

Hearts Far from God

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Preacher: Paul Barker

[0 : 0 0] This is the evening service at Holy Trinity on December the 27th 1998 The preacher is Paul Barker His sermon is entitled Hearts Far From God And is from Isaiah chapter 29 verses 1 to 24 We'll keep that passage open and I'll pray for us O God we pray that you may open our hearts to you, to your word Open our ears to hear, our eyes to see So that we may praise you not only with our lips but with our lives For Jesus' sake, Amen

Well you don't need to drop a bomb on Baghdad to know that issues of national security are important in our world Not just in our day and age but in every day and age issues of national security are important for nations And it was the same in ancient Israel in the time of the Old Testament A small nation, vulnerable, so issues of national security were always of paramount importance We being in Australia are somewhat isolated I guess And so issues of national security aren't always top of our agenda But for ancient Israel like for many countries today it's top of the agenda And it was in ancient Israel in Isaiah's day in the 700s BC To the north of them was the growing threat of Assyria The mighty world empire of the time

In 721 BC Assyria had defeated the northern part of the kingdom of God's people The part called Israel Leaving only what was called Judah Further to the south with Jerusalem as its capital And indeed in the years after the defeat of Israel Much of Judah was taken over and run over by the Assyrians as well They got to the gate of Jerusalem as we'll see later In the preceding chapter in Isaiah, chapter 28 The people are turning to Egypt for help It's as though the United States is threatening you And so you turn to the other great world superpower To the Soviet Union or the European Union or something like that To defend you You sort of pick the second best Egypt was second best at that time And so they're trying to negotiate an alliance with Egypt To gain national security To be strong in the face of the threat from the north From Assyria And at one level we might think

Well what's wrong with that? That might be wise politics And wise international relations But what we find in Isaiah Is that it is far from wise It is actually very foolhardy indeed The reason it's foolhardy Is because their political negotiations with Egypt Or anyone else for that matter in Isaiah Because Isaiah covers a large period of time And during that large period of time Israel was trying to negotiate relationships With all sorts of different countries During that period of time Israel's negotiations with other countries Signified a denial of trust In God's ability to defend and save That's the problem By negotiating with Egypt To try and find an alliance That would ward off the threat of Assyria They are saying in effect God will not and cannot save us and defend us We need to turn to another nation to find that

Now these words in chapter 29 Address that situation that Israel was in In the late part of the 700s BC And Isaiah's words are here Are saying two things And it's worth keeping this in mind as we run through It is saying firstly That God will judge The lack of trust and faith That Israel is exercising With respect to God That is they're not exercising any trust God will judge that So there are words of judgment We'll see in this chapter But also That doesn't answer the problem of the people Isaiah you see Is not just concerned to say God's going to judge you Because you're not trusting him He's also concerned to show That God can save And is powerful to save Despite the judgment that's coming In fact God will save so Extraordinarily That one it's clear that it's only God And two it's clear that he's much much more powerful

[5 : 07] Than any opposition That Israel will ever face So Isaiah's words are doing two things One is they are warning against the coming judgment Because their lack of trust And secondly they are promising that God will save But even when there's this great promise of salvation That promise itself is a rebuke To the people who don't think God can do it It's quite intriguing in a sense That you get such a great promise But it's actually a promise that functions as a rebuke For lack of trust And we see in this chapter That if God's going to declare his hand And show how powerful he is The salvation he brings For God's people Judah Will have to be very extraordinary Very powerful So that it is clear that he's only God And not just circumstance Now for the people of Israel Some of them it seems Were fairly complacent in their religion And complacent in their lives They believe that because God had chosen Jerusalem

As the centre And the place in which the temple was built And where God himself would reside within that temple Then they thought Well we're impregnable God's always on our side We'll never fall We're inviolable That is we can never be violated or destroyed So the people just sit back and think Oh well we're safe What's the problem?

Fairly foolhardy as we'll see But it was a common thing of the ancient Israelites We see Jeremiah attacking that issue Ezekiel does the same Isaiah does the same Implied here as well in verse 1 Very sarcastic words these Ah, Ariel, Ariel The city where David encamped Add year to year Let the festivals run their round What's going on here?

What's Ariel? In England Ariel is a brand of washing powder But not here The word Ariel is a strange word But it means the altar hearth That is it means the If you like almost the hot plate Where the fire on the altar burned Not the altar itself But the part where the fire burned For the altar in the temple Where the sacrifices would be made Now of course the reason for using this word here Is sarcastic Sarcastic It's talking about Jerusalem Which is the place where the temple And therefore the altar was It's therefore the place where God Has extended his privilege to the nation By choosing this place For his presence to be And the place for the altar For the sacrifices to be And the sarcasm of the verse Is as though the people are trusting The fact that God will always defend us Because this is where his altar is

But as we'll see that's not the case The city where David encamped Again attacks one of the privileges Of ancient Judah or Israel That is the David's own city David the great king The one to whom God had made Extraordinary promises of an everlasting dynasty Well surely if those promises Applied to David Jerusalem will always stand The king will always stand So what Isaiah is doing In his opening verses Is being very sarcastic In attacking the privileges Of Jerusalem Its altar And its king And he says Sarcastically again Add year to year Let the festivals run their round Possibly Isaiah is speaking These words at a festival And so the crowds are gathered In Jerusalem for the festival You imagine getting up On Christmas morning And saying Oh well you know Next year we'll have a whole host Of other festivals Running throughout the year Christmas again in a year's time Another year's cycle to come As though the religious festivals

[9 : 02] Somehow ward off any danger From the opposition From the enemy From Assyria As though performing perfunctory Religious practices Somehow guarantees security and safety These are sarcastic words remember Isaiah is saying You've got it all wrong If you think that you're safe Because this is where the altar is Because this is where the Davidic king is Because this is where the festivals are You've got it wrong If you think that that Guarantees your safety Against enemies Because he goes on to say In verse 2 God speaking in effect through Isaiah I will distress Ariel The place that's meant to be safe And impregnable Will come under God's distress And there shall be Not the singing of festivity The psalms of ascent And joy At the festivals But rather there shall be moaning And lamentation And Jerusalem

Shall be to me Like an Ariel That is Like an altar hearth But not here the place Where a sacrifice Is made to bring atonement To God's people And reconciliation With God But rather The Jerusalem itself Will be the sacrifice Jerusalem itself Will be destroyed Is the threat here You see how it's flipping things On its head God will come And destroy Even his chosen city Even his chosen temple In judgment Against the people's lack of faith You see the external practice Of religion And the annual cycle Of festivals Does not cover up Lack of faith In the hearts Of these people Verse 3 And like David I will encamp Against you David camped in Jerusalem And made it his capital But here the camping Done in Jerusalem

Is not a positive thing But a negative thing Because God Will set up In effect An army camp In Jerusalem Or next to Jerusalem And then as verse 3 Goes on to say Besiege you with towers And raise siege works Against you We know from various things Found in The British Museum And other museums Around the world That the Assyrians When they conquered peoples Would besiege the main city As was common practice And they had various devices To destroy the city Once they besieged it One of those Was to build towers On wheels So that these Mobile towers Made of wood Would be wheeled Up a ramp That would be made By human hands Wheeled up a ramp And often have a Battering ram On the end of it Wheel it up the ramp To try and Shatter down the walls Of the city To destroy it So that the Enemy can get Inside the city There are all sorts Of other things That they did

But this is what It's referring to here And the pictures That the Assyrians Have left us Show these sorts Of things Did indeed happen I will besiege you With towers And raise siege Works against you Now notice also That it's I Will do this Clearly in the Immediate history After these words It's Assyria That does it But God says I'm not a spectator In world history I act Assyria will be My agent of Judgment I am the one Who will camp Against you And I am the one Who will besiege Your city But you'll see Assyrians doing That But I God Am the one Active In this action The effect of it Jerusalem will be As if it is dead Verse 4

Then deep from the Earth you shall Speak From low in the Dust your words Shall come As though a body Buried has begun To speak Your voice shall Come from the Ground like the Voice of a ghost And your speech Shall whisper Out of the dust In effect Jerusalem will be As good As dead and Buried That's the threat That God is Making here Against his own City and his Own people Verse 5 Flips all of that On its head Unexpectedly And inexplicably These words Now Flower Into promise And salvation The enemies Will be destroyed The multitude Of your foes Shall be like Small dust And the multitude Of tyrants Like flying Chaff And in an Instant

[14:05] Suddenly Unexpectedly It looks as though They're losing The enemies Far greater Than Jerusalem Will be But unexpectedly Inexplicably The tables Will be turned The enemy Will be just Like Dust And who Is afraid Of dust You will be Visited by The Lord Of hosts Now not As a visitor In judgment The one Who brings The siege But now A visitor For salvation Thunder Earthquake Great noise Whirlwind And tempest The flame Of a devouring Fire Symbols That are used Time and time Again in the Bible Old and New Testaments To denote The presence Of God Himself They're Threatening They're Destructive But their Destruction In this Verse Is turned On Israel's Enemies God has Come to Save his People In a Very Obvious Way It will

Be clear That it Is God Bringing This Victory He's Coming As a Friend Not a Foe And the Result That the Threat That Israel Faces From the Assyrians Will be As if It's a Bad Dream And the Multitude Of all The nations That fight Against Ariel All that Fight Against Her And her Stronghold And who Distress Her Shall be Like a Dream A vision Of the Night Just as When a Hungry Person Dreams Of Eating And wakes Up Still Hungry Or a Thirsty Person Dreams Of Drinking And wakes Up Faint Still Thirsty So Shall The Multitude Of All the Nations Be That fight Against Mount Zion Another Word For Jerusalem That is The Reality Seems To be A Ferocious And Powerful Enemy But You'll Find When Suddenly God Comes To Save That The Enemy Will Be Like a bad Dream I Remember Some Years Ago When I Was First Ordained Facing My

First Wedding And I Discovered The Week Before The Wedding That I Was Terrified Of Doing This Wedding I Wasn't Even Getting Married I Was Marrying This Couple Partly I Was Terrified Because I Hadn't Met Them Until The Week Before The Wedding But I Had Dreams Or Nightmares Shall We Say Of Marrying The Best Or Forgetting To Sign The Right Certificates Or Not Having Any Certificates And For That Matter Not Having Any Robes Or Clothes At All All Those Terrible Terrible Dreams And I Would Wake Up And With Relief Think That's Just A Dream It's Not Real The Enmity That Israel Faced Will Be Real It Will Be Powerful They Will Be Afraid But When God Acts It's As If A Dream Suddenly Gone In A Moment In A Twinkling Of An Eye Almost And

They'll Realize That There's No Real Threat There At All Anymore These Verses Are Making An Important Point Why Trust Egypt For A Political Alliance To Give You Strength Against Assyria God's More Powerful But Why Fear Assyria The Mighty World Superpower God's More Powerful God You See In The End Is Real Power Assyria's Threat Or Power Is In One Sense Imaginary A Dream It's Not A Real Threat Because God Is The Substance Assyria Is Just The Dust Fear God Not Humans Trust

God Not Humans Just Probably A Few Years After These Words Were Spoken And Written In 701 BC The Emperor Of Assyria Called Sennacherib Besieged Jerusalem We Know This From Many Texts From His Own Texts Found In Assyria From The Bible's Own Story In The Books Of Kings And Also Later In Isaiah As We'll See Later In The Month Jerusalem Was About To Fall But Suddenly One Night An Angel Of The Lord Smote The Assyrian Army Dead And Sennacherib Fled Back To Assyria His Own Text Doesn't Tell us It's An Angel Of The Lord But He Tells Us That He Got To Jerusalem's Gates And

[19:08] Left God's Words Come True There's No Military Answer For That At All Nobody Would Have Expected Assyria To Fall At The Very Gate Of Jerusalem When They Defeated Cities Much More Powerful Already But They Did Because God's Words Come True Even In The Most Unlikely Situations Well Now Isaiah Turns Back To The Problems Of The People What We've Seen In Two Sections One To Four Is A Statement Of Judgment Against Their Lack Of Faith Then It Goes Into A Statement Of Promise Which As I've Said Is Also A Statement Of Rebuke For Their Lack Of Trust In A God Who Can Save But Now It Goes Back To Statements Of Judgment In Four Now He's Coming To The Heart Of The Issue Stupify

Yourselves And Be In A Stupor Blind Yourselves And Be Blind Be Drunk But Not From Wine Stagger But Not From Strong Drink What On Earth Is That Saying It's Saying This This Nation Of God's People Has Chosen To Be Blind Deaf Or Insensate To God's Word It's Dull To What God Has Been Saying Okay You've Stupefied Yourselves The Result Of That Will Be God Will Confirm You Or Harden You Or Further You're Being Stupefied You're Being Blind You're Being Dull As If You're Drunk That Is You've Chosen This Path To Walk Which Is Dull To God's Word So God Will Confirm You In That Dullness Verse 10 Says That For The Lord Has Poured Out Upon You A

Spirit Of Deep Sleep He's Closed Your Eyes You Prophets And Covered Your Heads You Seers Even The Ones Who Are Meant To Be Attentive And Alert To God's Words The Prophets And Seers They Also Are Dull To God's Words They Don't Hear It See It Or Understand It Or Speak Is To Confirm Them In Their Dullness In The Chosen Path That They Have Made Now That's Exactly What We See In Isaiah 6 For Those Who Were Here Some Weeks Ago When I Preached On That Chapter Isaiah Was Told That You Shall Go And Preach To All These People But As You Preach Because They're Deaf They'll Be Deaf Because They're Blind They'll Be Blind Because They're Dumb They'll Be Dumber And So On And That's Exactly What's Happening In This Verse Isaiah's Own Commission To Preach God's Word Would Fall On Deaf Ears And

That Is What This Verse Says Now Has Already Happened But This Isn't The Only Time That Happens This Is Not An Unusual Event In World History Is It God's Prophets Often Met With Dull Ears Or Deaf Self Quotes Isaiah When He Says My Words In Effect Will Fall On Deaf Ears And On Blind Eyes And On Hearts That Are Hard In Mark Chapter 4 For Example And Paul Says The Same In Romans 1 That In Effect People Are Dull To God's Word And They Choose To Remain Dull And God's Response To That Is To Confirm Them In Their Dullness Or Deafness Or Blindness We Think It Might Be Harsh Judgment But All That God Is Doing Is Saying Well You've Chosen That Path And I'll Let You Walk Down It That's What Pharaoh Did In Exodus When He Was Hard Hearted Or Stubborn Hearted God Didn't Make His Heart Stubborn At

First Pharaoh Did That But Once He Chosen That Path God Let Him Walk Down It And The Further He Went The Harder His Heart Was And That's The Same With Our World Isn't It That's Why People Don't Flock To Hear The Gospel Anymore Or Ever Have Really Because They're Hard Of Heart Dull Of Hearing Deaf Of Hearing And What Happens Is That God In Effect Let's Them Keep Going Down That Path It's Only When God Supernaturally Intervenes In Somebody's Life And Gives Them Ears To Hear And Eyes To See And Hearts To Understand That Somebody Is Actually Rescued From The Peril Of Walking Down The Path Of Deathness But By And Large Our World Keeps Walking Down That Path And God Says Well I'll Let You If You Want To Go That Way And That Is The Leaders Of The People Are Walking Down This Path The Prophets The Seers Even Those Who Are Perhaps Scribes

[24 : 09] Or Writers In Verses 11 And 12 The Vision Of All This Has Become For You Like The Words Of A Sealed Document That Is They've Heard Isaiah Speak It They've Probably Seen Him Write It Down But It's A Sealed Document That Is They Have No Access To It Why Because If It Is Given To Those Who Can Read Not Everyone Would Have Been Literate We're Talking Here About The Scribes And The Leaders With The Command Read This They Say We Cannot For It's Sealed That Is They're Deaf To The Word But If It's Given To Those Who Cannot Read That Is The Common People Well They're Also Stuck Because They Say Well We Cannot Read And The Leaders Have Not Taught Them And Shown Them What To Do These Verses Nine To Twelve You See Are A Condemnation Not Only Of The People But Especially The Leaders Who Have Not Taught The People The Word Of God And Isaiah's Words Which Have Been Because

The Leaders Of God's People Refuse To Heed What He Says Because They Will Not God Says You Shall Not He Confirms Them In The Path That They've Chosen A Path To Judgment When We're Deaf To God's Word We Have Serious Ramifications Not Only Do We End Up On A Path To Eternal Judgment But When We're Deaf To God's Words Then We Place Our Trust In The Wrong Place We Place Our Trust In Egypt Or In Assyria Or In The King Or In A Leader Or In A Religious Festival Or A Religious Rite Or Ritual Or Something Else Other Than God And Of Course That's So Common Today Not Only Outside The Church But Often Within It People Place Their Trust In Wrong Things Because They're Deaf To God's Words And That In The End Will Lead

Them To God's Judgment And Destruction Much Of God's Church Today It Seems To Me Is On A Road That Is To Judgment Because They're Deaf To God's Word And That's Probably Why They're Facing Silence From God The Warning Here For Us Is Severe I Think Make Sure We Are Not People Who Are Deaf To God's Word Make Sure We Pray For God To Give Us Insight To Give Us Eyes To See And Ears To Hear Make Sure That When We Read The Bible We Pray That God Will Help Us Understand It And Live It Because Without His Spirit Doing That For Us We Will Be Deaf And When Deaf We Place Our Trust In The Isaiah Goes On With His Accusation In Verse Thirteen Words That Jesus Quoted Because These People Draw Near With Their Mouths

And Honor Me With Their Lips While Their Hearts Are Far From Me And Their Worship Of Me As A Human Commandment Learned By So I Will Judge Them He Goes On To Say In Verse 14 Now We Shouldn't Think That These Words Don't Apply To Us Or Problem Jesus Quoted These Words And Elsewhere In The Bible Time And Time Again This Issue Is Dealt With By Different People That Is A People Who Worship Externally Their Lips Are Drawing Close To God They Are Full Of The Right Words They Are Full Of The Right Songs They Are Full Of The Right Praise And Prayers But Their Hearts Are Far From Me Throughout The World Of Any Age There Is False Religion In The Guise Of What Is True Christian Faith People Who Go Through An External Ritual Or Rite Or Practice And

I Don't Just Mean By That A Sort Of Very Ceremonial High Church Ritual But It's Just As Common In The Low Church Evangelical Churches As Well People Who Know The Right Words To Say The Right Songs To Sing The Right Days To Come To Church The Right Festivals To Attend The Right Pew To Sit In To Be Seen To Be Respectable And Christian And Godly But Their Hearts Are Far From God Let This Be A Warning To Us Our Faith Is Not Just A Practice Of Words And Veneer A Facade Of Respectability Or Christianity What God Wants Is Our Hearts To Be Right With Him That Means That Will Say The Right Things And Praise And Pray Appropriately But Our Hearts Must Back Up What We Say On The Outside Let Us Be Careful That We Do Not Fall Vulnerable To This Judgment And Accusation

[29 : 12] Let Us Make Sure That We Are In Private In Our Relationship With God What We Are In Public Make Sure That We Are Christians Of Integrity And Not Pharisaical Pretenders Putting On A Pretense Of Piety The Day That Isaiah Was Speaking These Probably The King Was A King Called Hezekiah A Very Good King A Reforming King A King Who Cleaned Up The Temple Who Got Rid Of Some Of The Idolatrous Practices In The Nation And So On But All That King Could Do Great Though It Was And He Was Was External All He Could Do Is Tidy Up The Exterior The Facade The Ritual He Couldn't Change People's Hearts No Doubt He Knew That Reform Which Is What He Did Needs To Be Accompanied By Revival The Internal Life That God Gives No Person Can

Do That No One Can Create Revival We Can Create Reform God Alone Creates The Revival Of The Heart So God Will Punish False Religion Verse 14 Says He Will Do Amazing Things With His People Shocking And Amazing The Wisdom Of Their Wires Will Perish And The Discernment Of The Discerning Shall Be Hidden Those All The Things They Hold So Dear And Wise And Good Shall Be Found To Be False Remember That This False Religion Comes Under The Veneer Of What Is True And Right Be Discerning Therefore In Your Own Observations Of Christian Practice Make Sure That Just Because Something Comes Under The Name Christian You Don't Think It's Just Right Automatically Because Often It's Not The Accusation Continues In Verse Fif People Think

They Can Hide From God How Are You Who Hide A Plan Too Deep For The Lord As Though Anything Can Be Too Deep For The Lord Whose Deeds Are In The Dark And Who Says Who Sees Us As Though Nobody Can See And Nobody Can Know These Are People Who Practice False Religion And Any False Religion Has God As Its Servant Because A False Religion Is A Human Religion Even If It Comes Under The Guise Of Something Right And God Is In A Box God Is Packaged Up God Is The Servant Of The Practitioners Of This Religion Whatever False Religion It Is That Is Always The Case They Flip The Side You See God Is Me To Be In Control And We His Servants But The Danger For Any Of Us Is That We End Up Making God Our Servant By Creating A Religion Into Which God Fits In A Particular Slot Or Box They Think They Can Hide

From God They Think Their Plans Are Far From Him They Are Not Alone The Very First People Adam And Eve Thought They Could Hide From God In The Garden After They Had Fruit Of Course They Couldn't And They Didn't But So Often It's The Case Isn't It For Us In Our Practice Of Wrong Doing We Think Somehow We Can Hide From God But We Can't God Acknowledges That What They've Done Is Turn Things Upside Down In Verse 16 Shall The Potter Be Regarded As The Clay Shall The Things Made Save Its Maker He Did Not Make Me That Is We Are The Clay Made By God The Creator But We're The God In It's Own Image We Must Be Careful That We Are Not Such Potters See This Is Very Modern

Really There's Lots Of Stuff In Our Modern World That's Just Like This People Keeping God Under Control People Saying That God Would Only Ever Do This And That And Not This And That God Is Freer Than We Can Imagine Sometimes And Does Things More Astonishing Than We Might Want To Give Him Credit For The Reality Is That We Are The Clay He Is The Potter The Reality Is We Must Let God Determine Who He Is What He Like And What He Does We Must Let God's Word Tell Us Rather Than Us Tell God Well Just As Verses 1-4 About Judgment Went Into A Statement Of Hope So Do These Verses 9-16 Go Into A Statement Of Hope From Verse 17 To The End Of The Chapter I Guess The Theme Of These Verses Is About Reversal God Is In The Process Of Reversing

[34 : 12] This World See The Things That Are Reversed Verse 17 Talks About Lebanon Becoming A fruitful Field And A fruitful Field Being A Forest Lebanon In Those Days Was Renowned As A Forest I Don't Think This Is Meant Literally I Think What's Being Spoken Of Here Is Figurative The Forests Are Probably The Nobles And The Field Just Just As Jesus Said That The Meek Shall Inherit The Earth So Here The The Lowly Of The World Shall Be Exalted By God And Verse 20 The Opposite The Tyrant The Scoffer

The Alert To Evil The On Earth They'll Be Brought Down In God's Judgment The Tyrant Shall Be No More The One Who Oppresses The Meek The Needy And The Poor The Scoffer The And Cease To Be And Those Who Are Alert To Do Evil Isn't That Interesting Because They're Also The Ones Who Are Dull To God's Words Deafness Dullness To God Usually Is Accompanied By Alertness To Evil Then They're Described In A Bit More Detail In Verse 21 The Ones Who Bring About Injustice Who Cause The Poor To Lose A Lawsuit Probably By Bribery Because They've Got More Money They Can Pay Off The Judge Or The Lawyer Or Whatever They Set A Trap For The Arbiter In The Gate The Gate Was Where The Court Would Be Held And Without Grounds Deny Justice To The One In The Right These Are The Powerful The Oppressors

And God's Reversal Will Bring Them Down And Lift Up The Meek The Needy The Lowly Of This World And It's God's Doing The King Won't Do It And The People Won't Bring It On Themselves God Will Do It Just As God Redeemed Abraham In Verse 22 God Bringing Abraham Out Of Paganism And Idolatry And Giving Him A Relationship With Himself God Will Do The Same For His Wayward People Who Gone Themselves Into Paganism And Idolatry God Will Do It As He Did For Abraham And Then There Will Be No More Shame On The Nation In The End Of Verse 22 No Longer Shall The Nation's Face Grow Pale Probably With Fright And Terror At An Opposing Enemy For When The Nation Sees His Children The Work Of My Hands Remember Because He's The Creator God He's Not The Clay They

Are The Clay Then They Will Sanctify My Name The Word Is Hallowed Just As In The Lord's Prayer Hallowed Be Thy Name They Will Sanctify The Holy One Of Jacob Another Name For God And Will Stand In All Of The God Of Israel And Those Who Err In Spirit Will Come To Understanding And Those Who Grumble Will Accept Instruction That Is God Is Reversing The Situation Those Who Are Rebellious Against Them He Will Bring By His Grace And Power To A Position Of Or Of Him And They Will Honor God's Name These Final Verses Serve A Few Functions Five Brief Points To Finish One It Is An Encouragement To The Meek And The Lowly And The Needy Of Society To Trust And Persevere With God It's Not A Promise For Immediate Relief From Oppression But It Is A Promise For Ultimate Relief If We Are Someone Being Oppressed

If We Are The Meek And Needy And Lowly Of This Earth Keep On Trusting In God Because His Justice Will Come Eventually For Sure He Hasn't Abandoned His Meek And Lowly People As Jesus Said In The Beatitudes In Matthew 5 At The Beginning Of The Sermon On The Mount Secondly From Our Point Of View And Perspective These Verses Encourage Us To Look To Jesus Because He Is The One Who Brings About The Reversal When Mary Sang A Song Announcing The Forthcoming Birth Of Jesus She Said About Jesus Exactly What This Is Saying Bringing Down The Proud In Their Conceit And Lifting Up The Lowly The Meek And The Humble As Say This Morning As Well Jesus Is The One You See Who Will Do This Who Will Bring About This Great Reversal He Is The One To Whom We Must Look And He Is

[39 : 14] The One In Whom We Must Place Our Hope And Trust And Of Course His Resurrection I Guess Is The Ultimate Guarantee Of This Reversal The One Who Is Dead And Buried Meek And Lowly Risen Up And Exalted To The Greatest Place Of Heaven Thirdly This Is Reminding Us That God Is Faithful Just As He Redeemed Abraham And Because He Redeemed Abraham He Will Redeem Abraham's Descendants Those Who Place Their Faith In The Same God God Is Faithful To His Promise And Will Keep His Promise Even If The Political Situation The World Situation Seems To Say Otherwise And The Sins Of God's People Will Not Thwart His Promises Being Fulfilled Fourthly Deliverance And Redemption Result In The Praise And Glory Of God That's His Ultimate Goal God In One Sense Is Selfish Because He's Seeking His Own Glory

From The Creation And That's What We See In Those Last Three Verses The Children Of Jacob Praising God Hallowing His Name Sanctifying Him Praising His Glory And That Is Where You And I My Friends Are Headed As Well To The Praise Of God's Glory That's What He's On About In This World To Bring Praise To His Holy Name That Also Ought To Be Our Motivation In Life But Finally Real Religion Is From The Heart Left Not headphone Marital First To Fan Naed Have home Wall not hiding from God behind even religious practices.

Indeed, there's no safer place, it seems, to hide from God than in the midst of religion, but rather standing in awe of the God of Israel, in fear of Him, placing faith in Him, trusting Him and praising Him.

People who are drawing near to Him, not only with their mouths and lips, but with their hearts made right by Him. Let us make sure that we are those people on the last day.

Amen.