

# The Lord ordaining peace for us (Quality: Good)

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[ 0 : 01 ] The Lord's help, I will turn your attention again to the 26th of Isaiah, verses 12 and 13.

26th chapter of Isaiah's prophecy, verses 12 and 13. Lord, thou wilt ordain peace for us, for thou also hast wrought all our works in us.

O Lord our God, other lords beside thee have had dominion over us, but by thee only will we make mention of thy name.

The Lord has now brought me to realize that this text is but the blessed hub, and which radiates out so many glorious truths.

When we come to the subject of divine peace, ordained peace, peace already prepared for us without any addition, we truly are by the side of a deep well.

[ 1 : 29 ] And though in my own spirit there has been much conflict with regard to the text, yet there's a willingness to go on with it, long to the Lord enable me.

I hope, sincerely, someone is learning a lesson. And that although the text is the same as it has been before, as some of you know, the text is the same as it is, long to the word of God.

Yet, we need fresh thought, matter, help, grace. And why should we be so wretched and unbelieving as to think that we can reach the bottom of the well of truth?

Why should we hesitate to speak again from the word of God? What is it but later pride? And how the good spirit is able to bring forth those things which are new.

And in this matter, those of you that were chronic on Wednesday will remember that we spoke again of this word, and spoke of the 40th chapter, having spoken of the earlier ones, of the birth of Christ, his kingship, messiahship, so many other things that are found in previous chapters.

[ 3 : 22 ] We went on to the 40th. Come but ye, come but ye, my people, saith your God. Such a remarkable similarity, and yet such a change.

Meaning so much, inferring so much, containing, but we have already mentioned the needs of the poor, the needers.

And they seek water, and there is none. Blessed field of divine truth. All this is to particular characters, to understand through divine grace what it really means to hunger and thirst.

and who are, in their own feelings, quite certain of what they want. And that when water is mentioned, they are not thinking of earthly water, or bread, of earthly bread, but of spirit.

So that when we come to such words as this, as the history of Hezekiah finishes in the 39th chapter, so does the Lord break out again.

[ 4 : 56 ] Men have said that a different writer takes over here, because of the marked difference between the early passages of Isaiah, the breakaway to relate the case of Hezekiah, and then the sudden return to this evangelical teaching.

Men have said it's a different man or guest. We need perhaps to ask them just one question. That will satisfy answers to the authorship.

That is, isn't there a marked difference between the Gospel according to John, and the book of the Revelation? Would you say the same man wrote it if you didn't know?

Why should not the Holy Ghost dictate, as seemeth him good? And why should not there be a marked difference between the Holy Writers?

Let it not be a stumbling block to you. Men seek to overturn, slightestly, that the Spirit, who dictates and inspires such writings as these, makes no mistake.

[ 6 : 35 ] Therefore we feel not slighted, hesitation, anxiety, or trouble at all, not the shadow of a doubt, as we say, that Isaiah wrote the whole of Isaiah's prophecy.

And that, though the matter, and even the tone, be different, this isn't the only prophecy that you can find such things in.

You can find it in Daniel. In this matter, therefore, let us be at rest. And then, especially, perhaps you children, come to meet those who contradict the Word of God.

What I say may one day help you to remember that there is quite a difference in some of the expressions, terms, and tones of these writings.

So that when he breaks away with his comfort, and he declares the people that who are to be comforted, this is at once related to the text, they will ordain peace.

[ 8 : 01 ] Here we come to the manifestation of this peace. But to whom? This is the first point in Isaiah 40 that needs a thought.

Speaking comfortably to Jerusalem, crying to her that her walk is comfort, that her iniquities pardon, for she hath received the Lord's hand, and doubled all her sins, that is, grace and glory.

That's what Jesus said. Grace here, glory hereafter. We come then to the voice of him that cries in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord.

which we read in the third of Matthew, which is referred to in Malachi.

Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant whom ye delight in.

[ 9 : 30 ] Behold, he shall come, says the Lord of hosts. This denied was a natural one. They denied as a nation to think that there would be a Messiah who would arise to deliver them from their Babylonian captivity, and their present sad state in the Old Testament clothes.

Their delight was not in him, say, that there is a Savior. For whom I abide the day of his coming, and who shall stand when he appears?

For he is like a refiner's fire, like full of silver. He shall sit, and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness, and so on.

The subject, therefore, is the messenger. The one that goes before. And that messenger? No other than John Baptist.

And the Lord did suddenly come to his temple. There weren't many months that separated their birth. There were several years before they came together, ministerially.

[ 11 : 10 ] Jesus did not commence his public ministry until he was nigh on 30 years of early. John Baptist began, as we read in Matthew, to baptize.

He was a very remarkable thing. There was no command for it. There was, for other ordinances, God made it quite plain upon Mount Sinai, as regards to circumcision.

There was no connection whatsoever between the two. That baptism is introduced on the page of Scripture, just quietly, plainly, peaceably.

He will speak peace unto his people. But it is in connection with a considerable amount of trouble.

Who shall abide? Who shall abide? And so on, the day of his coming. There's a lot of clearing to be done.

[ 12 : 25 ] We read, every valley shall be exalted. And every mountain and hill shall be made low. The crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain.

You know it by heart. You know it by heart. In the distant background of this is said to be the custom of ancient kings, when they went on a journey through the desert, to send before them men, pioneers, who should level the ground.

And also make it secure. And that they should raise the valleys manually. And lower the hills manually.

And lower the hills manually. So that to us this seems very strange. And whilst we might give it its spiritual meaning, we believe there is also a factual meaning.

Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made known. Now this is rough work.

[ 13 : 47 ] We see enough of it these days in road making. We stand amazed at the way roads are constructed. It seems nothing else but chaos.

There seems to be no mind in it at all. No design. And yet when it comes to what you think is a great heap of earth that is in the way, proves to be the very thing that's going to be used to make the road.

And we who do not understand these things, must stand by somewhat amazed.

And you come to hear John Baptist begin his ministry, comfort ye my people, that you'll be amazed. You may have been already. But when it is pointed out to you, that he didn't begin in any soft tongue language.

He was like a devouring fire. His call to baptism and repentance to the Jews, that was.

[ 15 : 17 ] It was called the baptism of John. His language was some of the strongest we have in the scripture.

Oh generation of vipers, who has warned you to flee from the wrath to come. That's almost enough for me to enter this chapel with, isn't it?

If you really took it to heart. But this isn't gospel language, but it's the language of the gospel.

This was the leveling of the mountains. This was the uplifting of the valleys. This was making the white plain.

Here were the Sadducees in particular, who were denied the resurrection. Here were the Pharisees, who were delighted in Abraham, rested everything on this.

[ 16 : 27 ] It was not the shadow of a doubt that Abraham was their father. And being as he was, father of the faithful, they laid their claim upon their forebear, the hereditary nature of their upbringing.

That's all they had. That this was the voice, the word of God, the voice crying in the wilderness.

And it was to the Jews. And although it contained with it the call to repentance, what was the repentance to be on account of?

If you read the history, the intervening history between Malachi and Matthew, you will realize a little of the awful times through which they passed. Josephus gives us an account of it, and a valuable account too.

Some Bibles contain a summary, that they were awful days, the life of which had never been seen before. Jacob's problem.

[ 17 : 57 ] When Christ came, and after he had spent his thirty years in humble little Nashville, they hear this astonishing proclamation.

Called to repentance. National repentance. The same as in the Old Testament, as I've been reading to you, and as in Isaiah.

If, says the Lord in the first of Isaiah, ye be willing and obedient, and only if, God called his ancient people right up to the Nile, to repentance.

Did they repent? Were there any grounds of hope, that as a nation I mean, they repent you? See, we talk about repentance very lightly.

We think it's something that, it's just a lip expression. But far from that, it's heart expression.

[ 19 : 17 ] It takes us, some of us, a long time, to say we're sorry, doesn't it? Have you come to the sanctuary of God this morning, in a bad mood?

Have you? Has there been some trouble somewhere? Does it lie with you? Do you know it lies with you? Do you know it behoves you, to be the first one to say I'm sorry?

Do you know how hard it is, don't you? Men talk about repentance, as if it were something that could be picked up.

They were called to repentance, and they were then called to bring forth fruit, meat for repentance.

So that whilst we have this in a few verses, in the third of Matthew, it took a long, long time to accomplish.

[ 20 : 30 ] One of the things we need to bear in mind, in our meditation on the Word of God, that what we read in, say, half a dozen verses, took perhaps half a dozen years.

Oh yeah. The wonderful shortness and brevity of the Scripture, is a masterpiece of divinity, part of the Holy Ghost.

And we are not to read into it what isn't there, but we are to ponder what is there. So that don't hurry over your Bibles, will you?

I don't think that you can assimilate it all, because you will have to admit to much that is hard of understanding.

So is the baptism of John, a deep mystery. One of those things which has long been a matter of thought, not to say discussion, amount of people who are, you read in the Acts of the Apostles, that those came to the Apostle Paul, who'd only been baptized in the baptism of John, and they said, we have not so much as heard, that there would be any Holy Ghost.

[ 22 : 08 ] A remarkable position, wasn't it? And when this was explained, and they believed it, then they were baptized again, in the name of the Holy Ghost.

A very deep subject. But it's in the Word of God. So that in this, the ministry of John Baptist was like a rat.

His tongue may have tasted honey in the wilderness, but his ministry was like the sting of the locust.

And so that, Lord, I will ordain peace for us. It has a connection.

And this comfort, which Isaiah is led to write on, comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God, speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, speak ye to her heart.

[ 23 : 28 ] And this is what happened. And what happened here, we've not the slightest idea. In the second of Acts, we had numbers, four thousand.

We won't find any mention of any figures here, who drowned that time. No question of four thousand or forty thousand. Mark these differences, you see. Keep them in your heart and memory.

They are very important. Know that the voice was a very stern voice. an hurting voice. an offending voice. an offending voice. had they not merited this, so that both men and the God at Luke So that both Malachi and Matthew, very close together in our Bible, but some hundred, five hundred years in between, later all.

But there is the same God at work, putting his hand to the work again. And John says of him, I indeed baptize you with water.

And now, he says, the axe laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire.

[ 25 : 22 ] I say again, what a ministry! How like this! Prophet Isaiah and Jeremiah, and yet the text before us says, Lord, thou hast ordained peaceful.

For thou also hast wrought all our works in us. Where, then, does this fit in?

Why, very beautifully, under the older dispensation. The Lord Moses was still in active operation at this time.

The proof is that Jesus sent those that he healed to go and show themselves to the priest and offer the sacrifice which Moses commanded.

There's no question as to whether the gospel day had yet been answered in. It hadn't been. And yet this, this object of baptism unto repentance and confession of sin and bringing forth fruits of righteousness, the very beginning of the gospel day, is introduced here.

[ 26 : 31 ] The very beginning of the gospel day. And that, in the prophecy, the voice said cry.

The voice said cry. And he said, what shall I cry? What shall I cry? What shall I cry?

And this is what had to be cry. All flesh is grass. And all the goodness thereof is as a flower in the field.

And this is how the rough places, you see, are made straight. The crooked thing is. This is how the gospel, again, will travel.

You can't obey this great scriptural truth. Not that I think you want it.

[ 27 : 33 ] The work of grace begins with trouble. Anxiety. A leveling.

A raise of things that you left your confidence upon and hope upon. And you've never trusted in those works of grace.

That which you thought was so secure. You've now seen it leveled in your eyes. In front of your eyes. Painful words.

But why, it is an untold number. You can't describe. And then the valley. The very things that you despise, you now love.

Yes. Yes, you... You've got to admit to it. I heard someone admit to it only recently.

[ 28 : 37 ] There was a time when I used to despise the heaven. I used to say it's only a lot of doggerel. It's only a lot of poetry.

I said it's only a lot of poetry. And he said with tears in his eyes. I don't think so now. You see that, which he once despised.

No, no. Our poor despised him, but you see, he's down-throned today. I said that love by a number as well, isn't it?

Some say it doesn't make sense. Others say that there's divinity in it. From their own experience.

This is how the Lord levels and how he raises. The point is, the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

[ 29 : 43 ] This is a test. Glory of the Lord. It's good to have a religion that knows what measuring line you've got to measure yourself by.

Oh, yeah. It is this that is of such a good, real and vital nature.

And the glory of God is the test. And do these things lead to the glory of God? Has the Lord ordained peace for his people?

Has he accomplished and wrought all their works in them or for them? Well, that's for his glory. But there's no doubt about it.

You could hear the gospel trumpet right over the mountains, you see. It's clear. It's certain. You can hear the certainty and prepare yourself for the battle.

[ 30 : 55 ] Hear the Lord's name is honored and glorified. And hear alone that this is what the prophet declared, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed.

That's what I was saying last Sunday. This revelation, this unfolding, line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little, there a little.

This is revelation. This is revelation. Not some vast expanse open to your understanding which you would be quite incapable of receiving in a moment.

But learning a little at a time. A little at a time. And perhaps this is why I've got to step those steps. A little at a time.

This is where the glory of God will introduce itself and be introduced. Is this religion, this truth to the glory of God, does it glorify God to exalt him and the face of Egypt?

[ 32 : 17 ] How it is speak, that all flesh is grass, all the goodness thereof is just the flower of grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, because the Spirit of the Lord blitheth upon it.

Surely the people is grass, the grass withereth, the flower fadeth, that the word of our God shall stand forever.

It's what we need, isn't it? Lord, there has no dying peace for us. It's good forever. This isn't anything particular to the twentieth century.

This is good from the beginning. Even from the beginning of time. But more fully revealed in the Gospel.

So that when we come to the outcome of John's ministry, we find another very remarkable event in it.

[ 33 : 29 ] And that is the Lord Jesus himself. We read that he came from Galilee to Jordan. That's a journey.

He came from Galilee to Jordan, unto John, to be baptized with him. I do think that the Lord Jesus took his deliberate journey.

He took a good many deliberate journeys. A good many. He must lead, sweetly, go through Samaria.

That was a deliberate journey to meet that poor, adulterous woman, wasn't it? And save herself.

He took a deliberate journey. And that deliberate journey was from Galilee to Jordan, to be baptized with John. John for that.

[ 34 : 30 ] And you see everything falls into place. The dear man of God, with all his tentorian preaching, and the sharp edge of his tongue.

And that which would offend many. And the fan that he spoke of, which was in his master's hand.

And that he should burn up the unvedly with fire, unquenchable, and so on. And gather the wheat into his garner.

A little gospel here, in the third of Matthew, all on its own. What does he say when Jesus comes? Beautiful, isn't it?

Comfort me, comfort me, my people, saith your God. A will to ordain peace for us.

[ 35 : 34 ] Here is the grace of sweet humility, you see, pervading the spirit of John Baptist.

You don't see him anywhere, except at the end of his life, in this certain place. Then he was deeply tried.

But here, you see a remarkable claim. John for that saying, I have need to be baptized of thee.

See what he understood? Repentance, fruit.

Do you think he felt his lack of it? I do. He was apparent. And the very face of the scripture, that he realized the matter was the wrong way round.

[ 36 : 41 ] I have need to be baptized of thee. And comest thou to me. Now it was John's turn to receive the sharp point of the sword.

Suffer it to be so now. Say no more to me of this matter, as God said to Moses.

Moses. And Moses tweeted about the promised land. Begged the Lord that he might go into that goodly Lebanon.

And the Lord said to him, speak no more to me of this matter. Solemn, you know. And God finalizes a thing in life, doesn't he?

He says, say no more to me about it. So did the stern loving voice of Jesus say, suffer it to be so now.

[ 37 : 48 ] And the reason for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he suffered it.

Who would expect therefore to find such a sequel as this? But this isn't the final step.

There's another one. That is that when the Lord Jesus came up out of the water, having been immersed in it, the Holy Ghost descended in the form of a dove, descending upon him like a dove and lighting upon him.

And lo, a voice from heaven saying, this is my beloved son, whom I am well pleased. The whole Trinity gathered at the riverside.

The whole Trinity. They gather in sacred echo base. And it's recorded, as I've already said, in just a few verses.

[ 39 : 06 ] That's all. What essence there is in the mission. Lord, now, we're going to ordain peace, Lord.

Peace. Now, it is my thought to go any further with this, this morning.

Here is the teaching of Isaiah. Here is the labour and the message of John Baptist. Here is the outcome of God's word to his people, the messenger for the Lord whom he seeks will suddenly come to his temple.

And he shall sit as a refiner. Well, this is again, you see, slow work.

Refiners sit. They've got to sit. It's a long process, refining silver, so we're told, and read, which is of course true.

[ 40 : 23 ] And they cannot leave that refining work. It is something which has to be done with skill and care and as a right move.

And I was rather taken with a marginal reference to this in the 40th of Isaiah. And I say unto her that her warfare is accomplished.

Now, I am no great believer in substituting marginal references for the original. If we can take both together, all well and good.

But in the margin, it says at war there, her appointed time. Speaking comfortably to Jerusalem and crying unto her that her appointed time is accomplished.

Her appointed time. Now, when we look into this, we can see the deep meaning of warfare for Christ.

[ 41 : 33 ] Yes. In procuring peace for his people. Her warfare is accomplished.

And, Lord, thou wilt ordain peace. God. What glory surrounds it, doesn't it?

How it radiates, like the rays of the sun. Like the, uh, this ring of a diamond ring. The facets of it.

Look at it different ways. You see different colors. That proves that it is a real diamond. This remarkable product of the earth, this minute.

Now, when it comes to grace and the word of God, look at the facets of truth here. How unneeded, aren't they?

[ 42 : 33 ] And how instructive they are. Well, this is the first part. Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, set your broad.

The Lord helping us, we will go on with it again tonight. Thank you.