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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel, Brighton
on Sunday morning 30 June 1929

JEREMIAH 30 v 21

"And their nobles shall be of themselves, and
their governor shall proceed from the midst of them;
and I will cause him to draw near, and he shall
approach unto me: for who is this that
engaged his heart to approach unto me?
saith the Lord"

The prophecies of Jeremiah are true and full of importance, and so God said to him, write them in a book. We shall find all God's words true; they are written in a Book, in this Book, the Bible. What He says of the wicked, of the judgments that will overtake them and swallow them up, will be found true. What He says of judgment and punishment and affliction and chastisement in measure with which He deals with His people, will be found true. Search the Word and see if, so far as you know, any one word has failed. And what He says of Zion, her captivities and restoration, her desolations and His turning them into Eden and the garden of the Lord, will be found to be true. Every word of God is pure, purified in a furnace of earth seven times. The three chapters which precede this 30th chapter, are strikingly grievous in their threatenings of punishment to Israel and Judah, and this chapter, the 30th and the two following ones are equally striking because they are full of promises of restoration and they will be found, both of them, as in past so in the present and in the future, to be true, absolutely true. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My Word shall not pass away". Search the Scriptures and whatever you see there will be verified, must be verified. In passing, one may refer to what God is doing in this day when the higher critics are on all sides ridiculing the Bible, saying it is not true, not true to history, not true in many, many regards. By pick and spade excavations God is proving the very statements which are contradicted to be absolutely true. Never ridicule the Bible; never contravert its statements. The Bible is to judge you, to judge me. We are judges of the Bible. Reason is blinded, the affections are

warped, the understanding is darkened. How then, without divine illumination, quickening and teaching, can we understand the Word of God? This chapter refers to the restoration from the captivity of Babylon, and of the scattered people, and promises restoration. Not only Judah - the two tribes in which God preserved His worship in a great measure until Christ came, for He was to come of Judah - but also the ten tribes which had revolted are to come back. God will bring them all back - and though He had wounded them with the wound of an enemy and with the chastisement of a cruel one, so that, looked at from all natural points of view, their wound was incurable and impossible - said He, I will bring health and cure; I will do it. What man cannot accomplish is easy with God; there are no difficulties with Him, no contingencies with Him, no incurable diseases with Him. All soul sicknesses, all troubles of conscience, all difficulties of the understanding, these must submit to the healing touch of God when He gives that touch and He says that the city, which had been destroyed, should be again built on her own heap, her own little hill, on the heaps of rubbish. There God would restore His own city and temple. There is a great day coming for the Jews, a great and wonderful conversion of the Jews, when God's time arrives. They are returning now to their own land, in unbelief, but O, what a reign there will be of the Lord Jesus, not in His Person - the next time He comes from heaven it will be without sin to gather all His elect people to Himself - but the reign of His power, of His love, of His grace, the quickening of His Spirit, and the removal of the veil from their hearts. There will be the calling of the Jews, and they will be one with the Gentile church, that is to say, Jew and Gentile, according to God's mystery, will be one. "I will bring again the captivity of Jacob's tents and have mercy on his dwellingplaces; and the city shall be builded on her own heap, and the palace shall remain after the manner thereof"; just as it used to be when God was with them, so it shall be again, when He shall visit them. "And out of them shall proceed thanksgiving and the voice of them that make merry: and I will multiply them, and they shall not be few; I will also glorify them, and they shall not be small. Their children also shall be as aforetime, and their congregation shall be established before me, and I will punish all that oppress them. And their nobles shall be of themselves, and their governor shall proceed from the midst of them; and I will cause him to draw near, and he shall

approach unto me: for who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me? saith the Lord"

After the fulfilment of this word with respect to God's ancient people, there comes a spiritual meaning and fulfilment, and with this, one has to do this morning. And their governor, their prince, ruler and commander, shall proceed from the midst of them. The only Person who answers fully to this is Christ and He does answer to it. He answers to it in every particular of the word. He shall proceed from the midst of them; He shall be of them; He shall be of them in His human nature; God has called Him. He brought Him forth in a miraculous way of the tribe of Judah. You will remember, those of you who were present, that I named last Wednesday evening the incarnation of the Son of God. I want to add one or two observations to what I then said. The first is this, that the Son of God was active in His incarnation. His Father, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, prepared a body for Him and He, the eternal pre-existent Son of God in His divine nature said, as it is in the Psalms and in the Hebrews: Lo, I come. Thou hast prepared a body for Me, a Person already existing, and I, that Person, come to take up and unite with Myself the body Thou hast prepared Me. And this is the wondrous activity of the Son of God in His incarnation and here is His love, here is His willingness, and here is His infinite condescension, to take up poor human nature, with its frailties, and unite it to His divine, glorious, eternal, self-existent Person. I name this because it seems to me to involve the glory of Christ in this, His first act, in respect of His incarnation, that He willingly and lovingly came and took up what had been created by the Holy Ghost in the virgin and united it with Himself. And in the prophecy of Jeremiah His incarnation is spoken of as a creation. I, says God create a new thing in the earth; A woman shall compass a man. This is God's work. A part of the love of Christ, so to put it, is manifested in this, His freely coming into this world, becoming a poor man, a despised man, an afflicted man, with a heart broken by the rejection of Him by His own people. "He came unto His own and His own received Him not" And should the Lord make out this truth to us by His Spirit I am disposed to say that I think it will enhance the glory of Christ in our judgment, and affections and that we shall love Him and thank Him for coming, for becoming a Man, for being willing to be made under the law

that He might, being so made, become capable of having sin imputed to Him. This is a mystery. "Great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifested in the flesh", and willingly was made Man in order that He might redeem them that were under the law, being made a curse for them.

And the second remark I would make on this point is this, that herein is manifested the suitableness of the Lord Jesus for poor, sinful men. A Man meets the case of men. A pure, holy, harmless, undefiled Man meets the case of men who are defiled. I am speaking to some who know and feel that in their own names they may not go to God, that God will have nothing to say to them, but judgment and anger, as they stand in their own persons and names, but, as approaching the I AM in the Name of the Man Christ Jesus there is a new way for them, an acceptable way for them and this, as seen in the light of the Spirit, should make the incarnation of the Son of God precious to us. You will never get on without Him; you will never see God with joy without this Man as between God and you. You will never have access, never get a smile, never receive a communication nor any blessing to your soul, but in and through the Mediator, the Man Christ Jesus. This is the Person who is brought up by the Lord, proceeding from the midst of His brethren; He is not ashamed to call them brethren. And this makes way for a third remark. To save wretches; to quicken the dead, giving them His own life; to justify the ungodly, giving them His own righteousness; to sanctify the defiled, giving them His own holiness. And their governor shall proceed from the midst of themselves, that is, shall be of their nature.

And the next clause brings before us the priesthood of this governor, this ruler. "I will cause him to draw near and he shall approach unto me". And under the old, the Levitical dispensation, the approach of the priest to God was the approach of an appointed person. "Every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God" And when God said this Man, this governor should approach unto Him it was equivalent to saying He shall be the Priest whom I will cause to approach unto Me. And this "causing" is spoken of in the Hebrews as "calling" Christ to the Priesthood. No man takes the honour of priesthood unto himself, but he that is called, and Christ took not this honour on Himself, but

He that called Him said unto Him "Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec" Christ was called by His Father to be a Priest and it was the duty of the priest under God's appointment to approach unto God. The high priest himself, being a sinful person, had to make an offering and sacrifice and gifts for himself. Christ, not being that, approaches in His own sinless dignity. "Thou art a Priest for ever after the Order of Melchisedec". I will cause Him to approach unto Me. And that means the whole nation approached God. When the high priest went, on the annual day of atonement, unto God, he went in the linen garments provided and made for him by divine order. He was to go unornamented into the presence of God, because he was to go into that awful presence for others and to serve there in things pertaining to God. The claims of God on sinful men; the justice of God offended by men; the holiness of God forbidding the approach of sinful men; the honour of God in the broken law, the law broken by men; the faithfulness of God in the threatening of that law, the awful sanction of that law; these were things that pertained to God, and because sinful man could not meet those things, could not meet God in respect of those things, nor satisfy God by anything he could do, therefore the priest must approach God with the appointed atonement. A beautiful, a striking type of the Priesthood and the offering of the Lord Jesus. Says Paul, in the Hebrews, this man must have somewhat to offer. The priests offered and this Man, the anti-type of them must have somewhat to offer. And what had He to offer? What had this High Priest of our profession to offer? Himself. The gift of His will, the offering of His Person as a sacrifice, sufficient sacrifice. This was what He offered in serving in things pertaining to God. And because the old temple was no use - it had fulfilled its purpose when Christ came - but also because there must be a temple for a priest to officiate in, Jesus had a temple; He served in the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man and that true temple is His own blessed, spotless human nature. I will cause Him to approach unto Me. Now the approach was not for His own Person - except insofar as a commandment had been laid on Him, and He was made sin; it was necessary that He should approach God in that respect - but He approached God for a people whose sins He was bearing. "He bore our sins in His own body on the tree". What an approach this was. Various sacrifices offered on the day of atonement had respect to this Person and His gifts and sacrifices .

And He came into the presence of God. And the high priest, when he went into the holy place must have a golden censer, must have sacrificial fire put into it, taken from the altar, and on that sacrificial fire he must cast pure, sweet incense which made a cloud and, covered with that, the high priest went into the holiest of all before the Mercy Seat sprinkled with blood. I will cause Him to approach unto Me. And He did approach Him; He drew near. The grand enquiry for those who are convinced of their sins and of the painful truth, that they may not approach God in their own names, is this - did this High Priest approach God for them? And, as that is a secret with God, a secret no man can understand or enter into, He Himself alone can assure any enquiring sinner that such was the case. Look to God for that; ask Him for that assurance, that the Saviour did approach the I AM for you. And when you get the answer you will go forth in the dances of them that make merry.

"For who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me? saith the Lord". Not a sinful man, but the holy, undefiled, harmless Saviour, Jesus Christ. He gave Himself, gave His heart, engaged His heart and all that He had to approach unto God in behalf of the people given to Him to redeem. It was a great engagement, when you consider, for Him. He engaged this heart of His. When you consider the cases that He had to deal with and the sinners He had to save, it was no light thing for Him to engage His heart. If we see sin as God sees it, the sight is intolerable, would be a hell, but for the atonement. Now, think this, that the Lord Jesus saw sin in His own eternal, pure light, and yet He was willing to bear it, willing to have it imputed to Him, willing to be made sin, and this is in the matter of engaging His heart; not ignorantly, but with perfect knowledge of what it involved; that He must bear sin. The high priest was bearing the iniquity, the transgressions, and the sins of the people when he went into the holiest with the blood and incense and that typically sets forth the engaging of the heart of the Lord Jesus to approach God. He engaged His heart to obey. There is a great deal in that word of Christ's to His Father: "I knew" He said "that Thou hearest Me"; "I always do the things that please Thee". You will never say it in yourself; I shall never say it in myself. O, the tears some of us drop over our failings and fallings; the shame we feel, the fear we sometimes have of praying even, because of our constant sins. But

here is One who engaged His heart to obey His Father and that is in that Scripture in the Psalms: I come; I delight to do Thy will; Thy law is within My heart. This is in the engagement, my friends. And, as I remarked last Wednesday evening, I believe if anyone, any child of God, that is, were led to consider - reading the Scriptures concerning the life, pure, holy, blessed life of the Man Christ Jesus as He went about doing good - that person would get a sight of the perfect obedience which the law claims, but never receives, from any sinful man; cannot receive. But Jesus engaged His heart to render that obedience. He approached God with His hands full of that obedience. He approached the infinite One, full of that obedience and no shame, because no fault; holy, perfect, in all that He did. There is not a sentence, not a word, not a claim, not a demand, not a commandment of the holy law that He did not fully realise in absolute obedience. But that is not all. He engaged His heart to die. He engaged His heart to give His life. He knew perfectly what He had to do, what He had to suffer, when He came into the world and when He said, in the spirit of prophecy by the Psalmist, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God". Now He tells us Himself in the gospel of John what that was. "No man taketh My life from Me". They meant it; they did everything possible to effect that; but they did not accomplish their design. Christ was before them. "No man taketh My life from Me. I have power to lay it down of Myself and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father"; that was the will of God. O, that was the climax. What an approach that was. This is the consecration by Jesus of the new and living way, and this is how it is that a sinner is enabled at times to say with the Psalmist: "I give myself unto prayer". Christ was the forerunner in this. He prayed whole nights. He gave Himself to His Father; He gave His obedience to His Father and He gave His life a sacrifice to His Father. What remains? This that follows, the next verse. "And ye shall be my people, and I will be your God". It follows; Christ purchased His people with His own blood and now, being exalted at the right-hand of God, He sends forth His Spirit who quickens them and claims them and brings them to the cross, where they live; where they are justified; where they are sanctified; and where God smiles on them. As God made Jesus Christ glad on the cross, after He said: "It is finished"; as the sweet favour of God filled His soul with peace and happiness before He left the body, before He said "It is

finished", so, at that cross, God fills the souls of His people with peace and happiness. That is where you will live with God; that is where you will get the smile of God. Just as your Forerunner got it, so you will have it. Just as He went to heaven with the peace and love of God, so you will find your way to heaven with that peace and love . The sixteenth Psalm seems to me to the point. Says Jesus, "Thou hast made Me glad". What made Him glad? Why the love of His Father. "My Father loveth Me because I lay down My life" What will make you glad? The same love. "Thou hast showed Me the path of life". What was that? The way to heaven for the Redeemer was through suffering and when you see the path of life in the light of the Spirit, you will see that your way to heaven is just that way - tribulation. But, by faith in the Redeemer, made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. And He saw His resurrection. "Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell". What hell did Christ go into? Did He go into hell at all? Yes, the hell of punishment. Not the place of the damned, but the hell of punishment. Rutherford calls it an innocent hell. Punishment is innocent in itself, but it reached the holy soul of Jesus who was made sin. And then He said "Thou wilt not leave my soul" there - No, He rose from that - "nor wilt Thou suffer Thine holy One to see corruption".

Now how many of us want heaven? How many of us crave the smile of God? How many of us want justification and sanctification and wisdom and redemption? As many as can say they do want these things, to them this word will one day be made good. "Their governor shall proceed from the midst of them". They shall see their Redeemer to be the Man Christ Jesus, the very God who is in heaven. They shall see Him caused by God to approach Him as the great High Priest for them. They shall see Him engaging His heart to approach unto God for them. And then, as Christ was made glad by His Father's smile, so they will be made glad by the same smile. And O, what a wonder - only think of it - that the love of the Father to His Son as the Saviour is that love wherewith He loves the saints. "That the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them and I in them." Brethren, this, as far as I understand the matter, this is that glorious gospel of the grace of God which, made known, makes sinners holy, and, therefore, happy. No man can be truly happy until he is made really holy. Holy, not in himself, but in the Saviour, Just, not in himself, but in Him whose

righteousness is justification. May the Holy Spirit open so important and beautiful a word to us, and make it spirit and life in us, and He shall have the praise.

AMEN.