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THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST IN THE PROPHETS

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Class #3

The Way to Jerusalem

Reading: Isaiah 35 and Mark 5

Good afternoon my dear brethren and sisters

As we continue to follow the Master in the ministry described for us in Mark's gospel record, we've been with Him by the seashore in Galilee, and we've looked at this aspect, the power of His Word, and we've seen that the parables that the Master spoke in chapter 4 of the gospel record, really develop for us the fulfillment of what Isaiah chapter 55 was saying, that the Word of God was that which would give seed to the Sower and bread to the eater.

If we were to look more closely at Mark now, we would see then, that the parables develop the results of the growth. There are three parables in Mark; there's the parable of the Sower in Mark 4, the parable of the growing up of the seed (the farmer doesn't know how, but it happens. It's God that brings forth the growth). And the third parable is the result of that growth, starting off as a tiny grain of mustard seed, the seed of the kingdom grows into a great tree. And then we have in Mark's record two examples of the power of that Word of the Lord Jesus Christ. We have the power which astonished the disciples that He had the ability to speak to the wind and the sea, and they obeyed Him. And then in chapter 5, He could speak to a man who was tormented like a raging sea, and that man's mind could become as still as Galilee, once the Lord had spoken to him.

The record goes on to describe a number of miracles, showing us that the Word of the Lord Jesus Christ was to be directed at the redemption of Israel. There was the cleansing, the healing of a woman who was defiled because of an internal hemorrhage, which could not be stopped. She was unclean and in touching the Lord Jesus, she became clean, and wound up with that miracle is the miracle of the raising of the little girl. So from uncleanness to cleanliness brought life from the dead. So unclean Israel who were subject to death, were given life through this Word of the Lord Jesus Christ.

That chapter 6, that we had read in our readings this week, about an unrepentant Israel, represented by Herodias and her daughter, who hated the Law of God and despised

His prophets and caused the death of John the Baptist.

Our attention is in chapter 7 directed towards the essence of that redemption, towards the cleansing of the inner person. We are going to go to chapter 7 of Mark now, and see there what lay behind the problem with Israel. The cleansing of the woman with the hemorrhage was an internal cleansing; there was nothing from the outside that could be seen wrong with her, no doubt. It was a secret fault within, and that's where the cleansing had to be applied. And that's what the Lord in Mark chapter 7 is telling them, that it is from within, out of the heart of man proceed all those evil things. So the washing of pots and pans and the skin, the outside of the body, really wasn't the answer. The ceremonial cleansing that the Pharisees held as the essence of their religion, really didn't touch the real problem, and in Mark chapter 7 and verse 6, the Lord Jesus goes back to Isaiah's prophecy again, and this time to chapter 29. He answered and said unto them, 'Well hath Isaiah prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men'. So Isaiah in chapter 29 of the prophecy has spoken of the hypocrisy that the Lord encountered, as represented by the scribes and Pharisees.

The spirit of Christ then, is in Isaiah chapter 29, and we'd like to look at that first of all. When we get these keys through New Testament quotations, we can see how the scriptures unfold before our eyes, just following through the way the inspired writers of the New Testament take hold of verses, sets the framework and context of the chapter. The verse in question is verse 13, 'Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near Me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour Me, but have removed their heart far from Me, and their fear toward Me is taught by the precept of men. Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvelous work', that's the verse; what's the context? Well, the context of this chapter is a prophecy about AD 70; a prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. And we can show that; you just look at verse 3, where the message comes to Jerusalem, 'I will camp against thee round about, and will lay siege against thee with a mount, and I will raise forts against thee'. In your margin you'll see no doubt, a reference to Luke chapter 19 and verse 44, because the Lord Jesus in the record of Luke 19, takes hold of these words and the spirit of them, and applies it to the generation to which He came. He says in Luke 19 and verse 43, 'The days shall come upon thee that thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee: and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.' So the sense of the Lord's remarks were there in Isaiah chapter 29 which is speaking of AD 70, and it describes how the armies are going to come, through the power of God against Jerusalem. In verse 5 it says, 'Yea, it shall be at an instant suddenly', sudden destruction was going to come upon Jerusalem. Verse 7, 'The multitude of the nations are going to fight against Ariel'; verse 8 says it shall be as when 'a hungry man dreameth, and behold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty: or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and, behold, he drinketh; but he awaketh, and behold, he is faint, and his soul hath appetite: so shall the multitude of all the nations be, that fight against mount Zion'.

Now some have interpreted verse 8 to suggest that here is the deliverance of Jerusalem from those multitudes which come against it. They're going to vanish away as it were, like a bad dream, when we awake; if you would suggest that that's not really the sense of verse 8, what is happening is that, Israel is in dire trouble. The nations have come up against Jerusalem and they are hungry or thirsty in the sense of verse 8; they are in bad need of deliverance, but they have a dream. And in that dream, they have food and they have drink; and in their dream they feel they've been delivered, only to be rudely awakened. So when they awake from the dream, they are still hungry and they are still thirsty. And that's exactly what happened around AD 70, wasn't it? when the Roman soldiers came up against Jerusalem and besieged it, and then, unexpectedly, they withdrew and that left opportunity for those in the city to flee if they wanted. Those that had heard the words of the Lord Jesus in the Olivet prophecy, Josephus tells us some of them took their opportunity, and fled from Jerusalem, but many Jews who believed that they had been delivered, flocked into Jerusalem. So that when the Roman soldiers came again, in the sense of verse 8, when they awoke from the dream, they were thirsty and they were hungry. That's the way it was to be! So shall the multitude of all the nations be, that fight against mount Zion.

So, why were they in such a situation? Because they had rejected the gospel, of course, and crucified the Lord Jesus Christ, and rejected the appeal after His resurrection. In verse 9, they're described as drunk not with wine, they're drunk with false understanding. And verse 10 says, 'For the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath He covered', notice in verse 10, the cross reference to Romans chapter 11 and verse 8. Romans 11 and verse 8, the apostle Paul quotes verse 10 and he applies it to the unbelief of the nation of Israel, their unbelief in the face of the witness of the apostles. Romans chapter 11 is saying, 'Yes, Israel has rejected the gospel for the most part, save for a remnant; so we're right on tract, aren't we? with the context of this chapter. The rulers of Israel in verse 10, were blind; their eyes had been closed, they couldn't see. Verse 11 develops it in this way. 'The vision of all has become unto you as words in a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned saying, 'Read this, I pray thee'. And he saith, I cannot, it is sealed'. The vision of the kingdom was hidden from them; the learned men who could read and perfectly well understand any writing that they cast their eyes upon, couldn't read it because it was a sealed scroll. They had no authority to open it; so the book is delivered to those that can't read, the unlearned. And they say, 'Well, you read it'. And they say, 'I can't, I can't read', so nobody has the vision. The vision is hidden; nobody can hear the Word of God, because there's no one there who is able to rightly understand it. Why is that?

Verse 13, 'Forasmuch as this people draw near Me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour Me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward Me is taught by the precept of men', it was the precept of men, the tradition of the elders which was blinding the eyes of the nation to the vision of the kingdom, seen before them as never seen before the Lord Jesus Christ and the miracles which He did, and the things that He taught. They couldn't see; they were blind, their traditions so blinded

their minds that they couldn't see. It didn't mean to say that they didn't pay lip-service to God; their mouths were active, their lips were honouring God but their hearts weren't connected. So what Isaiah is talking about are the senses; the eyes were blinded so no one could hear the Word because no one could read it, and those senses were not connected to what they were saying and doing.

Verse 14 then says, 'Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvelous work among this people, even a marvelous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of the prudent shall be hid', that verse 14 is quoted in Acts chapter 13 and verse 41 and 1 Corinthians 1 and verse 19, which is speaking of the fact that the gospel was going to go to the Gentiles because the Jews would not believe it. A marvelous work was going to be done! God was going to confound the wisdom of the wise, and through what is called in 1 Corinthians, 'the foolishness of preaching' the gospel was going to go to the Gentiles.

And that is introduced in Isaiah chapter 29 with another beautiful figure, verse 17, 'Is it not yet a very little while, and Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field, and the fruitful field shall be esteemed as a forest?' (Just keep a marker in Isaiah 29 and come back to what is recorded in Mark chapter 7, this is the chapter which quotes this passage in Isaiah chapter 29) And look what happens in Mark chapter 7! The Lord has used Isaiah's prophecy against the wise of Israel because they were blind and couldn't see what was happening before their eyes. And so what does the Lord do? He leaves them, He goes out of the land, and in verse 24 it says, 'And from thence He arose, and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into a house, and would have no man know it: but He could not be hid. For a certain woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of Him, and came and fell at His feet. The woman was a Greek, a Syrophoenician by nation'. Notice we're told He went to Tyre and Sidon, to a woman who was a Gentile, and then it says not only that, it emphasizes the point in the record, that she was a Syrophoenician. What country was she from? She was from Lebanon, that's what Tyre and Sidon is, that's what a Syrophoenician is; she was from Lebanon. Well, Isaiah 29 is speaking about her. 'Is it not yet a very little while and Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field', so whenever we see Lebanon aren't we being told here, not just to think of trees, (see the trees, literal trees) but the trees which are the plantings of the Lord? And what did He find? A woman who was receptive to the hope of Israel; a woman who was content with the crumbs that fell from Israel's table. And so the hungry was fed and her daughter was healed and came back to full health.

Well, then the record in Isaiah and the record in Mark now go on and parallel, because in Isaiah 29 and verse 18 it says, 'And in that day, the deaf shall hear the words of the book and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness'. Those are very interesting words, the deaf will hear (you see, the book had been sealed; the Pharisees could not read, so the deaf couldn't hear) but now, the day was going to come when the deaf would be able to hear and the blind would see out of obscurity, and out of darkness (look at the double use of expressions here) out of obscurity and out of darkness. Well, if you run ahead of me in Mark, you'll realize that what follows now are two miracles which only the gospel message of Mark describes for us. The first, is when

the deaf hears and the second is when the blind sees, but you remember what's so unusual about that second miracle is that the Lord doesn't give sight to the blind man in one go, He gives him his sight in two goes. At the end of the first time, he sees in obscurity; he sees men as trees, and then in the second stage, he sees out of obscurity, he sees clearly.

And those two miracles, it seems that the Lord is saying, 'go back to Isaiah 29; I've given you the clue. I've actually quoted it for you', (and He's thinking of His disciples now), 'and see what is happening before your eyes'. What we need to notice now is that once the Lord had gone up into Tyre and Sidon, the ministry of the Lord changes tact; no longer is He going to be concerned with the multitudes in Galilee, but He is going now the way of the cross to Jerusalem, and the concern of the Master is to prepare His disciples. Not just to endure with Him along that journey, but to be prepared after His resurrection, to take the news of the same gospel out into the whole world. So what we find is, certainly when we get up to the transfiguration and so on, it is the education of the disciples; He wants to make them hear and see!

The two miracles in Mark 7 and 8 are unusual in that they are private miracles for the disciples benefit. Mark 7 and verse 32, 'And they bring one unto Him that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech him to put His hand upon him'; not an unusual incident, there must have been many occasions when people brought their sick relatives and friends to the Lord Jesus. But look at what verse 33 says, 'He took him aside from the multitude, He took him aside from the multitude and in verse 36, 'He charged them that they should tell no man'. It was intended as a private miracle; and the Lord may have done many of these, but this one is recorded by Mark alone, for Mark is giving us the beginning of the gospel of the Son of God as it is written in the prophets. I understand the Revised Version says, 'as it is written in Isaiah the prophet, which is why it was so often in Isaiah when we're looking through the eyes of the gospel record of Mark. What was the significance then of this particular miracle? Notice all these interesting features; it was done privately, it was done for the disciples' benefit therefore as well as for the man who was to be healed. But notice what was wrong with him! He was deaf and had an impediment in his speech, and the two things go together, although this man did have something wrong with his tongue as well. Very often you know, somebody who's stony deaf, they can't speak properly especially if they're deaf from birth, then they have never learned how to make sounds in a way that others can understand. You know, we can't speak clearly unless we can hear clearly, and wasn't that a message for the disciples! Isaiah 29 has spoke about the mouth and lips of the people giving lip service, but their hearts were not connected to what they were hearing by the Lord Jesus Christ. So first of all, they needed their ears to be opened so that they might speak the gospel clearly. The problem wasn't just with the rulers because in chapter 8, we've already referred to it, in verse 18 the Lord specifically turns to the disciples and says to them, 'Having eyes see ye not and having ears hear ye not', are you just like the others? Do you know better than they? And after His resurrection when the Holy Spirit brought all things to their remembrance, the apostles would sit down and say, 'yes, remember that miracle He did as He started His descent from Galilee to the way of Jerusalem and the cross? Do you remember that miracle He took

us aside with that man, the one who couldn't speak properly and he couldn't hear? Do you remember what He did?'

This is what He did! He put His fingers in his ears and spit and touch his tongue. Now, why would the Lord do that? It's been suggested that this would seem a fitting thing that the Lord was explaining to a man who couldn't hear what was going on, what He was going to do. It's no good the Lord talking to him because he couldn't hear, so He showed him; I'm going to unstop your ears, and I'm going to make your tongue be useful again, because spittle of course, when you think about it, is essential for speech. It associates the healing with the words which come out of the mouth of the Lord; the Lord actually touched His mouth, didn't He? and then touched the mouth of the man? And so He explained to this poor man, just what was going to happen to him. He'd hear and then he could speak; and that's what the disciples needed to learn if they were going to speak the Word of God, then they'd have to firstly, hear carefully what was being said. 'And then the Lord looked up to heaven and sighed and said unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened'; the miracle wasn't performed by a touch, for the Lord had taken His hands away from his ears, in order to touch his tongue. It was performed by a word, be opened, and 'straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plainly (he spake correctly; he spake rightly) It's the word 'straight' 'orthos'; what he spake was straight, it was a lesson for the disciples.

Where did that miracle come from? Well, we mentioned Isaiah 29 but Isaiah 35 is even more to the point now, for in a fascinating way the Lord Jesus was showing His disciples that He was the One of whom Isaiah 35 was speaking. It says in verse 5, 'Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped', that's what the Lord had done to the ears of the man; He had unstopped them. Look up the word 'Ephphatha' in the concordance, Strong will direct us back to the Old Testament, and we will find, if Strong is right, it is the word in Isaiah 35 verse 5 translated 'unstopped'. It's the very word; when the Lord said 'Ephphatha' He said, Be unstopped, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. So what a beautiful miracle! for the Lord was showing them, the disciples, hoping they would have eyes to see that in the spirit of Isaiah 35, here was the One who would reveal the glory of the kingdom age, and those who would have ears to hear would be able to listen to what He had to say, and speak forth the words of eternal life to others.

Just another interesting point before we go on to the second miracle, in verse 34, when the Lord looked up to heaven it says, 'He sighed'. Now, what made Him sigh? It wasn't the difficulty of the miracle; it was the stopped ears of His followers. We get it again in chapter 8, where the unbelief or the slowness of wit of the disciples is drawn attention to. 'The Pharisees' again in verse 11, 'began to question Him, seeking a sign from heaven, tempting Him' and again it says in verse 12, 'and He sighed deeply in His spirit, Why doth this generation seek after a sign?' And then He addresses His disciples, 'Having ears hear ye not?' it was the cause of the Lord's deep sigh. Isaiah 35 goes on to say, 'sorrow and sighing shall flee away' in verse 10, so the Lord in taking upon Himself the sighs and sorrows of His people, was going to bring about the remedy which would lead to joy and rejoicing.

Let's just follow it through! In Mark chapter 8 and verse 22 it says, 'He cometh to Bethsaida' (the fishing house; most appropriate for the preparation of disciples who were to be fishers of men, to carry out another private miracle for their instruction) 'He cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto Him, and besought Him to touch him. And He took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town'. So it's just like the other miracle, it was done quietly away from the crowd, for the disciples' consideration. And again the Lord uses His spittle. 'And when He had spit on his eyes, and put His hands upon him, He asked him if he saw aught. And he looked up and said, I see men as trees, walking.' His eyesight had come back but not with the true focus; he saw the blurred outline of men as if they were trees. Their arms as it were waving in the wind. 'After that He put His hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly', that's what Isaiah 29 had said, that in that day, not only would the deaf hear the words of the book, but the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness. What was He telling His disciples? That their eyes would be opened in two stages; in a sense, their eyes were already opened because, 'whom say men that I am?' asked the Lord immediately afterwards, and Peter says, 'Thou art the Christ', so their eyes were opened but they saw obscurely, did they not? Their understanding was limited; they only got a clear perception after the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Their first sight was hazy, the second touch of the Lord restored that sight so that they could see clearly. That's what was going to happen to them! and this must have been a relief to them when they recalled this miracle. 'Of course! that's what He was trying to tell us! Now we see clearly and our ears are open'.

Isaiah 35 says this, 'Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened'. And what is Isaiah 35 about? It's about the kingdom age; it's about the transformation of the wilderness; it's a contrast with the destruction of Armageddon in chapter 34, and the desolation that the judgments are going to bring upon parts of the earth, but in the Land the wilderness will flourish and blossom and a great company of pilgrims will come along a highway which is being prepared. And scattered Israel will come through a second exodus, along a highway from Assyria and from Egypt. They will be collected there from the nations, and they will come up to Jerusalem. And this highway will no doubt, be the way in which pilgrims come up to worship at Jerusalem, and without taking away anything from the beauty and the literal truth of those things, what the Lord Jesus is doing is showing that He is the One through whose sacrifice all this will be possible, and that the miracles that He was performing, were demonstrating the principles by which God would save His people. So when we go through and we see in verse 8 of Isaiah 35 reference to a highway, the Lord now was walking along a highway which led to Jerusalem. It ultimately would be the route of 'joy and gladness', even though it was first of all, the route of 'sorrow and sighing'.

We'll just see how Mark presents to us, verse 8 of Isaiah 35! Isaiah 35 verse 8 says, 'A highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it' (in the margin 'for He shall be with them'). So there's going to be a highway; the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; for He shall be with them; the Lord Jesus Christ will be with the pilgrims! Move on a little in

Mark's record to chapter 10. The Lord is nearing Jerusalem now, along this way, this symbolic way, and it says in verse 32 of Mark 10, 'and they were in the way going up to Jerusalem, and the Lord began to tell them again, how He must be delivered unto the chief priests and the scribes'. In the way, verse 46, 'And they came to Jericho: and as He went out of Jericho with His disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimeus, the son of Timeus, sat by the highway side begging', (now here was a blind man who is sitting by the highway. He can't follow with this great number of people because he can't see; he knows where the edge of the way is, but he is not able to walk along that way!) 'And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me. And many charged him that he should hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, Thou son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; He calleth thee. And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus. And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto Him, Lord, that I might receive my sight. And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way'. And Mark is making a special point; here was a man by the highway, he couldn't follow Jesus because he was blind; he calls upon the Lord and he is given his sight. Jesus gives him a choice; you can see what I've done for you, or go your way. Bartimeus thinks, 'my way is His way', and he follows Jesus in the way. He makes a choice to act upon the sight he's received, to follow Jesus. Back in verse 46, we're told his name twice over; we should notice that, it's quite interesting isn't it? and quite strange really, that we're given the name of the man 'Bartimeus, the son of Timeus', because Bartimeus means 'the son of Timeus'. 'Bar' is 'son of', but what does 'Timeus' mean? Well, our friend Strong tells us it means 'unclean'.

Isaiah 35 and verse 8, 'And a highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called 'The way of holiness'; the unclean shall not pass over it', and he couldn't because he couldn't see, but the Lord Jesus gives him sight; his uncleanness as it were, is taken away. Here is the man who is unclean; this is the uncleanness of leprosy, the uncleanness of sin. It's the word used in Leviticus of 'that uncleanness', a man who is defiled and unable to walk in the way of holiness. It may have been that He got that name because of the cause of his blindness! A son may inherit from his father, a physical cause of blindness through the father's unclean behaviour, which infects the mother and the baby at the time of birth, so that blindness is the result. And it may be that that is where he got his name from (what's your name? the son of the unclean). So he couldn't walk in the way of holiness until the Lord Jesus Christ passed by, and once the Lord had called him, he followed Him in the way.

Isaiah 35 says this about that way in verse 10, 'And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads', the ones that walk along that way, they're not clean by nature; they have been cleansed, they have had their ears opened by the Lord, and their eyes opened by Him. They have been ransomed from sin; the ransomed of the LORD.



Mark chapter 10, the verse before Bartimeus is introduced to us, look what Mark is telling us about this miracle! The first verse before Bartimeus is mentioned, the words of the Lord Jesus, 'for even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many'. And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and the beauty, brethren and sisters, of the Word of God. Here is the man, the ransomed of the LORD sitting by a highway, is waiting, for Isaiah 35 says, (and the marginal sense is there in verse 8) 'For He shall be with them'. The Lord Jesus Christ would have been mindful of the spirit in which He came; the ones for whom the kingdom age would open up as a real hope, because the vision now would be seen clearly through the Word that was preached by the apostles.

But there was one miracle that the Lord didn't do at this time, as far as we're aware, at least it's not recorded in the record at that time, but it's to be expected in Isaiah 35. If you're going to walk along the way, well, you've got to have the legs to do it. And Isaiah 35 and verse 6 says, 'Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing'. Well, the tongue of the dumb had already sung, because the Lord had touched the tongue of that man and the string of his tongue was loosed; that was part of the miracle of the healing of the deaf, his tongue could now sing. But what about the lame man leaping as a hart? Well, it's left for Peter and John, who now could see clearly, to perform that miracle which would indicate that the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, was the message that they preached. And it's in Acts chapter 3, and it's the first miracle that they did; they did, as it were, completed the vision of Isaiah chapter 35. And here's a man in Acts chapter 3 and verse 2, who is lame from his mother's womb, yet never been able to walk, and therefore, he was not one who could represent the 'redeemed, the ransomed of the LORD, in the way of holiness. 'And they carried him daily and laid him daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful'; we know from John chapter 10 verse 23, that the Lord Jesus Christ passed the way of Solomon's porch. We know that! this man could have been healed by the Lord, no doubt, on several occasions, but he wasn't. He was there waiting for the apostles, the gate of the temple is called the Beautiful gate; (we're not certain which of the gates it was; some suggest that it was on the east side of the city of the temple itself;(on an overhead bro. Palmer shows where it is understood that the Beautiful gate was) This is Alec Garretts' model of the temple and here's where he sat, apparently there were steps leading up to the entrance into the temple, but he couldn't make it because he was lame; a man that is lame from birth would have rather pathetic looking legs and feet; there would be no physiotherapist, no splints, nothing to stop the tendons from shriveling up and the bones distorting. He would have been a very sad sight indeed; he'd have no hope, no hope of taking a step up into the temple, but that, brethren and sisters, is the end of the way, the way to Jerusalem leads to the dwelling place of God and here's a man that can't make it on his own; he has to be carried! He asks Peter and we know what Peter says in verse 6, 'In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. And he leaping up stood, and walked and entered with them into the temple walking and leaping and praising God'. Walking and leaping and that's what Isaiah 35 says, 'then shall the lame man leap as a hart', he bounded up the steps into the house of God. Five at a time or whatever, like a hart skipping up the steps; he'd never walked in his life, and

instantly he was able to spring up on those feet, through the preaching of the apostles so men would be given the power and the strength to walk in that way.

And look what's happened in verse 9, 'all the people saw him walking and praising God'; it was an impressive sight and what does Peter go on to say? he says in verse 12, 'Ye men of Israel why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk? The way of holiness wasn't their holiness; it was the holiness that was brought to them through the Lord Jesus, and Peter goes on to explain in verse 18, 'but those things which God before had showed by the mouth of all His prophets, that Christ should suffer, He hath so fulfilled', and he repeats it again in verse 21, 'that which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.' And that's what those miracles were intended to display, that what God had spoken of through Isaiah the prophet, was a sure and steadfast hope; the One had come in the glory of Yahweh; He had come to save them. Could they doubt it now? Their eyes had been opened, they heard what He said, they saw the man leaping and walking; the highway had been prepared, the redeemed had been ransomed from the power of sin and death.

The exhortation for us, brethren and sisters, as well as the thrill of seeing these things, is brought out by the apostle in Hebrews chapter 12. Let's just conclude by looking at Hebrews chapter 12, for there is one other verse from Isaiah chapter 35, which is used by the apostle. Isaiah 35 and verse 3 says, 'strengthen Me the weak hands and confirm the feeble knees'. But why do they need to be strengthened and confirmed? because they're going to walk along the highway to the kingdom. Just think of the knees of that man who was crippled from birth; shriveled and without any strength at all; indeed, that's what we feel like so often when we think about the way of holiness and our total inability to walk in the right way, and that's the way it seems! This man was sat outside the house of God, and the context of Hebrews chapter 12, is the power of the Lord Jesus Christ to bring us to the destination, to bring us to the object of the journey! In verse 1 of chapter 12 he says, 'Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith'. He didn't just set us on the road; here's the One who will finish the race for us! He is able to bring us along that path.

There are times of sighing and sorrow! On the way, the Lord sighed deeply, not with His own sin, for He had none, but with the sin of those He came to save. It's not surprising is it, if His disciples should also sigh with their own sins? and see before them a race which is too difficult for them to complete. To sit as it were, outside the bounds of the sanctuary, their legs too weak to walk, and the apostle's words are for encouragement, to look unto Jesus the finisher as well as the beginner of our faith. Verse 10 says of the chastening of the Lord, 'but He for our profit that we might be partakers of His holiness'. The way of holiness is HIS holiness conferred upon us by the cleansing power of His Word through the Lord Jesus Christ. The power of holiness is the forgiveness of our sins, the very thing we sigh for! Verse 11, 'Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness

unto them which are exercised thereby'. Wherefore, (Isaiah chapter 35 verse 3), 'Wherefore, lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way, but let it rather be healed'. All those miracles of the Lord come to mind now in verse 13, 'the straight paths through the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ and its healing power should strengthen our hands and confirm our feeble knees, that as we tremble and fear because of those difficulties which face us, our vision is clouded; brighten the vision and the knees are strengthened, confirm the certainty of what the Lord has done and strength returns. Trust in Him to complete the course for us, and He will bring us to the kingdom. Verse 11 tells us afterwards, when those difficulties which are under the chastening hand of God, will yield the fruit of righteousness. 'The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose; it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice even with joy and singing'. What's Isaiah speaking about? surely not just the literal transformation of the Land, but the peaceable fruit of righteousness, flowering and blossoming as mortality is swallowed up in immortality, and not only is righteousness conferred, but the nature devoid of all that is unclean and unfit for the kingdom of God, is stripped away, and this corruptible puts on incorruption. My dear brethren and sisters, 'Wherefore, lift up the hands which hang down and confirm the feeble knees.'