true. I often, again, students, not so much anymore, but it used to be the students were really sensitive. And they would come and say, I'm afraid I've committed the unpardonable sin.

And I say, if you're afraid you have, you haven't. Because the unpardonable sin is when we smash our receiver and can no longer hear the grace of God. Right now, in this room, there is music, there is speaking, there is all kinds of stuff, but we can't hear it.

Why? Because we don't have radio receivers in our heads. If we did, we'd go crazy, trying to sort it all out. But that's what happens.

As Hebrews says, if you have been fervent for Christ, and there comes a day when you say, ah, that was all a bunch of hooey, nothing to that. You've crucified him afresh, and you've, in effect, smashed your receiver. You can't hear it anymore.

Yeah, I was in Cherokee, Iowa, 1971, at Cherokee Mental Institute, a seminar for pastors I met who had attended North Park College in Chicago. It's an evangelical covenant college. And he was telling me, 1951, you know, the spirit came out of Asbury and did the school.

And it came down to North Park. And he said it was just like, you could just see the Holy Spirit going through the dorms, you know. It was just, like, almost visible.

And he came to the door of, guess who? His dad was a pastor. Hugh Hecker, you know, editor of Playbook. And he just flat out rejected it totally, and, you know, turned away.

And he had that chance way back there in 1951. I mean, you know, that really makes you stop to think. It surely does.

Now, he says, my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor your ways my ways. What does that mean? You're finite. All right, we're finite human beings, so our thoughts are limited and his are unlimited.

What else? Yes. Even our most noble thoughts are not anywhere near him. I like what C.S. Lewis says.

He says, that when we finally meet love, we will know how totally inadequate our concepts and words are for love. Yeah, we can't do Hesed. We can't do Hesed.

At least not very well. Although, I've got to back up a little bit there. Jesus says in Matthew 5, you must be perfect as God is perfect.

And he's clearly talking about love there. Let me digress here a moment. Hang on.

He says, if you love those who love you, how are you different from a tax collector? If you love those who love you first, how are you different from anybody in the world? But God, his love is complete in itself. He doesn't need our love to get it started and he doesn't need our love to keep it going. And then he says, you must be perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect.

Seeing that context really helped me. There's no way we can be absolutely perfect like God is. But Jesus seems to be saying that you and I can have the same kind of love.

Not the same quality, not the same power, but we can have the same kind of love as the Spirit enables us. That we can love people who don't love us. And we can keep on loving people who don't love us.

To that extent, yeah, I think we can do Hesed. But not with the, certainly, the quantity that God does. Okay.

I'd suggest to you that God's way of redemption is grace. Our way of redemption is earning. I've been a Methodist all my life.

Fifth generation Methodist. Used to be Mennonites, but they saw the light. I have to say, most, most of the Methodists I have known are trying to earn their way to Heaven.

They're trying to be good enough for God. They're good people. They really are good people.

But the idea is that there's nothing I can do to earn God's acceptance. That the only thing I can do is to receive what the servant offers me. Here, take my broken, bleeding body and offer it to the Father as a sin offering in your place.

I don't need any sin offering. I don't need any bucket of blood theology. I'm a good man.

I've always been a good man. Don't cheat on my wife. Pay my bills.

Never murdered anybody. What's this stuff about a sin offering? I don't need that. My ways are not your ways.

My thoughts are not your thoughts. But as the rain and the snow come down from Heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth. It shall not return to me empty.

It shall accomplish that which I purpose and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it. One or two of you heard me do a long, long book review a couple of weeks ago. A great book called Unbroken.

It took me an hour and a half to get through it last time. I'll do it in a minute and a half this time. Louis Zamperini, a runner, an Olympic runner in 1936.

In the war, shot down over the Pacific. Spent 47 days with another man. There were three of them.

The third one finally died. Then were finally captured, and taken to a Russian, Japanese prison camp. Horribly, horribly mistreated.

One particular man picked him out because it was known who he was. The Japanese were great track fans, and so they knew about this guy. This guard was determined to break him, and he couldn't.

He was finally set free at the end of the war, came back, and was a wreck. Total wreck. Flashbacks, nightmares.

Woke up one night with his wife on the floor trying to strangle her, thinking she was this guard, and went to a tent meeting in Los Angeles in 1949. A big, tall North Carolinian boy was preaching. A fellow named Graham.

And Louis Zamperini gave his heart to the Lord and was changed. My word will accomplish its purpose for which I sent it. Thank God, thank God.

You'll go out in joy and be led forth in peace. The mountains and the hills before you will break forth into singing. All the trees of the field will clap their hands.

Instead, the thorn will come up the cypress. Instead, the briar will come up the myrtle. It will make a name for the Lord, an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

I'll ask the question here, and since our time is gone, I'll answer it. What is it about our salvation that makes a name for the Lord, an everlasting sign? Yes, we're the proof that He is God. Our redeemed lives are the sign that He is God.

Wow, God is willing to hang His eternal reputation on the likes of us. Talk about chutzpah, that's chutzpah. But He does, He does.

It will make a name for the Lord, an everlasting sign that will not be cut off. Amen.

Let's pray. Oh, thank you, Lord God, that you have sent your only Son, and through Him we may be redeemed. Redeemed from ourselves, redeemed from our sin, redeemed from our hypocrisy, redeemed, oh God, to share your glory in this world. Oh, forgive us when we fall short of it, but thank you for everything you do in us to show who you really are.

Praise you, in your name, Amen. Amen.