

6039

SILVER STAR BIBLE SCHOOL 1996

THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST IN THE PROPHETS

Speaker: Bro. Stephen Palmer

Class #4

The Authority of the King

Reading: Isaiah 56

My dear brethren and sisters in the Lord Jesus Christ

As we have followed in the way to Jerusalem, yesterday we met a man, a blind man sitting by the highway, blind Bartimeus, the son of the unclean, and we saw how in giving sight to this man, the Lord Jesus was drawing attention to the fulfillment of Isaiah chapter 35. That there was to be a way, a way of holiness, in which the unclean could not pass over, but that it would be for the 'ransomed of the Lord' to return. The holiness that they would have, would be a holiness derived from the One who would lead them.

So as we go now, in the company of a man who was the son of the unclean, into Jerusalem, we find ourselves in Mark chapter 11 with the Lord Jesus Christ. The first thing He does when He comes to Jerusalem, verse 11, it says, 'Jesus entered into Jerusalem and into the temple', and the theme of 'uncleanness vs. holiness' is continued. Bartimeus's name derives from the Hebrew word which is used of leprosy, the uncleanness of leprosy; it is used frequently in Leviticus chapter 13. When the Lord comes to the house in Jerusalem in verse 11 it says, 'that He looked round about upon all things'; He was inspecting the house. Let's just take a look at the house for a minute; this picture (this drawing) is by our brother Len Littmere and it is accepted as the most accurate reconstruction of Herod's temple, the second temple. The mount of Olives on the east side, the temple itself with the Most Holy and Holy place, and the outer courts, and these grand staircases which led through the porticos into this vast temple area. It was considered by the Jews, the greatest building in the world, and probably was; they said if you hadn't seen this building, you haven't seen any building! and it was made of white stone glimmering in the sunshine. A tremendously impressive sight! remember when the disciples sitting on the Mount of Olives looked across the Kedron valley, they marvelled at the manner of stones and buildings that they saw. The scale is quite fantastic really; these little dots here, are people; I don't know if you ever had a clear impression of the temple during the time of the Lord, till I saw this picture, I probably imagined a small building with people packed in together, but the air of this temple was vast and could hold many, many, many thousands of people. The ecclesia met there,

probably 3,000 of them all together in one little corner of this temple space.

The stones were very impressive; these stones shown here, from modern day Jerusalem, date back to the times of Herod; they are part of the foundation stones, I'm told, that propped up the temple Mount, to hold this vast structure which Herod had built. And some of the stones were 70 tons in weight. No wonder the apostles were mightily impressed by what they saw. Leading up the staircase (this is a picture from a model of the temple). You can see the grandeur of the place; you can understand why the Jewish rulers and the priests were so content with what they had, and so jealous to preserve that great citadel that was their investment. The Lord, perhaps, going up those steps, perhaps goes through the tunnel entrance here, and then up unto the temple mount, went to see what was going on in this temple. He had gone there on other occasions; you remember in John chapter 2 the Lord cleansed the temple; He'd gone there and He cast out those things which offended, and now He was returning as it were, to see whether that cure had been maintained, or whether the disease that He saw the first time, had recurred.

And so He goes into the temple and looks round about at all things. (Here is the temple, the eastern gate; perhaps that was the gate where the lame man was sitting, and through the gate into the court of the women. (The women weren't allowed to go any further than that). Just inside this 'Nicanor' gate, is the court of Israel and beyond that the court of the priests, the altar, the laver, the sacrificial area and the temple itself.) Of course, in this area there was a sort of marketplace; they were selling animals, there were tables erected for exchange of money. It was big business, it was where the priest etc. got their income. There were exactors of the poor, widows losing their properties to pay off that which was due; no mercy was shown in this house, and here we see, a barrier, a wall, with entrances at various points along it, and this was the wall that kept the Gentiles out. This was the wall of partition which prevented the stranger from going anywhere near the vicinity of the temple proper. And archaeologists have discovered two, I believe, of the plaques which were in different languages cited on this wall, as a warning to the stranger and they said this in translation, 'NO FOREIGNER IS ALLOWED WITHIN THE BALUSTRADE AND EMBANKMENT ABOUT THE SANCTUARY. WHOEVER IS CAUGHT WILL BE PERSONALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS ENSUING DEATH', that was the message which the rulers of Israel gave to the nations. Whoever approaches, even within many feet, of the house of God, will be personally responsible for their ensuing death, and apparently, the Romans allowed the Jews to implement that rule, and to take the life of the stranger, who dared to approach the house of God.

When the Lord went into the temple and looked round about on all things, He went out, and the next day went in we're told, and He cleansed the temple again. Verse 15, 'And they come to Jerusalem and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money changers and the seats of them that sold doves, and would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple'. What was happening here? Well, the Lord, the next day, a day or two later perhaps, in chapter 13 answers the wonderment of the disciples when

they considered the magnificent stones and the glorious building with its gold covered roof, and its golden vine entwined around the doorway, and the white stones glistening in the sun. He said to them, in verse 2 of chapter 13, 'Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down', He was using, of course, the language of Leviticus chapter 14; in Leviticus chapter 14 we have a description of the house which is plagued with leprosy, and what Israel should do with that house. Verse 34 says, 'When ye be come into the land of Canaan, which I give to you for a possession, and I put the plague of leprosy in a house of the land of your possession: And he that owneth the house shall come and tell the priest, saying, It seemeth to me there is as it were a plague in the house'. Now that must have been the message coming to the Lord Jesus all the while He was in Galilee; it seemeth to me there is a plague in the house. It was unclean, unfit for the holiness of God; it had been turned into a marketplace of corruption. The priests exploited the people, those who should have ministered the Law, abused it. Leviticus 14 required that the priests should go and inspect the house. Verse 36 says, 'Then the priest shall command that they empty the house, before the priest go into to see the plague, that all that is in the house be not made unclean', anything that went into the house, if it had leprosy, was contaminated by it. Do you remember what the Lord did, what Mark says He did, when He went into the house. 'He would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple', it was a sign of the danger of contamination for anyone who carried anything through the house.

He had been there before; He had tried to cleanse it in the spirit of Leviticus chapter 14. For the priests should come, and if it really was plagued, they should take the stones away and replace them, and then come again after a time, and see if the remedy had been effective. Verse 44 says, 'Then the priest shall come and look, and, behold, if the plague be spread in the house, it is a fretting leprosy in the house: it is unclean', and that's what the Lord found when He came to the house. The man who had cleansed the unclean and the 'son of the unclean' now finds the house which cannot be cleansed. So verse 45 says, 'And he shall break down the house, the stones of it, and the timber thereof, and all the mortar of the house; and he shall carry them forth out of the city into an unclean place', and that's what He was telling the disciples surely when He said to them, 'Seest thou these great buildings, there shall not be left one stone upon another'; this house was thoroughly infected and it was finished as a place that could be called 'the house of God'.

And the Lord indicates that in the Old Testament scriptures that He refers us to; just notice how the theme develops in Mark chapter 14, having predicted the demise of that house, there is another house that's going to replace it, a house, indeed, that will be a house of prayer for all nations. Of course, in the age to come, there will be a literal house in that place, but the Lord here, is thinking of a house made up of 'living stones'. And He begins that work as it were, of preparation; in chapter 14 we're introduced to the beginnings of the Passover preparation, and you just notice where the Lord was in verse 3. 'Being in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper', and surely there's an irony in Mark's record. The man who condemned the leprous house, is found sitting in the house of a leper, for out of the uncleanness of those He came to save, He was able to

work a miracle, to turn that which was unfit and cast away, into 'living stones' to be built up a spiritual house, for the habitation of God, through the Spirit.

When the Lord comes into the house in chapter 11, verse 17, He makes reference to two Old Testament passages, to the prophets of Isaiah and Jeremiah. And it says He taught, saying unto them, 'Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer', my house shall be called of all nations, says Isaiah, and it's Mark who is particular to give us that additional information, 'of all nations' it was to be the house of prayer. It couldn't be, could it? It couldn't be here, there was a wall of partition which was a great barrier to all nations, not erected under the instruction of the Word of God, but erected under their own tradition and superstition.

We need to go back to Isaiah chapter 56, and understand what the Spirit of Christ through the prophet was saying, was God's intention in His house in Jerusalem? A point that was completely missed by the rulers of the time; we've already looked at Isaiah chapter 55, which spoke of the Word of God coming down from heaven, providing seed to the Sower and bread to the eater. What was the purpose of the Word? what mission was it to accomplish? Well, it was to bring near to Israel and to 'all nations' the saving grace of God. So chapter 56 verse 1 says, 'Thus saith the LORD, Keep ye judgment, and do justice: for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed', the Word then, was to reveal the salvation and righteousness of God, and to confer a blessing upon those who would listen to it. Interestingly in verse 2, we have a link with bro. Jim's earlier talk on Psalm 8, where it says, 'Blessed is the man that doeth this, and the son of man that layeth hold on it', it was the Lord Jesus Christ who laid hold on that righteousness and salvation and brought it near to those who would receive it.

And notice the spirit of Isaiah 56 now in verse 3, it is the spirit of encouragement, 'Neither let the son of the stranger, that hath joined himself to the LORD, speak, saying, The LORD hath utterly separated me from his people: neither let the eunuch say, Behold, I am a dry tree'. You might just notice the link with Mark 11 and verse 3 there, and the dry tree. What's Isaiah saying? The message of the gospel was one of hopefulness for the son of the stranger, that had joined himself to Yahweh. The word 'joined' is the name 'Levi', the son of the stranger could do what the priests did, in the spirit of this chapter. They could be joined unto Yahweh; they needn't say, 'we are utterly separated from his people as a leprous man might be utterly separated from the congregation'. No! the message of Isaiah was that the son of the stranger could come, but not to that house, for the son of the stranger could not get near, except on pain of death. The Lord must have marvelled at the contradiction between the Word of God and the application of it by his people. And the same for the eunuch, the one who had no hope of offspring, whose name would just die out. He also, would be joined and have sons and daughters and an everlasting name, in verse 5, that shall not be cut off. And what the prophecy is telling us is that the Gentile, you and I, brethren and sisters, and the one who has no heritage amongst Israel, the one who is despised and without hope, can come into the covenant relationship through the Lord Jesus Christ. Verse 4 says, 'For thus saith Yahweh unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, and choose the things

that please me, and take hold of my covenant; Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off'. Notice where their name's going to be! within the house, within the walls; the best that Israel could do was to come outside the house, the court of Israel was outside the house proper. And the best a Gentile could do was to stand afar off, but the Lord is teaching them from Isaiah 56, about a house in which the son of the stranger and the eunuch, who are not able to approach, would actually be brought within it, and made part of the very fabric of the house of God.

So verse 6 says, 'Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to Yahweh, to serve him, and to love the name of Yahweh, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant: Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer', so they're going to be brought inside the house of prayer; they're going to be able to offer up burnt offerings and sacrifices which would be accepted upon the altar. In fact, under the Law, the stranger could offer offerings on the altar of Israel, and chapter 15 tells us that. It was Israel's own interpretation which excluded the son of a stranger; so they had to offer it on God's terms; they had to be circumcised, they had to accept the God of Israel, but they could be accepted.

And the conclusion of verse 7 is, 'for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all people', that's Isaiah's point! A point completely missed by those who erected the barricades against the nations. It was God's intention that the house would be called, a house of prayer, it wasn't even that when the Lord went to inspect it, but Mark is stressing that, not only will it be a house of prayer, it will be a house of prayer for all people. And the outcasts of Israel, those who had been cast out, by the rulers of the temple and the synagogues, those whom they esteemed unworthy of worship in the house of God, (and you can follow that through the expression 'the outcasts of Israel' into John chapter 9 and 10) they would find a home in the house of God. In verse 9, there's an invitation to the nations perhaps in AD 70, to come and devour the house that was corrupt, 'all ye beasts of the field, come to devour, yea, all ye beasts in the forest'.

And in verse 10, a reference to the scribes and Pharisees and the priests, 'his watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs', and we know that the appetite of the dog was applied by the Jew to the Gentile, and here the Lord is saying, no!, you're the unclean animal. They don't give warning to the people, they say they are shepherds but they don't understand; they look after themselves; they do not look after their flock! And you can see what verse 11 is saying, 'they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter', and that's what had happened, that's what the Pharisees were like. They made a pretence of religion but they were in it for their own benefit. Theirs was a professional occupation in religion! They devoured widow's houses; it was for a pretence they made long prayer; they were whited sepulchres, outwardly as white as the stones of the temple, but inside dead men's bones.

Well, this is the spirit of the prophecy of Isaiah 56 which the Lord directs to them at this time. In turn it has its own back draft, Isaiah 56 as the other chapters we've looked at in

Isaiah, are set against the reign of Hezekiah; the reason they can't be appropriate to those times as well as applying to the Lord Jesus Christ, we might say, is because Hezekiah was a type of Christ. Because there's a perfect match between the historical circumstances in which the prophecy was given, and its application to the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the marvel and wonder of scripture! What was Hezekiah doing? Let's go back to 2 Chronicles chapter 29; we find in this remarkable record of the early years of king Hezekiah, that this man had his priorities straight. He sought first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; it's a measure of the man that as soon as he came to the throne, the first day, the first month of the first year of his reign, his priority was to open up the house of God in Jerusalem which his father had shut down. You see that in verse 3 of chapter 29, 'He, in the first year of his reign, in the first month, opened the doors of the house of Yahweh and repaired them'. His father back in chapter 28 we're told, and verse 24, 'had shut up the doors of the house'. What a thing to do! to close down the place where God's name would dwell, to cut the people off from worship. The first thing that Hezekiah knew he had to do, was to open the doors and cleansed that house. And so he did, they started on the first day, verse 17 says, so it was day 1, month 1, year 1, and Hezekiah through the Levites accomplished the cleansing of the temple. But Hezekiah was not satisfied with having a pure house. He wanted to 'fill' it; he didn't just want to fill it with Judah and Jerusalem, he wanted to fill it, well, who did he invite?

You know, this attitude of Hezekiah, is remarkable and wants to be emulated; here was a man who put God first, who cleansed God's house according to the precepts of the Law. A man who made no compromise whatsoever in the things of the truth, but a man whose spirit was outgoing and inviting. Now, that is a hard thing to sustain; it's easier to be like this, isn't it? it's easier to keep the house pure by excluding people. That was never God's intention in building a house. It was that all people might come and worship in the beauty of holiness! so though we have the truth to maintain in its purity, the spirit of it is an outward invitation to 'come and join in the worship of the God of Israel'. And that's exactly what happens in 2 Chronicles chapter 30. Hezekiah sends out post men, carrying letters of invitation throughout the tribes of the north. Those 'unclean tribes' about to be swept away by the Assyrians; they were a hopeless case, nevertheless, Hezekiah was at pains to try and save whoever would come. That's the spirit of Isaiah's prophecy; it was in these times that Isaiah was writing. And although most people scorned and mocked, as verse 10 says, nevertheless verse 11 says, 'Nevertheless divers of Asher and Manasseh and of Zebulun humbled themselves, and came to Jerusalem. Also in Judah the hand of God was to give them one heart'. So there were a people that were called out, who came in the spirit of the invitation that was received. They came in an unclean manner; they came afflicted with diseases because of their uncleanness, but verse 18 says, 'Hezekiah prayed for them saying, 'the good Yahweh pardon everyone that prepareth his heart to seek God, Yahweh God of their fathers, though they be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary. And Yahweh hearkened to Hezekiah and healed the people', so even though the people that came were unclean, it didn't stop Hezekiah from inviting them and they were cleansed, not according to the ritual of the Law, but outside of the Law, through the intercession of the King, they were healed. You could imagine then the joy and rejoicing of worship in the house at that time! It was unsurpassed, and notice what verse 25 says, 'And all the

congregation of Judah, with the priests and the Levites, and all the congregation that came out of Israel, and the strangers that came out of the land of Israel, and that dwelt in Judah, rejoiced', so there were Gentiles there!

Not only had Hezekiah been bold enough to extend the invitation from Judah to the 10 tribes to the north, but with the 10 tribes had come Gentiles, and what was he going to do? They joined in; they were invited to share in the celebration and they joined a congregation which rejoiced with exceeding joy! A mixed multitude! but look what verse 27 stresses in the way that it describes what happened. 'Then the priests and the Levites arose and blessed the people: and their voice was heard, and their prayer came up to His holy dwelling place, even unto heaven'. My house shall be called a 'house of prayer for all nations'; it was, it actually was, and their prayers ascended, how far? even into heaven itself. That is what God intended, and that was the spirit of Isaiah chapter 56, and that was what Israel, was completely oblivious to, they didn't want the stranger, they didn't want the unclean, they didn't want those who were outcasts. They wanted to keep what they had for themselves; they wanted to hedge it about with rules and regulations that kept out the stranger. Instead of wanting to convert the stranger to the way of holiness, there was a spirit of animosity and jealousy.

In Acts chapter 21, the apostle Paul is in Jerusalem and he is persuaded by the brethren who were concerned about the feelings of the Jewish brethren, that he was in some way, undermining the Law of Moses; he was persuaded to purify himself by entering into the temple, verse 26 of Acts chapter 21, and to offer an offering for everyone who was being purified. So this is where he went. And verse 27 says, 'And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him, Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the Law, and this place and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place'. What they're saying that happened is this, that Paul had taken with him Trophimus; they'd seen him with Trophimus in the city, and Trophimus was an Ephesian. And they'd accused Paul of taking Trophimus across this partition, from the court of the Gentiles where Trophimus could legitimately have gone, into the precincts of the temple itself. And they were furious, and verse 30 says, 'And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple'. And then look what it says! 'And forthwith the doors were shut'; they reversed what Hezekiah had done! they slammed the doors of the temple to keep out, the very hint that the son of a stranger could come in. Isn't that remarkable! That's why that house was unfit and had to be removed. The house, which if it was to be a genuine house of God, was to be a house of prayer for all nations, but proved its true character when those doors slammed shut.

Trophimus was a dead man, wasn't he? If they could have got hold of Trophimus, the Romans would have allowed the Jews to kill him. I just want to think of Trophimus for a minute, because it's not without significance that we are told, not just that Trophimus was a Gentile, but that Trophimus was an Ephesian. Now, when Paul writes to Trophimus's ecclesia, the epistle to the Ephesians, it's not really surprising then is it,

that this, if you like, is the main thought of his epistle. For he's writing to brethren and sisters like Trophimus, who now had no where to go. In their city they had one of the several wonders of the world. The temple of Diana of the Ephesians was renowned; even in those days, people went as tourists to visit it. It was a place of immorality, Diana the goddess of love, but it was a magnificent temple with huge pillars made of marble. But Trophimus couldn't go in there anymore; that was a house that he had now nothing to do with. It says in verse 12 of Ephesians 2, and we know it well, 'that when they were without Christ, they were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world'. There was no place to go; no temple to worship in; they are without God, 'but now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace, who hath made both one, and (this is it!) hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us'. Can you imagine Trophimus's feeling when he hears that epistle and the account of what the Lord Jesus Christ has done, in removing that barrier between the court of the Gentiles and the house of God. The middle wall of partition has been abolished, and the two, Jew and Gentile, have been made one and now at peace. 'Reconciled both Jew and Gentile unto God in one body, by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby, and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh'.

And here was, not just the Spirit of Isaiah chapter 56, and the Spirit of Christ in the prophets, but the very language of Isaiah 56, 57 and 58. (We're not going to cover all of that, but let's just notice some of the links between Ephesians 2). What the apostle is doing is taking forward what the Lord Jesus taught in Mark chapter 11. For He taught them saying, 'My Father's house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations', he's saying, 'go back to Isaiah 56 and see what it says.' Let's go back to Isaiah 56 and let's find Trophimus! Here he is! Here is the test case, the particular example that caused Paul to be put in prison and eventually for the gospel, to go to Rome itself. Inadvertently, poor Trophimus was the cause of Paul's captivity. He's the perfect example of what is spoken of here.

Isaiah 56 and verse 3, 'Neither let the son of the stranger, that hath joined himself unto Yahweh, speak, saying, Yahweh hath utterly separated me from His people', because He hasn't! He had made him one; the leprosy of sin had been removed; He had been cleansed to walk in the way of holiness, to be one, and find a place in the very house of God, itself. The covenants of promise Paul mentions in verse 12, they're there in verse 4 and verse 6 of Isaiah chapter 56.

If we turn into chapter 57 the theme develops. There is, of course, this I suppose, well-loved quotation, Isaiah 57 and verse 19, where God says, 'I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith Yahweh; and I will heal him', He will heal him. The man who is unclean, the man who is suffering from a disease which would set him apart from the people, is going to be brought near. Those that are far off and those that are near are going to be united in peace; those are the words that the apostle Paul takes up in chapter 2 of Ephesians verse 13 and 17. Notice the language! 'You who were far off' the words of Isaiah 56 verse 19. Verse 17 of



Ephesians 2, 'And came and preached peace to you who were far off and to them which were nigh', so clearly Isaiah 57 verse 19, is speaking of the gospel to the Jew and to the Gentile. Well, what did it promise? Look at some of the language of chapter 57; in verse 10 we have the expression 'no hope', the origin of Paul's use in Ephesians 2 and verse 12, 'having no hope'; that's what it is without God, but God's people didn't realize it. It says, 'yet saith thou not, there is no hope'. That was the truth, there wasn't any hope in their way, but they didn't recognize it. But now a Gentile who does recognize that he has no hope, finds it.

Verse 15 of Isaiah 57, 'For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy', the high and lofty One, the One who is apparently remote, so high is He above our thoughts, look what He says. 'I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit', God the high and lofty One will dwell with him that humbles himself.

Ephesians chapter 2 and verse 18, 'For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father'. Verse 22, 'In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God. I dwell with Him'. So the high and lofty One is willing to habitate the house that is made up of people who were unclean and far off. The Spirit of Christ in the prophets!

Verse 15 of Isaiah 57 continues to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite ones. It is a hope of healing, it goes on to say, 'For I will not contend forever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before Me, and the souls which I have made', if God maintained His wroth against sin forever, there'd be no hope. 'For the iniquity of his covenant was I wroth, and smote him: I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart. I have seen his ways, and will heal him. I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him and to his mourners'. It is a picture of a man who's diseased and a man who is unclean, like Bartimeus, the son of the unclean. A man who cannot approach unto God because of sin, but through the Lord Jesus Christ, the high and the lofty One, has invited the unclean into a 'way of holiness'. 'This is the magnanimous gesture of the God of Israel, the outward invitation to join in the things of God, to revive those that are dying. Paul writes to the Ephesians in chapter 2 and he says in verse 5, 'Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)'. The word 'quickened' means 'to revive' to 'make alive'; verse 6, 'And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus' that has its origin in Isaiah 57 verse 15. It's not that God has descended to the level of man, but that God has taken the humble and contrite and elevated them to the level of God. He has made us to sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

If you'd just like to turn to chapter 58 of Isaiah and verse 14, to see what I believe is the actual expression that the apostle is taking hold of, when he's writing to the Ephesians, that expression 'heavenly places or the heavenlies'. Verse 14, 'Then shalt thou delight thyself in Yahweh; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of Yahweh hath spoken it', there's a link to bro. Colin's classes in Deuteronomy 32. He's caused us, dear brethren

and sisters, to ride upon the high places of the earth, to fly upon the back of the eagle, to soar into the dwelling place of God, to have our prayers ascend to heaven itself, to break down the middle wall of partition, to bring us who are diseased and unclean and afar off, and to bring us nigh through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, to make us one with Him, to cleanse us from our uncleanness, to allow us to walk with Him in the way of holiness, that we might be ultimately, that house in which the Spirit of God will inhabit.

We just looked at one of those quotations from Mark chapter 11, may we, dear brethren and sisters, as we consider the Spirit of Christ in Isaiah chapter 56, 57, seek to emulate the examples we've been given, and without any compromise to the truth, without any changing to the way of holiness, express that generous spirit and invitation to all who will, to come to join us in the house of prayer for all nations.