

# God and the nations

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[0:00] Turn to Isaiah chapter 14. We're going to look at some of these chapters without trying to cover every word. You might know them. They might be a complete stranger. If you've got to know them, you will know them by their actions.

How would they, what do they decide to do? And their reactions. What would they do if such and such a thing happened?

And this is particularly brought out in crises. And I'm not talking just imaginary. I'm talking real life crises.

Because we live in a world that doesn't often go smoothly at all. We can have big crises or small crises like you've turned up one minute too late for the bus or something like that.

How do we react to what we would nowadays call stress? How do we react to the unexpected? It's worth pointing out, brothers and sisters, that God does not shield us from these so that we don't ever have crises or stress or unexpected things.

[1:38] But God is with us in these things. And everything together is working for our good. He uses them for our good.

Jesus asked his disciples the question like this. Are you people of faith or little faith or no faith? In crisis, do we, and I'm not just talking about an immediate knee-jerk reaction, but what's really in our hearts, do we turn to God or do we actually turn away from God?

These are very important spiritual questions. In the chapters we're going to continue to look at, that's Isaiah chapter 13 through to 39, this is about Old Testament Israel, and she is almost constantly in a position of stress.

And the stress is produced by her position regarding the surrounding nations. So she has real-life crises, usually big ones, real-life stresses and threats, and real-life unexpected things happen to her, and how will she cope?

[3:04] God did not shield Israel from these things, but used them for his purposes. And that's a very deep subject, how God used the nations for his purposes.

Jesus, this is sort of anachronistic, isn't it? Jesus wasn't there in his earthly ministry, but the question could have been asked of Israel. Are you a nation of faith, or a nation of little faith, or a nation of no faith?

When the crisis comes, do you turn to God, or turn away from God? And we'll see that whole thing being worked out in some real-life situations in these chapters.

Okay, now then, if we were sitting over a cup of coffee talking about your particular stresses, you would say, but Phil, you don't understand.

There's so much going on, and I need to explain a lot of it to you. And hopefully I would sit and listen patiently. Let's sit and listen patiently to them saying, I need you to understand my situation.

[4:14] So let's look at their situation. There's history and geography. So that's Jerusalem. And look at where they are.

That's God's headquarters. Over there is Egypt. That's the nation that once took the Israelites into slavery. And that's a powerful nation that would offer Jerusalem a solution to her problems that does not involve trusting God.

That's Assyria. That, as it goes through the story, the time that Isaiah covers, that's a nation that rises and becomes a threatening superpower.

And the question arises, well, that's a real crisis. How are we going to react? How is Israel going to react to the threat of Assyria? And then there's Babylon, which takes over later.

And that is the big one. That's actually going to swamp the whole area and eventually take Jerusalem, the southern kingdom, and the northern kingdom into exile.

[5:26] That's going to be a horrible thing, but there's a lot more to it than I'm going to say just now. So that's their stresses. I think you would say stressors.

Don't you? Is that a sort of Americanism for things that cause stressors, stressor? Let's do a little bit of geography. So now this is a close-up of Jerusalem there, the Dead Sea, and what would be the area of Galilee.

Interestingly, there are trade routes that pass exactly through this land. If you're doing trade, you have to go by land or by sea.

I'll just point out that the Boeing 747 had not yet been invented, so you don't get flights. You've actually got to go along a path. If there's a hill, you've actually got to climb the hill or alternatively go round it.

And speaking for my wife at least, we would prefer to go round it, wouldn't we? So the geography matters, and the high ground looks something like this. That becomes important.

[6:43] There are routes through this from Africa, from Egypt, to Europe, to the East, to Asia, to Nineveh, to Babylon, and the traffic all goes through here.

So I've got some routes. You could come, whoa, I've clicked too many things. So this is a red click. So that is known as the way of the sea.

So you go there, and you've got to go through that little gap there. You go along the low land here, and you notice that this route leads through Damascus.

Or you could get to this point, and then you could go along the high ground. That would take you past Jerusalem. This apparently is the way of Shur.

Or you could skirt around here, and follow this high ground. That apparently is called the King's Highway. And all the geography of that comes into play in this.

[7:46] So I won't labour it, but it would be helpful for you to be aware of that. Those trade routes bring wealth. And we'll find that the cities along here, say Damascus, for example, it gains its wealth by being where it is.

Because all the traders pass through. They might extract taxes. They might do some trade there. They might do B&B, Airbnb.

There's probably a premier in there, or something like that. So they bring wealth. And they give the cities significance. And on the other side of it, if you were bringing an army, you'd be thinking the same sort of thing, wouldn't you?

You won't be thinking, I'll march my army over this difficult mountain. You'll say, I'll go through the valley. If I possibly can. And interestingly, this valley has got a mountain.

There's Megiddo. And the Hebrew for mountain is Har. And Har Megiddo is the mountain of Megiddo, which is where we get, would you like to guess, a very well-known word, which relates to this map there, the mountain of Megiddo.

[9:06] It's the battle of Armageddon. That's what Armageddon is, the battle of the mountain of Megiddo. And you can see why you'd have a battle there, because that's where you'd march your army.

I thought that was interesting. I hadn't realized the geography of it before. So we're going to look at three of these nations just now, three oracles, three speeches, three messages relating to these nations.

So the first one is Philistia. And if you have a Bible from the back of the church, chapter 14, verses 28 to 32, is the Philistines.

So the place where they live is Philistia. And there's the map. They live along the coast. They're quite famous in Bible history. King David fought the Philistines. King Saul fought the Philistines. And there are cities. These one, two, three, four, five. Well, I thought there were five cities, but Ekron, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gaza, Gath, Raphia.

[10:17] And as we shall see, the Philistines come with messages. We'll find out about that in a moment. Moab is also mentioned. Moab is on the trade route that goes that way, between two rivers.

Quite plush, I think, from the little that I've gathered. Moab. And when armies come to attack them, they are desperately seeking refuge.

And then we have Syria, which I'm roughly saying is up in the north here. And Syria, sometimes known as Aram, that confuses us, headquarters Damascus up here.

And they linked up with the northern kingdom of Israel. Israel had split into two. Southern kingdom, Jerusalem or Judah. Northern kingdom, Israel, Ephraim, Jacob, different names.

But the northern kingdom and Aram ganged up together. They joined together against Jerusalem. So we'll look at these three kingdoms.

[11:27] And they each have particular things that they say or that God says to them, particular situation. Right. Let's go.

Oh, sorry. I should have said that at the end of it. No, let me wind back. Philistia was the first one. Moab, the second one. That's in chapter 15 through to 16:13.

Syria is the next one. Chapter 17 verses 1 to 11. And by the time we get to the end of that, the scope has widened to all nations, which is, the prophecies tend to do that.

They tend to widen out from the specific to fundamental wider principles. Okay. Breath.

Number one. Philistia. This is chapter 14 verses 28 to 32.

[12:28] This oracle came in the year that King Ahaz died. Do not rejoice, all you Philistines, that the rod that struck you is broken. From the root of that snake will spring up a viper.

Its fruit will be a darting, venomous servant. And he goes on to say, whale, O gate, howl, city, melt away all you Philistines. A cloud of smoke comes from the north.

There is not a straggler in its ranks. What answer shall be given to the envoys of that nation? The Lord has established Zion, and in her, his afflicted people will find refuge.

That's quite a short prophecy. And I think Philistia represents a kind invitation to wrongly placed trust.

Let me explain what I mean. So the Philistines are ancient enemies of God's people. Do you remember that David went out and killed Philistines?

[13:28] And there's an ancient enmity. They have those five cities along the sea coast, and this prophecy happens when King Ahaz died.

Not many of the prophecies are given a very specific date like that, but this one is. King Ahaz has died. You might remember King Ahaz. He was the one who failed in faith.

Do you remember this? That when they learned in chapter 7 that the northern kingdom and Syria had allied together, it says they feared.

And King Ahaz, cutting a long story short, instead of trusting in the Lord, trusted in the Assyrians. And maybe the Philistines came along to the funeral.

And maybe they come, because King Ahaz has just died, they come to bring some sympathetic, supportive messages.

[14:36] So I've done the Philistine there. He's brought some flowers. He's also brought some fish, because I thought if he lived on the sea he might like to bring some fish, but I don't know. And the Philistines come along.

We're so sorry to hear that your king has died. He linked up with the Assyrians, didn't he? Well, we have got a better suggestion for you.

We've been linking up with Egypt to get our strength. And here is such a wonderful opportunity. Surely the hand of the Lord is in this. King Ahaz has died.

And we're here for the funeral. And we want to bring you this message. Trust in Egypt. We do. Now is the God-given opportunity to join us in this.

And I just stop to point out that if something happens opportunely, it doesn't always prove that God is in it. The example of Jonah, who was trying to run away from the Lord and he just gets down to the harbour and he finds there's a ship ready to go to Tarshish and he thinks, right, this must be it.

[15:57] God's provided that way for me to escape from God. The fact that the opportunity arises doesn't mean that it's from God. It might be, but it might not. You mustn't take that as proof.

And the Philistines bring a message. You see in verse 32, what answer shall be given to the envoys of that nation? What shall we say in response to the message?

Well, what do you think the message would have been? Well, we're doing a bit of supposition here, but I think the supposition makes sense. The Philistines were rejoicing, it says in verse 29.

The rod that struck you is broken. Now, who's he referring to? I think it would make a lot of sense to say Assyria is what they're referring to.

Philistines say, it's all gone quiet with Assyria. Isn't that great? We're safe now. But the prophecy says, no, you're not safe.

[17:01] Wail, O gate, howl, O city, melt away all you Philistines. A cloud of smoke comes from the north. There is not a straggler in its ranks. There's another army coming from the same direction. You're not safe.

The Philistines come, let's suppose, saying, now's the opportune time to trust in Egypt.

And what answer shall be given to the envoys of that nation? This is the answer that should be given. The Lord has established Zion and in her his afflicted people find refuge.

the safe place wasn't Assyria. The safe place isn't Egypt. The safe place is Zion, the city of the Lord.

The city where God has chosen to reveal himself, to set his promises, to put his king, to summon his people. That's the place. Now, let me just say, in case I'm misunderstood, that was how it was in those days.

[18:09] Nowadays, we do not put our trust in a geographical city. The days of that are past. We put our trust in the Lord Jesus. The city he is building is not an earthly city, it's a heavenly city.

The Jerusalem that we belong to is the Jerusalem above. And she is free, as Paul says. But the principle is the same. That's the safe place.

So let's take that from Philistia. What do we learn? New Testament says this, Do not fear what they fear. Do not be frightened.

But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. What answer shall be given to the Philistines? Trust in the Lord. What are they telling us?

Trust in Egypt. It's the opportune time to do that. We say back to them, No, we're trusting in the Lord. New Testament says, Don't be fearful about what they fear.

[19:11] Don't be intimidated by what other people are intimidated by. Christ is Lord. Put him in your hearts as Lord. Trust in the Lord. And in our situations of illness or loneliness.

Failure. Disappointment. Success. Stress. Worry. Whatever it is. In fact, whatever your situation is as you sit where you are sitting this very moment, don't fear what they fear.

Don't listen to the Philistines. This is what we're saying. The Lord has established Zion. That's where safety is. Trust in the Lord.

And just because it all came around at a particular opportune time doesn't mean that the Philistines were right. Okay? That's the Philistines. Let's look secondly now at Moab.

Chapter 15 and 16 is Moab. That's where Moab is geographically. And they are in a trade route.

[20:27] They can easily get knocked out by an opposing army. And that's apparently what happens. It's all very sudden. Chapter 15, an oracle concerning Moab.

Ah in Moab is ruined, destroyed in a night. Kir in Moab is ruined, destroyed in a night.

What are they going to do? Dibon goes up to its temple. They have their own religion. They go to their high places to weep.

It's totally distressing, sudden, unexpected. Now let's just think about Moab. In relation to the tribes of Israel, the Moabites are sort of cousins.

It's a rather unpleasant story involving incest, but they are cousins. They're also near neighbours. And you might remember from what David was telling us not that long ago, Ruth was a Moabitess.

[21:36] That's right, isn't it? Yeah. So, Ruth was David's grandmother? Great grandmother?

Okay, whatever you just said. that. But there's family, you see, in a sense, they're family with King David. So, this nation is in a slightly different situation.

They're not enemies, they're sort of family. And they have this sudden calamity. when bad things happen suddenly, C.S.

Lewis wisely says, this might be God's megaphone to speak. If you've been somebody who's been running away from God and ignoring God, and something bad and crisis comes into your life, the very reason for that might be so that God can get your attention.

If you're a Christian, you're probably listening to God anyway, hopefully, but when something bad comes into your life, that's still from God.

[23:07] So, a sudden calamity comes to Moab. Now, verse 2, they go to pray, but they go to the wrong God.

God, they go up to the temple. One of the Puritans, I'm afraid, I can't remember which one, said of storms in the Christian's life, if a storm like this drives us to prayer, blessed storm to drive us into such a harbour.

hunger. I think some of us, so I'm putting myself in this, are so unspiritual that we forget to pray unless the pressure's really on.

Maybe I'm just the only person that's like that, but I think there's a bit of human nature in that, that we pray with so much more intensity when the pressure's on. blessed storm to drive us to such a harbour.

So, there's one thing about this, that God's pressing them, but they pray the wrong way. Now, look at verse 5.

[24:21] My heart cries out over Moab, her fugitives flee as far as Zoar, as far as Eglath Shelishia. Now, I don't know what the geography of this is, but that just, it's so specific, isn't it?

You can see the refugees, you could almost imagine it on BBC TV, there's a water crossing and they're queuing up to get across the water there, they've just got a bag of, a few handful of belongings as the refugees make their way up there.

And, verse 5 says, my heart cries out over Moab. Now, who's the me? Is it Isaiah writing it, or is it God whose words Isaiah is writing?

And I think either way, God must be in on it. We learn here how God looks at Moab. Disaster has come to you, you've gone to the wrong place to pray, but, says God, I cry out over you.

You almost say, I weep over you. What a sad situation you're in. It's rather moving, isn't it, to think that our God, in some sense, weeps over the suffering in the world, weeps over the Moab situations then and now.

[25:48] What is God's heart towards Moab? He cares about them. there's another Puritan saying, and I can't remember who this one was either.

You cannot tell God's heart from his hand. You cannot tell God's heart from his hand. You might think he's really being very hard on you, but that doesn't mean he doesn't love you.

You can't tell his heart from his hand in that sense. There's that bit in Hebrews, isn't it, where it says, no discipline seems pleasant. You think, but every earthly father who really cares about his children disciplines his children.

And so God does to us. He brings hard things into our lives, not because he's forgotten about us, but because he loves us. If you were to film an operation, a piece of surgery, you'd think, that surgeon must hate that person on that trolley because he's cutting them up.

But you know, the reason he's doing that is not because he hates the person and he's trying to exact his revenge upon this person undergoing the surgery, but the surgeon does it because he cares.

[27:11] And Robert Murray McShane said, how bad sin must be if such a loving surgeon has to cut so deep.

It's an interesting thought, isn't it? Let's not do every word, but let's go over to chapter 16 verse 3. You've got this vivid picture of the refugees clustering and clamoring around the crossing point of the fords of Arnon in 16 verse 2.

And them crying, give us counsel, render a decision, make your shadow like night at high noon, hide the fugitives, do not be afraid of the refugees, let the Moabite fugitives stay with you, be their shelter from the destroyer.

And they're sort of at the border, at the border crossing, saying, let us in, let us in, we want to come into Zion, let us in. Do you know, I was going to save your hide, till the storm of life is past, safe into the haven, guide, oh receive my soul at last.

[28:19] I was going to choose that but I forgot to choose it. But that's what they're saying, hide me, let me find safety in you. Like Ruth, who, it was said, came to take refuge under the wings of the Lord.

That's a wonderful thing to do, to call out to the Lord, hide me, save me, let me take refuge under the shelter of your wings.

Jesus said, didn't he, I, like a mother hen, I long to gather my chicks under my wings. But in the end you wouldn't do it. It's interesting, isn't it? Sometimes there's a crying out but when push comes to shove, people aren't actually willing to do what they say they want to do.

What's the reply to Moab? It's in chapter 16 verse, verse, verse, verse, verse, the oppressor will come to an end and destruction will cease, the aggressor will vanish from the land.

In love a throne will be established, in faithfulness a man will sit on it, one from the tent of David who in judging seeks justice and speeds the cause of righteousness.

[29:39] It's a classic description of the throne of David and forgive me it uses these rich Hebrew words in love that's the chesed word steadfast love love that won't let you go love that won't let you down love that won't betray you and particularly when you need it most in chesed in love a throne will be established in faithfulness Hebrew word emet meaning firm reliable strong it's the word from which we get amen meaning yes firm reliable agreed in faithfulness a man will sit on it one from the house of David who in judging seeks justice Hebrew word mishpat meaning order goodness everything as it should be rightness nothing that you think is dodgy about it and he will speed the cords of righteousness Hebrew word tzedek meaning that which is upright and good morally ethically pure and above board this is the sort of throne that there will be this is the sort of kingdom that there is and this is what you're invited to belong to your true hope is in the throne of David this is true now as it was then isn't it it's as true now as it was then this is the throne that is fulfilled in Jesus this is his throne it's full of chesed and emet and mishpat and tzedek it's full of righteousness truth faithfulness all these things and that's the answer that's given to these refugees this is the kingdom that we belong to if we're

Christians this is the kingdom Jesus told us to seek seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and everything else will fall into place but I'm going to say there's a but this is a sadness about this there's a but and I think the but comes in verse 6 so there are the people queuing up we need to be hidden and there's the answer this is what you could be hidden in this kingdom and now there's a but verse 6 we have heard of Moab's pride her overweening pride and conceit her pride and her insolence her boasts are empty therefore the Moabites wail they wail together for Moab and it looks as though they said ah hmm not quite up for that actually it's a very sad thing when people seek the kingdom of Jesus Christ but when push comes to shove they say actually no that seems to be what's happening here if you follow the sequence of it because of their pride if you come to the kingdom you have to submit to the king he has to be the be all and end all Jesus said why do you call me Lord Lord but you don't do what I tell you why do you call me Lord Lord but you don't do the things that I say you've got to do that but it looks as though it looks as though Moab got to that absolute crisis point but when it came down to it they said actually no no we we're Moabites we don't actually have to submit to your king no we'd like the shelter but we won't accept the lordship we're a little bit we're rather special people and the bible says that's pride her misplaced confidence perhaps confidence in their prosperity because I think they were prosperous it says in verse 8 talks about the fields of Heshbon and the vines of Sibna and it talks about the choicest vines and in verse 9 it talks about their harvests and their vineyards and their orchards and there is something about wealth and security which makes people politely refuse the invitations of Jesus

Christ I need shelter yes you do need shelter come and shelter under the lordship of Jesus Christ well actually I don't need it that much I've got my orchards and my fields I've got my nice house I've got my nice pension I've got my company bonuses There's something about wealth and security which gets in the way and I think this is what happened to Moab and she talks about her vines and orchards and harvest and her splendor and in verse 12 she goes to pray Moab appears at her high

places she only wears herself out when she goes to her shrine to pray it is to no avail yes she'll be praying she'll pray she'll be religious but not too religious not religious as in submitting all to the king who reigns in Zion you don't need me to tell you this but I will tell you anyway not all people who pray are praying to Jesus not all prayers are to the god who made everything there are prayers that go in the wrong direction that god doesn't hear you don't need me to tell you that but I'll tell you just to be quite clear the Moabats prayed but they prayed to the wrong god not all gods are the same people pray to Mary don't they and Mary's saying what on earth are you praying to me for why do you pray to my son Jesus that's the whole point whole cultures pray to the saints praying to saint john chrysostom chrysostom means golden mouth he apparently a great preacher and john chrysostom is probably metaphorically spinning in his grave saying they call me golden mouth because I told people about Jesus and what are you praying to me for you stupid people we pray to the lord who receives prayer we pray through Jesus

Christ who reigns in Zion and I have to say the Moabite situation is repeated time and again Moab was family maybe you've got family members who say a lot of the right things who pray but when it comes down to it will not bow the knee to Jesus so sad so near but yet so far and the Moabite analysis is actually it's pride self is on the throne and self will not get off the throne to allow Jesus to be on the throne done very respectfully very politely in the middle of a life which is in many ways blameless but Jesus isn't lord so sad so sad so sad my heart cries out over

[37:38] Moab says God let's look at the third nation so this is now we're now into chapter 17 an oracle concerning Damascus Damascus will no longer be a city but will become a heap of ruins and it's linked with verse 3 the fortified city will disappear from Ephraim and royal power from Damascus you see Ephraim is the northern kingdom Damascus is the capital city of Syria and we have a brother here from Syria today who was in Damascus so and these two in this history had allied together against Jerusalem and it was said of them when the king heard that Ephraim had allied itself with Aram the hearts of the people shook like the trees of the forest are shaken by the wind that was how intimidating they found it as we would say as Ray reminded me they were shaking like a leaf at this alliance and this alliance was an alliance of human power and it intimidated the people of God they stopped trusting in the face of this alliance now alliances are good things in the

Lord it's good for God's people to live together to work together it's good for churches to pray for one another if we're preaching the same gospel it's good for us to work together as best we can but that's working together in Christ it's working together in faith but this alliance was not an alliance of faith it was an alliance of flesh and it is said of this alliance your wonderful prosperous cities will be reduced to rubble that's what it says in verse one Damascus will no longer be a city will become a heap of ruins and the glory refers to glory refers to royal power in verse three and it talks about the remnant of Aram will be like the glory of the Israelites and in verse four the glory of Jacob will fade away the fat of his body will waste away it will be as a reaper gathering the standing corn and harvesting the corn as when a man glean ears of corn in the valley of

Raphael but some gleanings will remain like when you harvest an olive tree you leave I say you neither you nor I have ever harvested an olive tree let's be honest but if we were to quite difficult to get all the olives and you leave one or two on the top on the top branches says the Lord and he says this is what happened to these people they were glorious they were reduced to rubble however not completely not utterly destroyed there's bits left over their glory is turned into gleanings and remnants!

and that is well that's the point I'm going to bring out about this national reference God judges them but he leaves one or two remnants and in verse 7 it says in that day men will look to their maker and turn their eyes to the holy one they will not look to the altars the work of their hands they will not regard the asher poles and the incense altars their fingers have made so this in this case some are left over it's different from Babylon because Babylon is absolutely wiped clean nothing left no hope but in this case there's some left and the Lord deliberately because he could just wipe the whole thing clean he deliberately leaves some he spares some it's a remnant and seems to me you can correct me if I'm wrong but I think a remnant is always a remnant by grace grace is when

God doesn't deal with us as harshly as we deserve and that's why you're here today isn't it because God has not dealt with you as harshly as you actually deserve you're in this position of being like an olive left at the top all the other olives were squashed in God's judgment but amazingly you're still there why because God spared you he had a plan for you he didn't just obliterate you he says I've actually I've got a plan for that that olive and that olive and that olive as well and I'm going to spare! [42:52] them from my judgment and I'm going to do something in their hearts and although they were looking completely in the wrong direction in that day they will look to their maker God will do something for them on a particular day this is how Christians are saved I hope you know this we're saved by grace it's not saying we've deserved it we don't earn our salvation either before we were saved or by repaying it all afterwards our salvation is by grace it's God saying look bottom line I'd just like to bless you and you say why me Lord and the Lord says well I'd just like to actually nothing to do with you I'm just going to bless you grace it's surprising actually quite a nice idea to write a song called amazing grace wouldn't it unless somebody has already thought of writing such a song we're invited by

Paul in Romans to consider the kindness and sternness of God that he has every right to judge that's his sternness he could take all those olives off that tree and squash the lot of them he would be perfectly entitled to do that consider his sternness but consider his kindness that he chooses not to do that and he leaves a remnant by grace huge subject but a very important one let's not go home without realising that's how if we're Christians that's how we're saved not by works that we have done but by grace through Jesus Christ that's amazing what else does it say will happen on that day well it says in that day verse 7 men will look to their maker and turn their eyes to the holy one of Israel they will turn away from man made religion to their maker!

now what's this is putting a finger on the whole problem of the human race summary of human sin what people do is worship created things rather than the creator first chapter of Romans the fundamental sin of the human race is not that they do the wrong thing on Sunday or not that they don't always pay their taxes properly the fundamental sin of the human race is they don't respect their maker they don't worship their maker they don't give him glory they don't thank him that's the fundamental sin and this says on that day they will turn from created things that they've been so busy making and trusting in and building up and worshipping to the one who made them and they will look

I noticed that word look verse eight and verse seven they will look to their maker they will turn their eyes to the holy one they will not look to the altars to the work of their hands and I'm going to ask who are you looking to this morning who do you look to Jesus Christ says look to me in Isaiah! it says look to me all the ends of the earth and be saved when Spurgeon was converted he sat under the gallery so I'm just going to look at the people who were almost sitting under the gallery there and the preacher said to this young man who wandered in you look rather miserable young man so I'm going to see!

[46:43] look! look! look! look! look! look! it didn't say a lot it just said look to the Lord it doesn't take much to look to the Lord it's as simple as can be but look to the Lord and be saved and I'm just going to say who are you looking to this morning are you looking to the Lord to be saved Jesus says once Moses lifted up a snake on a pole and people looked to the snake and they were cured of snake bite and Jesus says when I'm lifted up on the cross you look to me in faith and you're not healed of snake bite you're given eternal life just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert so the son of man must be lifted up and everyone who believes in him will have eternal life that's where we should be looking isn't it and he goes on to say in verse 10 the problem was you've forgotten

God your saviour you've not remembered the rock your fortress so we could put that as another thing we're to look to him and we're not to forget him there's an important thing about remembering the past rather than focusing on self and feelings and present experience and I wouldn't be surprised if the thought had occurred to you we didn't sing many lively songs this morning I didn't get very carried away this morning in the songs and I think that's probably true because some

songs are very carry away with the beat and the musicality can be intoxicating and you might be thinking well we haven't really worshipped this morning and I'm going to say that's not right because what we have sung is about the things the Lord has done and that's where our faith is not whether we felt a particular form of emotion while we gathered our faith rests on what God has done and we are not to forget what God has done that's where our faith is that's how we trust in the Lord not our present experiences but what he did in Psalm 78 it says the men of Ephraim turned back they forgot what he had done and I say don't forget what he has done don't forget that Jesus came and died on the cross remember that don't forget don't forget the things he said don't forget that he was raised from the dead don't forget that he has ascended into heaven don't forget his promises He brought that into your life so that you didn't look to the things you had made but you looked to your maker don't forget remember remember and trust in the Lord trust in the Lord look to him let us be God's people let us be God's people let's not make the same mistake that they all made let's be people who listen and remember and walk trusting in the Lord let's sing a song together