

## The Book of Isaiah

### Introduction:

Isaiah is called "*The Book of Salvation*." The name *Isaiah* means "*Yahweh is salvation*" or "*Yahweh is the source of salvation*." Isaiah, who is called the Prince of Prophets, shines above all the other writers and prophets of Scripture. His mastery of the language, his rich and vast vocabulary, and his poetic skill have earned him the title, "Shakespeare of the Bible." He was educated, distinguished, and privileged, yet remained a deeply spiritual man. He was committed to obedience over the long haul of his 55-60 year ministry as a prophet of God. He was a true patriot who loved his country and his people. Strong tradition suggests that he died a martyr's death under the reign of King Manasseh by being placed within the hollow of a tree trunk and sawed in two. He was a contemporary of Amos, Hosea and Micah.

As might be expected, salvation is the overarching theme in the book of Isaiah. Other themes include judgment, holiness, punishment, captivity, the fall of the nation, comfort, hope and salvation through the coming Messiah.

The first 39 books of Isaiah contain very strong messages of judgment against Judah and a call to repentance and holiness. The people exhibited an outward form of godliness, but their hearts had become corrupted. God warned them through Isaiah, to come clean and purify themselves, but they ignored his message. Isaiah predicted the demise and captivity of Judah, yet comforted them with this hope: God has promised to provide a Redeemer.

The last 27 chapters contain God's message of forgiveness, consolation and hope, as God speaks through Isaiah, revealing his plan of blessing and salvation through the coming Messiah.

Isaiah's calling as a prophet was primarily to the nation of Judah (the southern kingdom) and to Jerusalem, urging the people to repent from their sins and return to God. He also foretold the coming of the Messiah and the salvation of the Lord. Many of his prophecies predicted events that occurred in Isaiah's near future, yet at the same time they foretold the events of the distant future (such as the coming of the Messiah), and even some events still to come in the last days (such as the second coming of Christ).

Isaiah was witness to one of the most turbulent periods in Jerusalem's history, from both the political and the religious standpoint. He was the son of Amoz, who according to tradition was a brother of King Amaziah. His status enabled him to take an active part in events, and in some cases to guide them. His relations with the senior members of the royal house, as described in the Bible, and the fact that he had free access to the palace, together with the complex linguistic style of his prophecies, suggest that he belonged to the Jerusalem aristocracy. This, though, did not prevent him from being an outspoken mouthpiece of the common people, who were being victimized by the rampant corruption of the ruling class. He involved himself in the politics of the day so that God's Word came to bear on the actions of the leaders seeking to move and shape the times.

Isaiah was married and had children, two of which are named in the book; Shear-jashub (meaning "a remnant shall return"...see the promise of 6:13) and Maher-shalal-hash-baz (meaning "the spoil speeds, the prey hastens" see Isaiah 8:4 for an explanation of this name.)

In summary, the message of Isaiah is that salvation comes from God—not man. God alone is Savior, Ruler and King. This is why many have called this book the 5<sup>th</sup> Gospel.

Bible Study  
The Book of Isaiah  
September 12, 2012

A. Prayer

B. Introduction

1. Many have called the book of Isaiah the 5<sup>th</sup> Gospel. It has historically been classified as THE book of salvation since Isaiah means "Yahweh is salvation" or perhaps better "Yahweh is the source of salvation." The messianic concepts captured in this book are seen from the beginning and run through to the end. The house of David, Judah, Yahweh's messianic agent, and the people it ruled were to look to their Lord...and to Him alone...to supply all their needs. He was their security and keeper and He would supply the leader who would be their Redeemer and Peace. It has often been said that Isaiah is hard to follow and understand and this is true for the most part. However, with a working knowledge of the rest of Scripture, specifically the books that come before Isaiah and the New Testament understanding the prophet becomes easier. I am not saying easy...but easier. Context is everything.
2. Isaiah was the son of Amoz, who according to tradition was a brother of King Amaziah (approx. 795-770 BC). Isaiah was probably born during this reign and he received his call as a prophet the last year of King Uzziah's life (Amaziah's son). His status enabled him to take an active part in events, and in some cases to guide them. Isaiah was married and had children, two of which are named in the book; Shear-jashub (meaning "a remnant shall return"...see the promise of 6:13) and Maher-shalal-hash-baz (meaning "the spoil speeds, the prey hastens" see Isaiah 8:4 for an explanation of this name.) Strong tradition suggests that he died a martyr's death under the reign of King Manasseh by being placed within the hollow of a tree trunk and sawed in two. (see Hebrews 11:37) So he prophesied during the reigns of 5 kings of Judah. Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, and Manasseh. Either his prophesying or the fact that he was a member of a rival royal family is what ended his life...probably the latter for it was customary to annihilate the former family when a "coup d'état" transpired. He was a contemporary of Amos, Hosea and Micah. He also has a special designation for the Lord that He uses over 276 times, namely... "the Holy One of Israel"! And the designation holy plays a prominent role in this book contrasting God's holiness with our fallenness.

C. Isaiah 1

1. Who was Judah in the grand scheme of redemptive history? Judah is the house of David from which the Messiah would come. They represent the covenant people. The elect within the chosen, if you will.
2. Verse one covers the introduction for the entire book. Just so we are clear the word "vision" (*hazon* in the Hebrew- a derivative of *hazah* means "to see" and often means "to see by revelation") does not refer to any inward sight from the prophet himself, but rather it means here, as it does in other parts of the OT, the "sight" that God placed in Isaiah's mind or what God had revealed to him to pass on to others. (See I Peter 1:10-12)
3. What is God doing in verse 2?

- a. Yahweh, as the Supreme Ruler, Judge and King has called them forth for this purpose...interesting when you think about it, isn't it, that God would call all of creation to testify against us... His children. **How does God still do this?** Because of the sinfulness of the Church we have drought and famine in places, we have the original definitions of things like life and death and marriage being redefined. The sun's rays are literally too much for many of us...because of sin we return to the ground from whence we came.
  - b. He is bringing all creation to bear as witnesses against Judah for their sin...these are witnesses that would have NO emotional tie to the peoples; they would be completely objective, if you will. As Calvin said, *"When insensate objects are commanded to witness a condemnation of sensible creatures, the guilt of the latter must truly be great."*
4. What is meant by the word "children/sons" in verse 2?
  - a. That God is also creator of His people;
  - b. That God has a covenantal relationship with His people...He is our Father (the people of the OT were aware of this concept of God's character just as much as the people of the NT...not a new concept...our Father by creation and by adoption Ezek.16: 4-11; Hosea 9:10) ...the ones He reared and brought up;
  - c. That God uses an affectionate/intimate term for His people to communicate His covenantal love;
  - d. It expresses the grace of God manifested to its highest point...being made sons of God.
5. With this picture in mind then, how damning is the last part of verse 2 through verse 4? Why?
  - a. Because of the grace God has willingly shown to His elect peoples the nation's rebellion appears even more striking and more hateful. How base is the sin of ingratitude? This is the basic nature of the fallen side of things.
  - b. In verse 4, Isaiah identifies these people as "a sinful nation" (or, "a sinning nation.") "Sinning" is the adjective that most accurately describes these people: they are devoted to the practice of their sins; they love their sins more than they love their God. Furthermore, he describes them as "an offspring who are evil doers." Note: the text literally reads, "an offspring of evildoers"—but this does not mean that they are the children of evildoers; on the contrary, they are the children of godly forefathers. But, unlike those forefathers, they are a generation of evildoers. Then they are "children who deal in corruption" (or, "children who act destructively.") By their lifestyle of sin and disobedience they are bringing estrangement (a separation from God, their Father...separation that would be in the form of discipline not loss of salvation) upon themselves.
  - c. Their sin is described as personal transgression against the Lord Himself: "they have forsaken Yahweh; they have despised the Holy One of Israel."
  - d. How do we do this today?
6. What consequence does the nation suffer because of their disobedience?
  - a. Because of their disobedient lives the Lord takes strong disciplinary action against His people.
  - b. Verses 5-6, picture a man being flogged for his transgressions, yet he defiantly persists all the more in those transgressions; consequently, there is no relief from the discipline that is being administered to him. This is a picture of a hard-headed, obstinate, stiff neck individual...or more completely a whole people...the people of God for this is how God describes His chosen in Deuteronomy.

- c. Note: in verses 7-8 the actual means of discipline/punishment is described: it is foreign invasion. We must realize that when we go against God it will go hard for us, and there will be no relief unless we repent and submit to Him.
7. What do we learn about the peoples' religious life from Isaiah 1:11?
- a. Although their lives were devoted to sin rather than to God, the people continued to conscientiously perform their acts of religious service. They brought multitudes of animal sacrifices to the Lord.
  - b. But by His question voiced in verse 11 the Lord indicates that in the absence of obedience those sacrifices were worthless and meaningless. The burnt offerings of rams that were presented were intended to represent the offering up of the worshiper's life unto God. But hypocritically, these people were merely presenting the animal sacrifice unto the Lord instead of offering their lives unto Him.
  - c. But these are His people. How does that work? It is interesting that the book of Ecclesiastes comes before Isaiah for it gives us help here. According to Solomon...God that is...you can be a Christian and think like a Christian, or you can be a Christian and not think like a Christian, or you can be a Christian and sometimes think like a Christian and sometimes not. God's work in His church is to enable those in Christ to be like Him, to think His thoughts, as both David, Isaiah and Paul have reminded us (Ps. 139:17, Rom.12:1 & 2), and know how to be a witness for Christ to the world, as salt and light Christians, in a manner that does not compromise His truth.
8. First, who or what gave them the right to worship as they saw fit? This, of course, is a very contemporary issue. Can we worship God in a way we prescribe or are we to worship Him as He prescribes? How much latitude in interpretation do we have? These are just 2 of the many questions that today's church is struggling with and coming away often with wrong conclusions. What is the Lord's response to the acts of worship that are being presented to Him by His disobedient people in verses 12-15?
- a. In verse 12, the Lord demands to know, "Who has asked this of you—this trampling of my courts?" The Lord Himself required that His people appear before Him in worship: "Three times a year all your males shall appear before the Lord God" (Exodus 23:17). But worship that is devoid of obedience and divorced from a life of devotion, the Lord views as a "trampling" of His Holy courts.
  - b. In the strongest terms the Lord Himself denounces such "worship" (verses 13-14). "Stop bringing meaningless offerings!" Such worship neither pleases nor honors God; it does not win His favor, nor does it appease His righteous indignation. "Your incense is detestable to me!" "Incense" with its fragrant aroma represented prayer; but prayer divorced from obedience becomes "detestable" to the Lord—like the stench of an open garbage can on a hot summer day.
  - c. *"The calling of convocation/sacred assemblies—I cannot tolerate them! Do away with iniquity and the solemn assembly/appointed feasts!"* "Solemn assemblies" and "iniquity" are usually two mutually exclusive things; when such assemblies are mixed with iniquity those assemblies become repulsive to the Lord. (Think I Cor. 11 and Paul's rebuke of the people for their mistreatment of one another during sacred assemblies...worship.)
  - d. Verse 15 is particularly damning, if you will...as they are "worshiping" without repentance and obedience God hides His face from His children...and He does not even hear their prayers... for their sin is ever before them... *"their hands are full of blood."*
  - e. We must not forget that these are His children. That is why repentance needs to be a regular thing in the lives of His children. Not because we are afraid we will lose our salvation...that is guaranteed by Christ's work to remain intact... but disobedience and

rebellion will and does affect our on-going relationship with the Father and the consequences or blessing that come from that relationship.

9. What counsel, what promise and what warning does the Lord give to these people in verses 16-20?
  - a. In verses 16-17, the Lord gives the counsel to cease from sin and to practice righteousness ... *"wash yourselves"* ... there can be no true worship without genuine repentance . Drawing on the reference above from verse 15 about blood on our hands we must keep the tally of our sins few by repenting on a regular basis so that our fellowship will not be hindered. This righteousness is marked by ... ceasing to do evil, learning to do good, seeking justice, correcting oppression, bringing justice to the fatherless and pleading the cause of the widow. These were all things they had "forgotten" how to do. The wording is such that they must be re-taught these concepts. This is not exhaustive in the least but it must include some form of these to be genuine. It is interesting, the Church today often fails to enter in to what it calls secular issues. These mainly are referring to the social injustices of the day. They were God's people they were NOT to be defined by these. So there is no dichotomy between secular and spiritual for the people of God and we must speak out against injustice as well as root it out of our own lives where it is found. These could only be corrected with a change of Heart which God alone can do...for we see our fallen nature in the sin and evil...only God can affect the necessary change and then God's people need to reflect that change.
  - b. In verse 18 the Lord graciously extends the offer of forgiveness to those who have offended Him but who now return to Him: "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are as red as crimson, they shall become like wool." Only God can forgive...not the Church...but God for He is the One who has been offended against. Why would God do such a thing? We are His children...He has promised to do such a thing!
  - c. Interesting, verse 19 seems to indicate, the Lord promises His mercy and blessing only upon the condition of our submission to Him: *"If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land."* Since nowhere does God and His word speak of salvation by works, what is it He is saying in verse 19? Note: this is not a self-manufactured obedience that produces salvation; on the contrary, it is the fruit of salvation and new life in Christ. The experiencing of what God has already promised. When we live as He commands and enables we will experience the promised blessings.
  - d. In verse 20, the Lord warns of His judgment against those who persist in their transgressions and rebellion against Him: "But if you resist and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword, for the mouth of Jehovah has spoken it."
10. God's question is interesting in verse 21-23. How is it possible that a faithful city...people...could become what she is now, a harlot? How can one who has been given so much turn away from such blessing? This is not unlike questions we have today about those who were once living expression of the faith they professed or a church who was steep in God's word and will and has now become secular in its relevance.
  - a. A harlot in this case describes one who was faithful but now is not. One who knew the purity and tender mercies of her oneness with the Lord and has given them up. This is an action of the heart.
  - b. This harlotry seems to be most focused on the social injustices they have perpetrated or at least consented to...not necessarily a full scale leaving of the faith as seen in the further context of verses 22-23. E.J. Young speaks of infidelity against God's ways towards others...not living before men the way God intends for us to live. Christians can hold some strange views and still be Christians but they are views that need to be repented of ,

like abortion on demand, homosexual marriage and the like or life will never be as full as God has promised for these things will stand in the way of a fuller experience of God's grace....and as such the church will become less authentic and non-authoritative in the eyes of people.

11. Verse 24 -31 are wonderful verses. First, let's look at the names and designations for God in verse 24. The Lord= master of all- "adonai". The definite article "the" designates that this One is Master of all. The LORD of hosts...or of the armies= "Yahweh", (His covenantal name that include the promise of His deliverance of His people) the commander of the heavenly armies...no enemy can stand before Him...all will be swept away. The Mighty One of Israel= "El abir"- the strong One, all powerful One, in the way El Shaddai communicates...the One who alone can judge the nations and His people as he will.
12. What is the judgment spoken about?
  - a. God will judge His enemies and deal conclusively with them in condemnation
  - b. God will perform a work of purification so that His people can be restored. God will purge and cleanse His church starting with its officer and then continuing through the people. God disciplines those He loves. If sinners are to be saved, they must be cleansed and purged by God alone. If the church is to be a shining light in the world the same must happen from time to time to keep it sharp. Just like headlights on a car...after a while the covers must be cleaned or replaced so that the lights are able to perform their purpose well.
13. What is seen as positive?
  - a. God will give His people new judges and counselors to lead them effectively...
  - b. With good leadership the "city"...the Church... will be called a people of righteousness, a faithful city...only AFTER God acts can these names be applied to His people...
  - c. "Zion shall be redeemed..."- redeemed equals deliverance obtained by means of payment of a price...judgment and righteousness which comes from God...for God has already made the case that His people were not exhibiting these qualities at this time so they could not muster them up for themselves. Through God's work of redemption and His alone are His people saved.
  - d. Then the people will be led to repent because of a changed heart and a changed leadership...God always preserves a remnant to rebuild with...God's grace again.
  - e. Vss. 28-31 speaks of the ones who are not and will not be converts to the true faith...those who have rebelled against God and are jealous of His people. If there is to be purity and prosperity for the true church, then the wicked must be broken...the dross must be purged...the chaff thrown into the fire...just as God has promised over and over again. Complete redemption will occur when all God's enemies have been dealt with and are complete condemned.
  - f. How does it come about? The people haven't even noticed their sin...so God takes care of the restoration...for only He can affect change in His people's heart to do the right thing...the "good" we have been commanded to do.
14. How does this chapter speak to us today, almost 5000 years since it was first given to God's people? As was said in the class ...Redemption and restoration seems to be a painful experience for God's children.

Bible Study  
The Book of Isaiah  
September 26, 2012

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. What is the main theme of the book of Isaiah? Salvation is of the Lord alone...He is its object, source and its implementer for His people.
2. What was one or two things that struck you about the first chapter?

C. Isaiah 2

1. A few word notes for understanding Isaiah. "Latter Days or Last Days" are always used by Isaiah to depict a new period of time in the future...usually the far future...but not always. The next stage of redemptive history if you will, with events impacting on a world scale...usually referring to the time when the Messianic salvation will actually occur. But this can also refer to big events that unfold over time...the next reigns of kings, the restoration after the Exile, Christ's first coming, Pentecost, Christ's Second coming as redemptive history winds its way toward the end. Also, "mountain" is most often used to refer to the Lord's Kingdom and it can also talk about the Lord's temple... in this case...His kingdom will be established above all other kingdoms. Also, note in the English the word for "The Word" at the opening of this chapter is "davar" a synonym of "hazon" (the word we defined as vision last time). *"The word that Isaiah...saw..."* can be a strange expression until we consider that Isaiah "sees" the words that God has given to him...God's revelation of His inspired Word to see and to speak to His people. Why do I make a big deal about these words? It is God's spoken Word...which is powerful and always true and right. The same Word that spoke the cosmos into existence is the same Word that reveals what God wants His people to know.
2. In the midst of impending discipline and judgment against God's own people what is it specifically that we find here in this chapter and more specifically in verses 1-5? Words of hope! God has a day that they will finally be vindicated among God's enemies. Salvation is coming!
3. Look at Hebrews 1:1-2 for a moment. (Also see I Peter 1:20) How does the writer of Hebrews define the term "last days or latter days"? These days begin with Christ's first coming and they reach their climax with Christ's triumphant return. With this in mind where, in what time period does Isaiah focus the attention of God's people and why? (Look also at Phil. 3:20. How does this help with your answer?) He focuses their attention on the future...something that we are also exhorted to always be doing... looking towards the future ...towards Christ's Second Coming. For our hope is based on what God has done, is doing and will do! Jesus spoke to us about keeping an eye toward the future when He spoke to us about the Lord's Supper...do these things *"until I come..."* Paul's teaching focus on the already and not yet. They are a people whose whole life has been based on what God will do in the future...the Messiah will come and they looked forward to God fulfilling that promise all their life. Their whole culture is based on Messiah's/Christ's coming.
4. What does Isaiah see happening in this period known as "the last days", the days between Christ's birth and His 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming according to verses 1-5?

- a. *"It shall come to pass..."* is God's guarantee by the power of His Word that all that He says will happen! This has the same force as *Thus says the LORD...*!
  - b. Verse 2b and following speak of God's kingdom...His Church... being revealed to be permanent, durable, unshakeable and everlasting...it will be *"...established as highest or chief among the mountains..."* But we must not forget that this has been a kingdom that has always been see Ps. 93:1-2.
  - c. Next the text tells us that *"...all the nations shall flow into it..."* See Rev. 5:9-10. These nations are the Gentile elect that will be called from every nation tongue and tribe...like a mighty river "flowing into the city" ...the kingdom of God with its ultimate picture of all those coming into the heavenly city on the New Earth of Rev. 21.
  - d. In verse 3, not only do they flow in but they come to praise and worship the one true and living God and they desire to be instructed and to KNOW their God and they also have a desire to walk with Him. They want to be discipled that they might be affective followers to bring Him glory. Doctrinal purity is crucial for this to occur...for the type of teaching is that which interprets God's Word correctly and effectively so that lives are changed. Can you think of a specific event this may be speaking to? Note: this statement *"For out of Zion shall go the law or the instruction* (which is a better translation of the Hebrew word) *and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."* Probably points to a specific event in the future...Pentecost. See Luke 24:46-47.
  - e. Verse 4 speaks of the Lord's peaceful rule over the nation's... beginning with His church in this life as we seek unity and harmony in God's blessing...with an eye to the day of rule of the Godhead after Christ's 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming. (See Eph. 2:14-18) this is a picture of the type of peace that can be had when believers live together as God has prescribed but one that won't be fully realized until the consummation.
  - f. There is a finality in that wars will not star up again or people won't sin again.
5. Look at Hebrews 11:10 and Hebrews 12:18-24 and Heb. 13:14. Do these shed any light on our understanding of this prophesy? How? Christ's kingdom...the kingdom of God will have pre-eminence
  6. As he witnesses this future scene of the Gentile nations coming to the Lord, what does Isaiah exhort Israel to do in Isaiah 2:5? To walk in a spirit of restoration. How will they do this? Why is this ironic? In verse 5, as he witnesses this future scene of the Gentile nations coming to the Lord, Isaiah exhorts his own people, Israel, *"Come, let us walk in the light of Yahweh!"* Isaiah is calling upon his own people to imitate these new converts in their zeal to know God and serve Him! It is ironic that the people of God must be admonished to imitate the godly example of the Gentile converts...(a people that they had no use for..but a people that God would use for His glory and the saving of the elect Jews.) See Rom. 11:25-36. The elect Jews will be evangelized and discipled/taught by the converted Gentiles.
  7. What do you think about this image of God's future? How should it affect your faith today?
  8. What are some of the sins Isaiah accuses Israel of practicing in verses 6-8?
    - a. In verse 6a Israel is described as being filled with *"things/the customs of the east"*—a reference to the pagan customs and practices imported from the East; the very place Abraham had been called to forsake in order to follow the Lord into the Promised Land.
    - b. 6b says, occultism- *"of fortune-tellers/ practice divination like the Philistines;"* Israel had come to look to soothsayers for guidance instead of looking to the Lord their God and His Word.



- c. Vs. 6c, "*They clasp hands with the children of foreigner.*" (high 5's all around after a deal is made) this is a reference to making covenants with them... they were forming binding relationships and covenants with those who were strangers to the Lord and His covenant.
  - d. Vs. 7, "*Their land is filled with silver and gold...their land is filled with horses ...chariots.*" in their prosperity they have no need for God...and in their military prowess they are secure.
  - e. Vs. 8, "*Their land is filled with idols;*" rather than destroying the idols of the pagan nations who possessed the land before them, as they had been commanded to do (Exodus 34:12-14), Israel embraced the pagan religion of their neighbors.
9. What is meant by verse 9? This humbling is still in the future. The land is "prosperous" from their perspective which meant in their mind that God was blessing them. But God through Isaiah reiterates what He has said before...a day of reckoning is coming. And ALL Israel will be involved in God's discipline...even Isaiah if he is still around. Everyone will suffer...the humbling judgment of God will be upon all men...this was seen in the Exile...it affected all of God's children. No one misses out on the tribulation!
10. In verses 10-21 Isaiah describes the coming Day of the Lord. What are some of the characteristics of that great day? (Note especially verses 11-12 and 17-18.)
- a. Verses 10 and 19-21 tell us that it will be so bad that there will be no place to hide... "*Enter into the rock...*" knowing that one cannot get "into" a rock the phrase is simply saying there will be nowhere to run. No one could hide from the Babylonian invasion and no one will be able to hide when Christ returns... for the unbeliever it will be "*terror*" and for the believer it will be "*the splendor of the LORD.*"
  - b. So bad that they will be casting all their belongings...including their idols...along the road in an attempt to get out of the way of God's coming wrath. They will carry only that which is most important and needed!
  - c. Verses 11 and 12 and 17 and 18 foretell the coming Day of the Lord of hosts: a day of reckoning and a day of accountability. It is emphasized that on that Day the Lord of hosts will especially set Himself against the pride and arrogance of man.
  - d. Verses 13-16 speak of all the evil things that God will overthrow...in His promise to make all things new. All will be burned to dust or ash according to Peter in II Peter 3: 8-18.
11. What is the command given in verse 22 there for? We are to cease and desist from placing confidence in man...as we saw in Peter we are to only truly trust in God above. Idolatry leads to death...spiritually and emotionally and physically. Why? "*in whose nostrils is breath...*" ...the way this is written seems to indicate that man don't even have the ability to give themselves breath. Man's life is transitory...God and His word is forever. It was God who breathed this life into man in the first place so it can and will be taken away by the One who gave it as he sees fit... "*...for of what account is he?*" ...or so in whom should we really place our hope and trust? "*Trust God*", Jesus said, "*trust also in me.*"
12. What is the definition of an idol from this chapter? Something that is valued over God!
13. What connections can be made to our modern times? Same things as them in their time. Don't trust in personal accomplishments How do these words still affect us today? How do they impact your faith, if at all?
- a. There will be a time of humbling...NOW! We are still within the time from talked about in these verses.

- b. No one misses out on the tribulation...believers didn't then they won't now. I see little if any justification in Scripture to support God rapturing His Church out of tribulation since that has not been His habit in times past.
- c. We are to be looking to His future...not knowing when Christ will return...unbiblical to even try and figure it out...but we are to be looking with expectation for His return at any time and our lives are to be marked by how we live out our faith at home, work worship and play...to do all things to God's glory!
- d. Christ is Coming and He will do all that He said!
- e. We have won only because He is the victor and we are in Him...and we will fully win when He returns...our salvation will then be full...in the splendor/fullness of the LORD!

Next Time: Chapter 3-4:1

Bible Study  
The Book of Isaiah  
October 3, 2012

A. Prayer

B. Review

- 1. What was the key point that Isaiah wants to communicate in chapter 2? Stop regarding man as something...The Day of the LORD is coming, is here and will come.
- 2. What is the definition of an idol that Isaiah gives us in chapter 2? Anything that is valued over God!

C. Chapter 3-4

- 1. Read 3:1-7. We find the word "Behold" quite often in the scriptures. As we begin the chapter what is this word communicating here as it does in other parts of the Scriptures? See, understand and accept. Isaiah expects the people to understand what he is saying and how it will affect them.
- 2. In these passages, what is being taken away? Support and supply...Interesting fact here is that "support" in the Hebrew is a masculine term and "supply" is feminine term of variations of the same word which signifies in the prophets that the category is exhausted...simply using these words in this form he is saying that all support and supply will be taken away to the last crumb...but then he goes on to explain what he means. What does the answer given mean?(remember Isaiah loves lists so he lists everything he means)...the rest of the verses speak to what this means:
  - a. Taking away bread...famine and starvation in mind, also deals with making a living, buying and selling goods, clothing and basics..
  - b. Taking away water...to grow things...probably more emphasis on the growing aspect...
  - c. The military prowess will be gone...there won't be found any "good" leaders those who stir the masses...heroes in general...

- d. The nation will be ruled by people with no experience...good government will cease to exist replaced by corrupt and incompetent leaders...anarchy will ensue...the use of the word “youths” here indicates that the people who rule will be capricious: aimless, selfish, unpredictable, childish in their ways...despot. (All of this is contrast with chapter verse 7)
  - e. With the listing of diviners, skillful magician (artificer= one skilled in the arts...craftsman one who makes things of art or artistically like stone columns or classical architecture...some stay with the word magician because they see it going with diviner and the next designation...perhaps with these skills they may have made some of the idols as well) expert in charms /enchanter...(this is the Hebrew term for what we would consider a sorcerer/magician...this one works with incantations and potions)...we see that the LORD is removing both the good and the bad from the people at the same time...
  - f. The people will be at each other’s throat...family against family, friend against friend...it will be every man for himself...total chaos will set in...everything and everybody this nation “leaned upon” will be taken away. Things are so bad that even a “righteous” man will refuse to get involved in government.
3. Who is the one who is taking all of this way? The Lord God of Hosts= “Adon”-Lord God= Sovereign one or Almighty One in Isaiah... “hosts”= armies...God’s armies which he alone commands signifying that He is the supreme ruler of all things...he who controls the strongest army controls it all!!! ...and according the Hebrew God’s name is supposed to be there but appears to be missing from this translation...Yahweh = self-existent, eternal, covenantal...which would be seen with a LORD in all capitals...I don’t know if this is an editing problem...that is someone didn’t capitalize the Lord in this verse or what but Yahweh is definitely there in the original. Why such a stacking of titles and God’s covenantal name?
    - a. His covenant name shows that He has a particular relationship with His people...He is in covenant with them and no one else.
    - b. For emphasis to be sure...
    - c. But this also makes it clear that the things that are about to occur did not happen by chance or even by the will of men...but by God alone.
    - d. Isaiah always stacks the titles and name of God together when judicial acts of God are to be introduced.
  4. We finished last time with 2:22, *“Stop regarding man in whose nostrils is breath, for of what account is he?”* How do these verses (1-7) explain why it is important not to regard men or trust in men? Because of all that God is going to do in taking these leaders and others away from the people.
  5. Read 8-15. According to Isaiah 3:8 why will the Lord bring this devastation upon Jerusalem? Isaiah 3:8 explains that the city/nation is ruined “because their words (i.e.; their speech, the ideas which they express) and their deeds are in opposition to Yahweh, provoking the eyes of His glory.
  6. What does verse 9 say about the people’s attitude? What do you think this means? In verse 9 the prophet Isaiah personifies the nation in its present moral and spiritual state: *“The look on their faces testifies against them.”* Their expression of defiance testifies to the truth presented in verse 8; theirs is not an ignorance of the law of God, rather it is a conscious rejection of it and hostility against it. *“They display their sin like Sodom, they do not hide it.”* When there is still some remnant of the fear of God, men seek to conceal their sins out of a

sense of shame and guilt. But described here are a people who have become so steeped in sin and so defiant of God that, like Sodom, they practice their sins openly without any trace of guilt or shame.

7. From time to time God “tucks” little morsels of hope into places especially in His words of judgment. Verse 10 is one of those morsels. What is He communicating here as this message was for all the people? That He is neither removed from their suffering nor that He will always prevent suffering but as they suffer He will make sure His remnant is cared for. He will give them grace to endure. God has always promised to be with His people...His elect...to preserve the remnant.
8. Verses 11-15 basically explain what is said in verse 4 in more detail along with God making it plain where he is at in all of this in verses 13-14. Now in Isaiah 3:16-4:1 the character of the society is being described by means of the lifestyle of its women. What does this passage tell us about their attitude and appearance?
  - a. First, don’t miss the explanation of verse 12 where it says, *“and women rule over them.”* It had become a highly feminized culture. (sound familiar) The order God had established was turned on its ear.
  - b. Verses 16-23 depict the vanity, conceit, and superficiality of this society as it is especially exemplified in the lifestyle of its women. *“The daughters of Zion are haughty/arrogant”*—they are proud, vain, conceited.
  - c. They *“walk around with outstretched necks/heads held high”*—an outward display of their arrogance— *“glancing wantonly with their eyes”*—in their haughtiness they disregard God’s commandments relating to moral purity.
  - d. They *“mincing along as they go, tinkling along with their feet/ ornaments jingle from their ankles”*—they walk with short, dainty steps so as to emphasize their sophistication and sultriness. They desired to draw attention to themselves. They were dressed up to the “nines” almost like prostitutes...over done for affect... they put on airs of superiority and sophistication which really doesn’t exist...everyone looking knows what they are. They were more concerned with their own affairs than the poor condition of their brothers...
  - e. Verses 18-23 describe an incredible amount of ornate and superficial beauty; what is described here is in striking contrast to the admonition of 1 Peter 3:3-4, *“Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear—but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God’s sight is very precious.”*
9. What will be God’s just judgment on these people according to verses 17-4:1?
  - a. Their hair will be shaved in shame...that is what is meant by the wording, *“...therefore the LORD will strike with a scab the heads of the daughters of Zion...”*
  - b. The Lord will *“take away”* (see 3:1) all the adornments...the crutches...they believe that make them attractive to the world. that they believe will make them attractive to the world.
  - c. In fact, not just take them away but turn everything they thought they knew up on its ear. Perfume becomes a stench...in that day...an ornamental belt becomes the rope of a slave...beautiful hair a sign of pride, is shaved to baldness a sign of shame...rich robes are exchanged for the clothes of slavery dissatisfaction and pain sets in...beauty is exchanged for branding...which is tattooing used for slaves...(beauty is contrasted with tattoos here...)...the order for marriage is reversed...no longer is the man the head of his

wife ...he did not seek her, but “instead” she sought him....she led him as Eve led Adam to listen to Satan and eat.

- d. Desperation will set in even to women fighting over the men they were mocking just a while ago. There is a shortage of men because of the devastating wars at a ratio of at 7 to 1. Also they were so desperate that they were willing to support themselves rather than have the man do it just to be married. The law stated that the man was to provide for his wife...but here desperation defines the terms.
10. Why does God describe the society by means of the lifestyle of the women?
- a. One author put it this way, “When the women are wholly vain and self-centered, the cancer of moral decay is truly consuming the nations heart.”- E.J. Young .
  - b. What does he mean by this statement and how would such a statement be heard and received today? By not using proper adornment and relying on true beauty given by God to be a reflection of God women are rejecting God’s work as not complete or not good enough and attitudes like over concern with youthfulness and dress then permeates the rest of their thinking thus rejecting God and His purposes. What is significant in the repeating of the phrase, “*the daughters of Zion*”? The World may act this way...but NOT the daughters of Zion for they are held to a different and higher standard. The Scriptures says that Israel had been out whoring and that the nations around them saw right through them.
  - c. The leadership/headship principle has been laid aside. Since the men are unwilling or unable to lead as God prescribes the women step up to lead in the home and in business and in government... this is not what they were created to do...not the duties they were created to perform. Now this does not mean that women cannot serve in certain areas of leadership (that would go against some of the basic assertions of Scripture)...in this case God through Isaiah is saying that they have taken these positions for the wrong reasons...the men have passively given them up...the whole order established by God is purposefully turned on its head.
  - d. Their actions were symbolic of how the children of Israel was trying to make themselves attractive to the nations around them...so that they could be “like” them and be accepted by them...they were throwing away their position and relationship to God to be an adulteress with other nations.
  - e. Since twice in this section we see the use of the words “in that day” we also know that this speaks of THAT Day when the LORD returns and judges the earth... and it speaks of THIS day-now- the period between Christ’s comings.
11. Is this a condemnation of jewelry and make-up by Isaiah as some have suggested? Why or why no? Just so we are clear just like in the I Peter passage this is NOT a condemnation of jewelry and make-up...it is a condemnation of attitude...wanting to be something that one is not!
12. What is God promising to His people “in that day” according to 4:2-6?
- a. He will restore His people...the tree has been chopped down and from its stump a branch will shoot up...a renewed church...
  - b. Also, this is the sign of the Messiah/ the Son of God as will be depicted later in Is. 11:1...He will come through this branch of Jesse...
  - c. This is a kingdom of the redeemed and purified by the work of the Holy Spirit... “*the spirit of judgment and of burning/fire*”...*think Pentecost again and then Rev. 11:15.*

- d. Here is a kingdom of the Triune God's presence in their midst... vs.5-6 just like Ex. 13:21 God is in their midst in His tri-unity. And with that presence comes 2 things that reveals what His presence will look like:
    - (1) God's glory will be over everything
    - (2) God's blessing will be evident in all things.
13. How does our present compare to this picture?
- a. Daily the elevated are brought low in their arrogance...
  - b. We choose the people to lead us who will "give us the most stuff" rather than those who should or could lead us well...
  - c. We don't even know what good leaders look like any more so we complain about all of them and are not submissive to anyone in authority...
  - d. "Righteous leaders" do not want to involve themselves in all the corruption...
  - e. We compromise to get along...
  - f. We tout our individuality as if it is something...when it only leads to despair and weakness...
  - g. Our acts of "courage" are weak and lame for we are afraid to go too far because of the possibility of reprisal even from our "friends"...

Next Time: Isaiah 5

Bible Study  
The Book of Isaiah  
October 10, 2012

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. What was the key point of chapter 3? Maybe trust in me in all things! There is coming a day and this is what it will look like when I judge and when I restore.
2. Was God through Isaiah condemning jewelry, make up and women working outside the home with this judgment? Why or why not? It is like so many other things in Scripture this is not a condemnation of these things it is a condemnation of what is done with them...a condemnation of attitude...wanting to be something they are not. Relying on these things rather than on God. Making these things the definition of who they are rather than it being enough to be defined as God's children.

C. Isaiah 5

1. Read 5:1-7. What is Isaiah doing as he begins telling God's message to God's people? Why? He is singing. Song was an appropriate way to convey a message in this culture...causing the people to take notice.
2. What is the purpose for the vineyard imagery? He tells us what He expects His people to be like a flourishing vineyard but instead what they are is rotten fruit. Think Matt. 21:18-22 (also Mark 11:12-14, 20-25) to this degree as Jesus was making a case as well of the judgment that would descend upon Jerusalem. Jesus expected to find fruit on the vine and there was none and so He cursed it since it was not producing while it looked perfectly healthy on the outside. "Wild grapes" refers to rotten fruit. The Lord took the greatest care to insure that His vineyard would produce good fruit: "He dug it up and cleared it of stones and

- planted the choicest vines. He built a watchtower in it and cut out a winepress.” He asks in verse 4, “*What more could have been done for my vineyard that I have left undone?*” As we learn from verse 7a, the vineyard represents the nation of Israel, the Old Testament people of God. How do we know from the text that He was expecting a good crop?
- a. He planted it in a good place for it to flourish... “...*a very fertile field.*”
  - b. “*He dug it and clear its stones...*” or “*He dug it carefully about and He gathered out the stones...*” ...speaking of the tender care he was putting into it to get good grapes ...
  - c. “*He planted it (the vineyard) with good vines...*”
  - d. The Lord expected His vineyard to produce a crop of good grapes, (see vs. 2b..he looked for it to yield grapes...”good grapes”...
  - e. He built a watchtower because He expected it to be worth a lot...
  - f. He hewed out a wine vat in anticipation of a good crop.) but it only produced wild—bitter, inedible—grapes. The Lord expected His people to produce in their lives the “fruit” of justice and righteousness. But instead, they practiced social injustice, causing the distressed to cry out because of their oppression.
  - g. He asked them to judge between Him and His vineyard. How is this a proof?
3. Since God was obviously “expecting” a good crop, what does this say about God’s sovereignty? Was He caught off guard by this action by His people? Had he simply done His best but it wasn’t good enough? Why or why not? (Be prepared to support your answer from the text...chapters 1-5.) If he wasn’t in control of this situation how could He have been sovereign over all the others...famine, controlling the rain, sending forth enemies to judge His people? No, His ability is not in question here ...simply showing that He did all that He was supposed to do...no one can blame Him for these actions...the people are responsible for their own sin. While God ordains all things to happen as they do His Word is clear that that does not remove personal responsibility for our sins.
  4. Why do you suppose God uses such imagery throughout Scripture if as many people say that it is wrong to drink alcohol? (See Matt. 20:ff, 21:28, and 33-44; Mark 12:1; Luke 20:9-16, 13:6ff; John 15:1-6)
    - a. An answer given during class was this: God has a sense of humor...knowing that so many people would misuse this subject in years to come He thought He would use it in a positive way...maybe prompting them to stop and think differently or just so He could laugh!!!
    - b. The Hebrew word most often uses for wine is “*yayin*” which is a fermented drink derived from grapes. The word for vineyard is “*yadid*” ...interestingly similar. This word first appears in Gen. 9:21 and speaks of Noah getting drunk so fermentation goes with the wine from the beginning through to the end. All the Hebrew Lexicons agree that this word has always meant a fermented drink...
    - c. The Bible does have a phrase for grape juice “*mishrath-enabim*”. So if God was trying to make a point for a non-alcoholic drink He easily could have.
    - d. Bottom line wine seems to have been given to men for celebration and our good...it is a gift of God...see Deut. 14:26; Isaiah 55:1... so as a gift God sees His people as a gift and He wants us to be at our best and He wants us to produce the best fruit so that he will be glorified and we will have joy more abundantly.
  5. Since the vineyard is not producing what God expected it to produce, what is God going to do about it according to our text?
    - a. Because His vineyard has produced wild, sour, worthless, grapes, the Lord will destroy the vineyard and reduce it to a wasteland. Think the curse of Gen. 3:18.

- b. He will tear down the protective hedge around it and allow it to be trampled down and devoured by wild beasts. This is a picture of the judgment the Lord would bring upon His disobedient Old Testament people—He would allow them to be invaded by foreign powers as the just punishment for their sins.
  - c. No rain so it can't even try to produce again.
  - d. Think with me a minute; in verse 6 when God says He will make it a waste or wasteland, He goes on to say, "... *it shall not be pruned or hoed...*" in light of a passage like John 15:1-6 what are we to understand about this? That God is not at least for a time going to be caring appropriately for His children...He is giving them over to their sin in punishment for their sin to teach them how bad they have been...something many will learn well during the Exile.
  - e. How can God do what He is doing?
    - (1) "*I will tell you...*" or "*...let me, I pray cause you to know...*" – the people are silent so God says He will inform them but even more He will cause them to know what He is doing and why He is doing it...their sin will be revealed to them by God...
    - (2) It is His vineyard...He can do as He wills...6 times in 2 verses He tells us what He will do...
    - (3) He will do it because of His covenant...the covenant bound God to bless an obedient people and to curse a disobedient people. This is Him following through with His promises...He is a just judge.
6. What is God communicating in verse 7? He is saying by way of a recap that:
- a. First that He is the Lord of hosts and as such He and He alone can dole out the justice against His people...for He is in charge...He is their Father...it is not up to anyone else to deal with them...As the supreme commander of all the armies of the LORD which include His earthly army is also the supreme judge. 4 times we see this title of God in this chapter and in each case it speaks of God as judge of His people.
  - b. 2nd, the reason for this punishment is:
    - (1) He looked for justice from His people and only found bloodshed...the poor were not being taken care of in fact, they were being abused...and they were warring among themselves not for justice but for self-perseverance and possessions.
    - (2) He expected righteousness and all he found was an outcry for personal position and security...no one following after God's ways only themselves.
7. Now let's look at verses 8-30. Verses 8-23 are describing the sins that were practiced by the nation of Israel in a more specific way than verse 7. Each sin is outlined well and begun with the word "Woe". How many sins are there and what are they? 6 specific sins are delineated here...there will be more later. Which group of people is primarily pointed out in these Woes? The wealthy and the leadership primarily. So the wealthy SHOULD pay more?!?
- a. Vs. 8-10 deal with the sin of greed. What they have is not good enough they wish to squeeze out the little guy...think West Texas land wars. People are never satisfied with what they have but in this case it also goes so far as making sure others don't get any!
  - b. Vs. 11-17 deal with drunkenness...over indulgence of a good thing brings with it a lack of character and is an example of an overindulgence society. God has defined how believers can celebrate feast and assemblies with wine and music and they are disregarding His direction...vs. 12b. So Isaiah is not condemning drink or music but rather the overindulgent way they are being used.
  - c. Vs. 18-19 deal with the sin of mocking God as they sin...they are weighed down by their own sin and all the while they either do not recognize why life is so hard or they blame



God when their hardship is not taken away quickly or they are found mocking God saying “If you are going to judge get it over with, already!”

- d. Vs. 20 deals with the sin of moral corruption...and those who call good evil and evil good.
  - e. Vs. 21 deals with the sin of pride and self-righteousness...both of which are ironically blinding to the person that lives by them.
  - f. Vs. 22-23 deals with the sin of injustice...interesting that the case is made here that overindulgence leads to injustice. See Proverbs 31:4-5? How can overindulgence lead to injustice?
8. Now what are the “therefore’s” there for in verses 13, 14, 24, 25 and possibly 9? (A little theological humor...I know...very little.) And what do they tell us? See Hosea 4:6 All therefore’s tell us to consider what has just been said and then they offer up a general conclusion. But the topic at hand is Judgment... obviously... but they speak of specific things that God will therefore do because of the sins of His people. They have broken the covenant and now their MUST (divine directive) be retribution... punishment... for God can not overlook the continual sins in His children... if He did He would have to overlook all sin.
- a. Possibly vs. 9- The LORD of Host has sworn there will be an end of the mansions of the rich and famous...no longer will they be able to rule unjustly the division of the land. God had divided it and given provision for how that would be maintained these people rejected God’s law and did what they did for their own good not thinking of anyone but themselves.
  - b. Vs. 13-My people will go into exile...ESV says, “... for lack of knowledge”- the Hebrew more easily say “without their knowledge”. This is not speaking of ignorance...because of the depth of their sin they knew not the workings of God. Even when His prophets proclaimed judgment their sin had blinded them to this reality... “We are God’s people. He wouldn’t do that. We haven’t done anything that bad to warrant such an action.” They were in denial because they were so steeped in sin that they cannot comprehend the destruction that is right around the corner. They cannot properly interpret the signs of the times...another sign of God’s impending doom.
  - c. Vs. 14-Sheol like a snake unhinges it mouth to receive such a size of bodies. There will such a huge mortality rate that they cannot and will not comprehend it. But in this case its prey does not fight for its life...in this case the snake simply unhinges its mouth and these sinners step in unknowingly and unwittingly... “will go down...” at first as if there was something attractive to see and they are found exulting or rejoicing at the prospects. While this is a picture of literally hundreds of thousands of deaths...it is also a picture of how they will go into captivity. Vs. 15 shows us that the LORD of host will be exalted in His justice. When the people are humbled in captivity they will see the “rightness” of what God did to get them to change their behavior.
  - d. Vs. 24- Israel has abandoned the LORD, so she herself will therefore be abandoned to the most severe judgments at least for a time. The consuming fire of the tongue has a twofold method: to consume the faithless and then to purify the faithful! In this case to consume the faithless those who rejected the law of the LORD of host and despised/condemned His word. Remember this is where Isaiah began back in 1:4.
  - e. Vs. 25-This is the BIG therefore referring to what has just been said but then referring to the whole chapter perhaps the last 5 chapters.
9. Read verses 26-30. According to verses 26 what is going to happen as a result of this last “therefore”?
- a. God will call the nations to come and implement His judgment upon His people...specifically Assyria and Babylon... “*He will raise a signal flag...*”- Like a

commander in battle signaling the different division when and where to begin their assault. What this? *"He whistles for them..."* It is clear by this wording that it is God who directs by His providence these armies of the nations to come.

- b.* They come immediately. When God acts, the response is immediate. They take credit for their cunning in coming against Judah but it is God who moves them...they would not come had God not moved them...just like it was God who moved the Roman world with a census so that Jesus would be born where He was in Bethlehem ... the rulers of the world do not even know the way God moves and shakes.
10. How is this enemy described? Well trained...disciplined...nothing out of place everything ready for battle...powerful beyond imagination...fierce and bold, certain of victory and they will be victorious in every way...because that is the way God has planned it... would God do any less than use the most efficient and best trained army for His judgment?
11. What is the final judgment in verse 30? The people will think that they have been completely severed from God's grace...it will be so bad that even the prophecies of restoration will not be remembered...there will be no hope for a time...all lays in darkness because of their sin. God does this so that they can sense fully what separation from God "feels" like...like a child in a grocery store that gets separated from their parent either because he wandered off thinking he was "big enough" or she was distracted by the shiny things...they feels lost...though they aren't ...they are only momentarily separated from thier parent but it feels like an eternity for the child and the child feels complete lostness...overwhelmed because of the separation ...but then they are reunited with their parent that has come looking for them and they are overjoyed and they don't leave the side of their parent...sticking like glue. This would be Judah's experience as well.
12. How can God do this to His people? How can a "good" God do such a thing to teach His children a lesson? Good also means just...And God must be just in order to be good. He is not like the parent that bargains with His children for their love and obedience...neither is He the authoritarian that demands obedience and love or there will be reprisal. His steadfast love is long-suffering but it is also certain and because of His covenant He must bring justice...even to the point of sending His Only Son to take His wrath against us upon Himself that we may be adopted into His family. He paid a severe price for our freedom...for our identity...no longer to be children of wrath but rather children of God By god's work through the shed blood of Jesus Christ being imputed to us by the Holy Spirit of God.

Next time: Isaiah 6- the Holiness of God

Bible Study  
The Book of Isaiah  
October 17, 2012

- A. Prayer
- B. Review

1. What was/were the key point (s) in chapter 5? Judgment for their breaking the covenant.

2. God does all things well. What examples of that fact do we see in this chapter?
  - a. Planted a vineyard so that it would produce the “best” grapes/wine...
  - b. Called up the best of the best military force, at the time, to meter out His judgment.

C. Chapter 6- the Holiness of God

1. Read Chapter 6:1-7. This is chapter 6, have you ever wondered why, in God’s providence, that Isaiah’s call is placed here rather than at the beginning of the book like so many others?
  - a. Nothing haphazard about this placement...God is not always concerned with what we would consider “orderly placement” of events.
  - b. Isaiah’s purpose was to present the heart of his message and only then to speak about his calling.
  - c. The purpose being to announce the depravity of the nation of God and the certainty of the coming judgment and then that from this judgment the only refuge will be found in God and His grace. He wishes the people to be more focused on the prophecy rather than the prophet.
  - d. Then as if to explain His ability to speak for God as if someone was asking by whose authority he speaks we have chapter 6.
2. This question will require some history. What is significant about the fact that King Uzziah is dead? (He died around 739 or 740 BC of leprosy.)
  - a. Uzziah’s life seems to symbolize the state affairs in the kingdom and how they have become spiritually leprous and abomination to God and to others.
  - b. It informs us that it is a critical time in the nation...this would be like a president who had done great things for his people dying in office. Sure there will be people to step in but there are all kinds of questions of uncertainty that will come up. Closet thing I have is the assassination of Pres. Kennedy and the unrest that followed that and the attempted assassination of Pres. Reagan.
  - c. Israel is in anarchy and Judah is also suffering. It is a weak and decaying Judah that Isaiah was called to prophesy to...though being in decline they thought they were still all that and a bag of chips! Thought the signs were there very few wanted to look and even less wanted to hear the truth...sounds familiar, doesn’t it?
  - d. The king is dead and it is this year that Isaiah begins his prophecy of judgment...the great glory and national pride was now or soon would be in crisis.
  - e. One other piece of information that will become relevant in the near future is this...historians and tradition say that this is the year that the city of Rome was founded...from now on Judah would be in decline while Rome would increase slowly at first and then... well we all know the rest of that story.
3. Next we have to address the “fact” that he “saw the Lord”. How is that possible since the Scriptures are clear that no man can “see” the Lord and live?
  - a. Just so we are clear on who this One is, Isaiah uses the designation “Adonai”=the One who rules over all, the absolute Lord and Master...Almighty and Sovereign...he uses this designation a lot in this book at least 6 times in these 6 chapters so far. Sooo...
  - b. 1<sup>st</sup>, in Ex. 33:20, God says to Moses, “...you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live.”
  - c. 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Scriptures say no man has ever seen the LORD...John 1:18; I Tim. 6:16
  - d. 3<sup>rd</sup>, this was a divinely imposed vision so he is seeing indirectly...much like John in his vision...no physical eye can see Him for He is invisible and at the same time the light that emanates from Him so bright it would consume us for our God is a consuming fire. God placed this vision here... it was not something Isaiah conjured up on his own so God

let him see in a way that he could see a person ...one like the Savior perhaps... who is King.

- e. Yet the Bible does in fact say, *"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."* The eschatological reality is that we shall all see God on That day.

4. How does Isaiah describe the revelation the Lord gave Isaiah of Himself? (See Isaiah 6:1-4) Isaiah describes this revelation of God in the following terms:

- a. The Lord was seen *"seated on a throne;"* He reveals Himself to be the true Ruler over the world, the sovereign Lord and judge of creation and history. See Eph. 1:11 where the Lord is described as the God who *"...causes all things to work for the sake of His own plan."* That is, He causes all things to operate and interact in such a way that they contribute to the fulfillment of His own sovereign will and plan.
- b. The Lord is seen to be *"high and exalted;"* His divine majesty and sovereignty are not to be compared to the temporal and temporary sovereignty of earthly rulers; the Lord is transcendent above all. There is none or nothing like Him...none or nothing that can even compare since He is the One who creator all things...He stands alone in Himself.
- c. He sees a robe of royalty, priesthood and of a judge... the train of which filled the temple...in other words there was no room for anyone else to stand for no one else could! In ancient times the length of the robe signified wealth, power and royalty.
- d. As the Lord is seated upon His throne and He is attended by angelic beings called *"seraphs"* (literally, "burning ones"); their very being as "burning ones" illustrates the infinite purity and glory of the Lord. They are continually praising God; continually proclaiming His holiness and continually proclaiming His dominion over the earth: *"the whole earth is full of His glory"* (or, *"the fullness of the whole earth is His glory."*)
- e. Glory is an all-encompassing word that describes the fact, in this context, that everything in all creation displays God's majesty and sovereign creating power and rule.
- f. *"Holy, Holy, Holy"*... the 3 fold holiness stands for completeness in itself in Themselves- Father, Son and Holy Spirit...they are absolute and infinite in their holiness. All of His attributes are glorious, but only this one is described this way. Why is His holiness so exalted? E.J. Young says this, *"The designation 'holy' signifies the entirety of the divine perfections which separates God from His creation. God is the Creator who exists in absolute independence of the creature. He is the Lord, and not a man. Although the creation depends upon Him, He Himself is entirely independent thereof."*
- g. The thresholds shaking and the smoke go to impress upon Isaiah 2 things:
  - (1) It is God who does the moving and shaking of things...doorframes to trees (7:2) to nations...
  - (2) He is standing in the presence of the One True and Most Holy God.
  - (3) All things will tremble in God's presence...Isaiah's actions are an example of that. It is not a safe place...but it is a good place.
- h. What would the actions of the seraphs have communicated to Isaiah? Even they could not or would not look upon God... face to face... whom they were intimately with all the time. They feared the Lord...had a reverential awe of their creator. They also communicated that their main purpose was to glorify God as well...by serving Him and praising Him just like we were created to do.

5. How does Isaiah react to this divine revelation of God's holiness in verse 5?

- a. Upon seeing the Lord of glory, Isaiah cries out, *"Woe is me!"* (he fears himself to be doomed...literally dead or dying...think about John's words in Rev. 1:17)
- b. *"I am lost or ruined!"* (Literally, *"I am undone!"*- he is declaring himself to be destroyed...deserving only God's wrath.) A terrifying evaluation to be sure.

6. Why is he so fearful?
  - a. He says, "*I am a man ...this realization alone would have been sufficient to know this was a place he shouldn't be... he is but a man for he is sinful...*"
  - b. He goes on to explain why he is sinful, "...with unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips" the word "unclean" was the word that lepers were required to call out when "normal" people got to close. The scene of the angelic beings ceaselessly praising God and testifying to God's holiness convicts Isaiah of what should be true of him, but what was, in fact, not the characteristic of his speech and life. The seraphs had a pure speech...there wasn't anything pure about him...at least not pure enough to be before One so Holy as his God.
  - c. Isaiah continues by saying, "*For my eyes have seen the King, Yahweh of hosts.*" King and the name Yahweh translates that this is the Holy One the covenantal God...and if the seraph's must veil their faces in His presence than the fact that Isaiah has revealed his means he must be going to die...
  - d. Also, Isaiah is standing...what is the appropriate posture for a person before their king? In his mind someone has to die for all of these infractions on the holy protocol.
  - e. The prophet must be made aware of his own sin and unworthiness before he can ever praise God as he should. He must have an honest confession of sin and he does.
7. What happens next in verse 6 and 7?
  - a. Because of his honest confession of sin...God's mercy is displayed. God sends His seraph's on a mission for Him ...to show mercy to this one of His chosen people...in this way the LORD draws near to Isaiah when Isaiah was incapable of drawing near to the LORD. His fear paralyzed him...this is the wrong kind of fear of the LORD. As a believer already he was making all the wrong assumptions...that he deserved death...that he was ruined...deserving only God's wrath. He needed to confess His sins but not to be saved...he needed to confess because an appropriate fear of God does that and then moves into His presence...not being presumptive but being assured that this is where we belong.
  - b. The mission of the seraph's was to take away or cleanse Isaiah's sin...the burning coal ...which is too hot for even the seraph to handle without tongs, by the way...represents the burning, sin-consuming holiness of God, purifying a repentant sinner not to consume him.
  - c. The purifying work can only come through God's work. Now let's not assume that just because this is his call to service that this was also his conversion to faith...this is, if you will, his commissioning...his consecration for service ...his being filled with the Spirit as he prepares to go on a specific mission for God.
  - d. He needs is to have God purify his mouth because he would be speaking God's Word after Him.
  - e. His sin is atoned for...this required a blood sacrifice...Which one is in mind here? Why?
8. Now that Isaiah has been purified for service, what is his natural reaction to God's work on His life? Why? No hesitation on his part to do whatever God asks even without knowing what it is that God would have him do. He is so thankful for the work that God has just done in him that nothing would be too much for God to ask. Just for fun. What is meant by God when He says, "...who will go for US!"?
9. In verses 9-13 what was Isaiah commissioned to do for God? The LORD is giving Isaiah the following commission:
  - a. "Cause the heart of this people to become callous.  
(1) Cause their ears to become closed, and

- (2) shut their eyes; so that they may not see with their eyes,
  - (3) shut their ears so they can't hear...
  - (4) close off all understanding with their hearts,
  - (5) so they don't return to me and be healed."
  - b. Isaiah's continual preaching of the Word of God, following upon all the preaching done by all the previous prophets, would have the effect of making the people insensitive and unresponsive by virtue of the repetition of the message, especially in light of their present habit of unresponsiveness. Jesus also refers to this passage again in John 12.
10. Why do you suppose the Lord gave Isaiah this particular ministry? God had hardened the hearts of His people as He prepares to send them into exile.
- a. Their hearts will be darkened until that day when they like Isaiah recognize that they are a people of unclean lips living among a people of unclean lips... a time when they too will fear for their lives and cry out to the LORD in truth.
  - b. It was time and he was God's man to do this work. Ironically, the very message that was originally intended for salvation would now become to them an instrument of judgment. How else could they be saved except by the preaching of God's Word, declaring their sin and directing them to the Lord as their Savior? Yet, the continued exposure to that Word—without the response of faith and obedience—would result in the people becoming callous to that life-giving Word.
  - c. What is presented here is a very mysterious and sobering phenomenon. It is a form of judgment enacted by God against those who have the privilege of hearing His Word, but who passively ignore or actively resist that sacred Word—and do so consistently and constantly.
11. Some quotes:
- a. John Murray writes this about the "fear of the Lord. *"It is the height of ungodliness not to be afraid of God when there is reason to be afraid... the fear of God in which godliness consists is the fear which compels adoration and love...recognizing its inability to do neither appropriately. It is a fear which consists in awe, reverence, honor and worship and all of these on the highest level of exercise. It is the reflex in our consciousness of the transcendent majesty and holiness of God."*
  - b. R.C.Sproul uses the word "transcendence" to describe God's holiness. *"Transcendence describes God in His consuming majesty, His exalted loftiness. It points to the infinite distance that separates Him from every creature."*
  - c. Jerry Bridges describes God's holiness as His *"transcendent majesty"*.
  - d. John Brown, a 19<sup>th</sup> century Scottish theologian/pastor wrote this: *"Nothing is so well fitted to put the fear of God, which will preserve men from offending Him, into the heart, as an enlightened view of the cross of Christ. There shines spotless holiness, inflexible justice, incomprehensible wisdom, omnipotent power, and holy love. None of these excellencies darken or eclipse the other, but every one of them rather gives a luster to the rest. They mingle their beams, and shine with united eternal splendor: the just Judge, the merciful Father, the wise Governor. Nowhere does justice appear so awful, mercy so amiable, or wisdom so profound."*

12. After looking over this chapter how would you define the fear of the Lord? And what should it look like in a Christian? (HINT: It might be helpful to get a correct definition of the word “awe”.) My dictionary defines it this way:
- An emotion in which dread, veneration, and wonder are variously mingled;
  - Submissive and admiring fear inspired by authority;
  - A fearful reverence inspired by duty.
  - Sinclair Ferguson on the fear of God. He gives us 2 words that are helpful in understanding how to define this phrase: Servile and filial
    - Servile fear= the kind of fear which a slave would have towards a harsh and unyielding master.
    - Filial fear= this is the loving fear of a child who had been an orphan and now has been adopted towards their adoptive parents. They are in awe that anyone would want to love them this way and so they go out of their way to love them back because they are so thankful.
    - “There is an indefinable mixture of reverence, fear, pleasure, joy and awe which fills our hearts when we realize who God is and what he has done for us. The love of God should astound us as sinners. His love rightly understood should cause us to gasp in amazement.”

Nest time: Isaiah 7-9:7

Bible Study  
The Book of Isaiah  
Oct. 24, 2012

- A. Prayer  
B. Review

1. What was/were the key point(s) in chapter 6?
2. How would you describe what “the fear of God” is to someone else? Continually repenting and realizing your need for God’s forgiveness...knowing God, looking to Him and then knowing you have to be moving forward to do His revealed will.

C. Isaiah 7-9:7- The Crisis and the Promise

1. Read verses 1-9. What crisis did Judah face in the days of King Ahaz in verses 1-2? In the days when Ahaz was king of Judah, the nation of Syria (under king Rezin) began to wage war against the land of Judah. In the course of time, the nation of Israel (under Pekah) also began to wage their own war against Judah. Thus the nation of Judah found herself under attack from two separate enemies: Syria, attacking from the northeast; and Israel, attacking from the north (2 Chronicles 28:1,5-6,8). But despite their attacks, these two individual enemies could not prevail against Judah; they were unable to capture Jerusalem. But now as Isaiah 7:2 reports, word comes that these two enemy nations, Syria and Israel, have joined forces against Judah—this now produces a real crisis in the life of the nation for the people and for king Ahaz. They had been fighting separate campaigns up to this point now the combined forces would be that much stronger...strength in numbers. They were probably wondering if this was the judgment that had been fore told.

2. What message does the Lord give Isaiah to deliver to King Ahaz and the nation as they face this crisis in verses 3-6? In the midst of this crisis, the Lord sent Isaiah to king Ahaz with the following message.
  - a. First, the Lord instructs Ahaz to get hold of himself: *“Be careful/pay attention, be quiet/keep calm, do not fear, and do not let your heart be faint...”*
  - b. The Lord informs Ahaz that Syria and Israel are enemies without strength; they are, *“two smoldering stumps of firebrands.”* They will eventually burn out...there is no additional fuel for the fire...it will smolder and maybe even look powerful for a while but it won't spread and before long it is all used up.
  - c. Finally, the Lord assures Ahaz that Syria and Israel are enemies whose purpose shall fail: *“Syria, with Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah have devised/planned evil against you, saying, ‘Let us invade/go up against Judah and terrify it/ let us tear it apart and let us conquer it for ourselves, and make the son of Tabeel king over it.’ This is what the Lord Yahweh says, ‘It shall not stand, and it shall not come to pass.’”*
  - d. What is significant about Isaiah's son being with him on this mission to the king?
    - (1) Shear-jashub means “a remnant shall return”...so there is a walking reminder of God's promise to His people of their restoration...
    - (2) his presence may have helped to calm Ahaz down because he was a reminder of God's provisions for His faithful
    - (3) He symbolized the remnant as he was set apart.
  
3. What concluding word of counsel and warning does the Lord give King Ahaz and the people in verses 8-9?
  - a. Ahaz's enemy will pay for their rebellion...in 65 years they will cease to exist as a tribe representing God.
  - b. And with that truth comes this warning...if you are like them you too will perish... *“If you are not firm in faith, you will not be firm at all.”* The Lord commands Ahaz to place his confidence in Him. But note that He states it in negative terms. That is to say, if you trust in the Lord...only if you trust in the Lord...He will uphold you in the midst of your trial and cause you to grow spiritually stronger by means of your trial. The reason the Lord states His counsel and warning in negative terms is because He knew Ahaz' heart; He knew Ahaz was determined to seek his own solution rather than put his confidence in the Lord his God.
  - c. Vs. 9b is Isaiah speaking to the people...If you (which is plural) do not believe/stand firm in the faith/trust...then you were never established in the faith ...see Romans 6....If you do not believe then you were not meant to believe and so you will not believe!
  - d. God had established the house of David as His house...just like He had chosen the people of Israel...but just as John would state in John 1, *“But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of the blood nor of the will of the flesh not of the will of man, but of God.”* And as Paul would say later, *“For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel...This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring.”* So ethnicity or even family guarantees you will be saved...God saves His own completely.
  
4. Read 10-17. What does the Lord invite King Ahaz to do in verses 10-11? How does Ahaz respond in verse 12? What was the real reason Ahaz declined the Lord's offer? See 2 Kings 16:7-8. The Lord not only calls upon Ahaz and Judah to place their confidence in Him, He graciously condescends to help them to believe. God has been speaking to Ahaz...He has come to him through the prophet... He came through Isaiah to His earthly king.



- a. The Lord is willing to put Himself at their disposal: in order to strengthen their confidence in Him, the Lord offers to provide Ahaz with a sign. Ahaz is invited, “Ask for a sign from Yahweh your God.
  - b. But Ahaz spurns the Lord’s gracious offer and command, using the guise of humility (verse 12) to conceal his determination to go his own way and seek his own “salvation.” Thinking that the LORD wouldn’t know he wanted to deceive. Ahaz is not moved by the fact that God spoke to him the first time so God comes again...this proves Ahaz’ heart condition, for he refused God’s offer and God’s command to ask...for God’s coming to him knowing Ahaz’ heart simply seals his own destruction. The perishing have no excuse as they follow their sinful course.
  - c. As 2 Kings 16:7-8 indicate, Ahaz had resolved to put his trust in the mighty nation of Assyria, rather than in the Lord Almighty.
5. What is the purpose for Immanuel for the people? For Ahaz?
- a. For the people it is a sign of God’s great promise for His people
    - (1) That Pekah and Rezin will be defeated within 12 years of this prophesy...vs. 16, “for before the boy knows...” the time of accountability is in mind here...12 years old.
    - (2) The Redeemer...to send a deliverer...fulfilling the promise He first made in Gen. 3:15.
  - b. For Ahaz, he is lost...God took everything out of his hand because of his rejection of God’s covenant made with His children and reaffirmed with His ancestor King David. He could have been the hero if you will by asking for something of God for the people but he had other plans...so God moved to his destruction.
6. Read 7:18-8:10. What does the Lord tell Ahaz will be the result of his seeking help from Assyria rather than from the Lord his God?( Note: The “flies” are a reference to the armies of Egypt and the “bees” are a reference to the armies of Assyria.)
- a. Vs. 18...eventual downfalls of Damascus, Samaria and Judah...Assyria will be summoned by God not by Ahaz
  - b. Vs. 20...Assyria will conquer and Judah will be shamed and humiliated
  - c. Vs. 21...this points to a time of hardship in the land when the simplest of foods is all one will have
  - d. Vs. 23...because there are so few people and so little working of the land by so few it reverts back to its wildness
  - e. 8:1-10...Assyria will deal with Syria and Ephraim...and then Judah... *“reaching even to the neck”*...it will almost be completely destroyed but not quite...
  - f. Another son of Isaiah is born...Maher-shalal-hash-baz= “hastening to the spoils, speeding is the prey”. The first son symbolized God provision for His people. How does this one do the same? His name prophesies the coming of the end of Syria, Israel and the coming judgment on Judah. God is providing for His people by keeping His word. So just like the first son he stands as a reminder of God’s word...the first restoration the 2<sup>nd</sup> judgment.
7. What is the meaning of God calling Judah, “Immanuel” at the end of verse 8 and then referring to Immanuel again at the end of verse 10?”
- a. Another reminder of His Coming provision for them when they will have a king that will actually do as the LORD says....
  - b. God’s redeemer...God with them...they are associated with the Christ as we are...that is the remnant is...the true believers.
  - c. Even though all things seems to be falling apart and are in chaos...God is still with His remnant to deliver them through...not from the coming punishment... but through it.

8. Read 8:11-15. What is the purpose for this section? Remember your calling and all that you felt associated with being in the presence of God...don't forget the fear of the LORD...this Savior will be a sanctuary to His own but a stone of offense and a stumbling stone ... this is how Isaiah and all the other faithful will be able to meet the advancing armies. (See I Peter 2:1-12) The "he" in this text is clearly Messianic in description especially with this passage being explained in the N.T. But Isaiah would have made the connection as God was talking directly to him. The Redeemer...the Messiah...will rescue.
9. Read 16-22. What message does the Lord instruct Isaiah to give the people in this time of national crisis? (Remember what was Isaiah called and commissioned to do.)
  - a. Verse 19 tragically depicts the spiritual apostasy of the nation of Judah. The Lord informs Isaiah that the people will, indeed, approach him, but they will not come seeking the Lord their God. On the contrary, they will actually request the prophet of the Lord to contact mediums and spiritualists on their behalf. Almost like the people at the foot of Mt. Sinai asking Aaron to make for them a golden calf.
  - b. In their hour of need they will abandon all faith and confidence in the Lord: either viewing Him as unable to help them, or spitefully rejecting Him because of what He has seen fit to bring into their lives to discipline them and chastise them (namely, first the combined forces of Syria and Israel and now the "flood waters of the Euphrates River" in the form of the invading Assyrian armies).
  - c. In response to their request Isaiah is to urge the people to consult their God and receive instruction from His Word. Then follows the warning of the fate of those who refuse to heed the call to seek the Lord and trust in Him: "*shall be thrust into thick darkness.*" (verse 22). Remember the warning to Ahaz in chap. 7:9b.
10. Read 9:1-7. What will Isaiah be doing during these dark days spoken of Isaiah 8:17-22 and what promise does the Lord provide for him and those like him in the passage before us?
  - a. They will see the dark days...in other words they will go through them...Even in the darkest of times; Isaiah will wait for the Lord, confidently trusting in Him. Even when he must suffer, not for his own sins but because he finds himself dwelling in the midst of an apostate nation, Isaiah will patiently and steadfastly remain faithful to the Lord and wait upon Him.
  - b. And the Lord gives this promise to those who wait for Him and continue to hope in Him, even in the midst of the darkest times...
11. Contrast the past and future states of the land of Zebulun and Naphtali. See Isaiah 9:1-2 and also Matthew 4:12-17. (Note: The land of Zebulun and Naphtali, located in the northern region of Galilee, were the first to experience the brunt of the Assyrian invasion.)
12. In Isaiah 9:3-5 the prophet is speaking about the deliverance the Lord would give to those who had remained faithful to Him and those who returned to Him in repentance. What are some of the blessings for which Isaiah praises the Lord?
  - a. "You will enlarge the nation" (verse 3a). The nation that was conquered and led away into captivity is miraculously revived and multiplied.
  - b. You will "increase their joy."
    - (1) This is a really cool statement for it says first of all that they have had some joy even in all this darkness. Even in the troubles that they have been placed they are able to rejoice. And now He is increasing it. Jesus came to make our joy "FULL"!

- (2) They will rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest, as men rejoice when they divide the plunder” (verse 3b). Their joy is compared to that experienced by men when they gather in the harvest or when they divide the spoil of battle. But this joy is far superior to all such earthly joys, it transcends all earthly joy, it is a joy in the Lord: “they rejoice before you (Yahweh)”...the God and Father...the one in whom they have much reason to rejoice. (cp. Psalm 43:3-4).
  - c. In verses 4-5 the future deliverance from the oppression of the enemy is compared to the great deliverance the Lord provided for His people in the day when He used Gideon to win a great victory over the Midianites who held Israel in terrible subjection in the days of the judges (Judges 7).
13. Who is the center of that deliverance...its object and procurer and how is this One described? How would this have comforted the believers at this time?
14. What type of “rapid fire” pattern has been displayed in these chapters 7-9:1-7? Why? Judgment (7:1-9)- Restoration (7:10-14)... Judgment (7:15-8:10) –Restoration (8:11-15)... Judgment (8:16-22)-Restoration (9:1-7)...and a few other places dropped in along the way...to reiterate for God’s people who were preparing to go through the same devastation as their countrymen, that God would be with them through this.

Next Time: Isaiah 9:8-11:16

Bible Study  
The Book of Isaiah  
November 7, 2012

- A. Prayer
- B. Review

1. What was the main point (s) of the chapters 7-9:7?
2. Given we have now covered 9½ chapters of this book we have seen between 45-50 uses of God’s personal name...Yahweh written LORD by Isaiah. What is significant about the fact that he uses God’s covenantal name so much?
  - a. To highlight that He is a personal God...He has a name...He is intimately involved with what is going on...
  - b. To highlight the covenantal relationship He has with His people. The covenant requires obedience and with obedience comes blessings... with disobedience comes punishment/discipline...
  - c. It also highlights that as the God before time He is always within His “rights” to do as He says He will do. This is not some arbitrary act of an angry parent...this is the potter dealing with His clay molding and shaping it as only He can for the determined affect.
3. Just for fun... *for those who like to dive in and study specific things.*  
Have you ever considered the relationship between words like “behold”, “look” and “see” in Scripture ...not to mention all the times the Lord speaks of the use of the

“eyes” (but even more specifically in this book)...the relationship between these words and illusions to words like “faith”, “belief”, “understand” and “trust”. Look back over the last 9 chapters and see how these words and illusions are used and just what they are talking about. These words work both ways...those who are able to behold/see/look upon the things of the LORD and understand...and those who behold, look, and see what they want to see and what they want to believe in. But in most cases we are dealing with the children of God. By using these words Isaiah is asking, “Who is it who is able to gaze upon God and understand His action to the degree that one can understand?” Believers have an ability that others do not... and when we choose to NOT use it, it gets us into all kinds of trouble.

### C. Chapters 9:8-10:34

1. Let's read verses 8-17. In Isaiah 7:5-8 the Lord had declared that He would oppose Israel's ungodly alliance with Syria and their goal of destroying Judah. Now, Israel is beginning to experience the Lord's opposition to their evil course—perhaps by this time the Assyrians had begun their advance into Israel. But what is Israel's reaction in 9:8-10 to this calamity ordained by God in His opposition to their sinful endeavor to conquer Judah?
  - a. The nation of Israel exhibited a spirit of pride and arrogance; they are described as speaking “with pride and arrogant hearts” (literally, “greatness of heart;” i.e.; stout, hard, defiant hearts).
  - b. Their heart is swollen with arrogance, self-determination, and defiance. Far from being humbled and becoming repentant as a result of the chastening judgments of the Lord, they are resolutely determined not to give in but to resist.
  - c. They are determined to withstand God and rebuild on an even grander scale: *“The bricks have crumbled, but we will rebuild with stone cut out of the quarry; the sycamore trees have been cut down, but we will replace them with cedars.”*
2. What is the Lord's response to Israel's attitude seen in 11-14? (Note: “Rezin” is the king of Syria, his foes are the Assyrians, and the pronoun “them” is a reference to Israel. Thus, Isaiah is telling us that the Assyrians would conquer Syria and then successfully advance against Israel.)
  - a. He will utterly conquer...the Assyrians from the east and the Philistines from the south will be used by God to subdue Syria...or as was said in the Bible study meeting, “Fine then, I'll just take you out.” (God to His defiant people.) or “Release the Kraken!”
  - b. Because of this spirit of defiant pride and arrogance exhibited by Israel in the face of His former judgments, because they have chosen to attack their “brothers” Judah, the Lord will now bring upon them even greater judgments ...because His acts of judgment have met with resistance rather than repentance, the Lord will continue to set Himself against these people who persist in their sin.
3. Who does the Lord especially hold responsible for the present moral and spiritual state of the nation in 15-17? Why? Anyone else? What have they done?
  - a. As verses 15-17 indicate, the political and religious leaders are held to blame for the moral and spiritual state of the nation.
    - (1) The political leaders supported the popular practices of injustice and made no effort to enforce God's moral law (10:1-2).
    - (2) The religious leaders acquiesced to the people's desire and proclaimed a message of peace and immunity from judgment, instead of calling for the repentance that would result in true peace and communion with God (Isaiah 30:9-11).

- b. But, as 9:17b indicates, the people themselves are also held accountable for their conduct... a conduct that is specifically spelled out in the verses mentioned.
- 4. What is going on in verses 18-10:4?
  - a. This shows the consequence of a society given free rein in their passions. God's judgment takes the form of allowing the society to consume itself. The whole structure of society which is supposed to be based on God's Word in morality and integrity collapses into chaos like a wild fire on a prairie... no stopping it once it gets started...the fire has to burn itself out.
  - b. In 10:1 woe is pronounced against those who write unrighteous and perverse laws. That is to say, those who seek to use the legal system for their own selfish ends—instead of enacting justice.
  - c. According to 10:2, the design and effect of such practices is to take unfair advantage of those who are socially and politically powerless and helpless.
  - d. In verse 3 the question is posed to those who would pervert justice and manipulate the legal system for their own personal gain at the expense of justice, "Now what will you do on the day of reckoning, when disaster comes upon you from afar? To whom will you run for help? Where will you find a secure place to leave your wealth?" In other words, "To whom will you turn for defense when the Righteous Judge calls you before His judgment seat and enacts His sentence of judgment against you?"
  - e. In verse 4 the answer is provided: there will be no escape for such people when the judgment of God comes in the form of foreign invasion and conquest.
- 5. 4 times we see this phrase in our reading thus far, *"For all this His anger has not turned away, and His hand is stretched out still."* (9:12,17,21,10:4) Why is it there so often in such a short space?
- 6. Now let's turn to 10:5-19. What are some of the things God is telling us about Assyria in verses 5-7? (Just so we are clear. Who is doing this? God is personally directing...these folks are the tip of His sword as He wields it! This is not God allowing this to happen. This is not the natural flow of His plan. This a parent who is physically spanking His kids and the Assyrians are the proverbial switch in the hand of God! He is personally metering out the punishment on His own.
  - a. They are the rod of His anger...the instrument that He will use to meter out His justice upon Syria, Israel and Judah.
  - b. He is using a "godless" people to carry out His wrath against a "godless people". There is a bit of irony here in that God uses the same term to describe Assyria as He does His chosen people.
  - c. They are unaware that this is what they want to do until God puts in in the wheel house. Assyria wasn't even considering such an invasion until God placed it in their hearts.
  - d. Tell me about the Assyrian's attitude about themselves and how does that played into God's cause of bringing wrath down on His people in verses 8-11? Their arrogance drives them and when He places this idea in their eyes it makes perfect sense for this is a people they haven't conquered yet.
- 7. How is it that God can ordain Assyria to do His will by being His instrument of His wrath and yet they are condemned for the wrath they will bring? Assyria thought of herself as sovereign...in control of all that she did. Judgment would surely come upon Judah but an even greater woe to them that brings the judgment...for that was what God had raised them up to do.

8. Why is God so entirely against men boasting? (Think about what He will do to Nebuchadnezzar when he boasts.) It is such a sign of the Fall and the depth to which man will go to reject God in his life. All boasting is elevating ourselves above all things...when we are to be the most humble of people given the fact that God provides all that we have and we can take no credit for anything. How many commandments does boasting break? All of them! Why does the boasting of pagans matter? All men are responsible to keep these Laws of God...God will hold even the pagan accountable for their sin...and sin is judged by God's law.
9. According to verses 20-23, what effect will all this chastening produce in His people?
  - a. Their present sense of self-reliance and reliance upon men—they “will no longer rely upon the one who struck them down” is a reference to Ahaz and the leaders of Judah initially calling upon Assyria for deliverance from Syria and Israel, (cp. 2 Kings 16:7-8)—shall be replaced by a genuine reliance upon the Lord their God (verse 20).
  - b. These people shall prove to truly be the people of God by returning to the Lord their God, the One from whom they had departed (verse 21). Note: while verses 20-21 contain the promise that “a remnant” shall return unto the Lord, verses 22-23 emphasize that it is only a remnant.
  - c. Where does the reference, *“For though your people Israel be as the sand of the sea...”* come from? Gen. 22:17 and other places. How is this reference now defined? To speak of the remnant as God's people...or as Paul says in the NT... *“For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but through Isaac shall your offspring be named. This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God but the children of the promise are counted as offspring.”* Rom. 9:6-8
10. How does God once again reassure His remnant giving them hope in verses 24-34?
  - a. *“Therefore...”* because of what He just said about there being a remnant that will make it through...
  - b. *“O My people...”* reassures His people of their status with Him if they are still wondering...
  - c. He only disciplines those who he loves...
  - d. The Lord will deal a blow upon them at just the right time...
  - e. *“In that day the burden will depart...”* He assures them that there will be a particular day when Assyria will be dealt with...just like there will be a particular day when all evil will be dealt with decisively by God ...
  - f. He even tells them the route the attackers will take in verses 28-32...
  - g. Verses 33-34 tells us of God specific action He will take when they get to Jerusalem...I s. 37:30-37 gives us the REST OF THE STORY!

Next time: 11 and 12

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. What was the main point (s) of 9:8-10:34?
2. Where is the hope of restoration in this text and to whom alone does He give it? To His elect from among the nation of Israel and Judah...who by the way are the only ones who can see, hear and understand by faith what God has to say.

C. Isaiah 11

1. Let's look first at 11:1-5. How badly has God chastised His own according to verse 1? There is only a stump left.
2. Now look back with me a second to 10:34. What is this a picture of? God cutting down the vast army of the Assyrians. Now to 11:1, what is being described here? The coming of the Messiah from the promised house of Judah. What possible reason would God have through Isaiah to make these 2 comparisons: between the vast forest thicket of Assyria being cut down and the house of David specifically the Messiah coming forth from a tree stump?
  - a. The Messiah comes from one tree...one way to salvation
  - b. Isaiah looks at the Messiah's lowly coming in the context of the mighty empire of Assyria, by not emphasizing King David's house but rather emphasizing the stump of Jesse...highlighting the humble shepherding beginnings. Jesse had lived in Bethlehem and Bethlehem was least among the cities of Judah.
  - c. Additional contrast: Assyria would perish and come to a complete end, but in the rootstock/stump of Jesse there is new life. From the stump a twig would come forth that would give root to an uncountable forest.... "his roots will bear fruit."
3. What is the difference between this stump and the one spoken of in 7:4? The first speaks of a slow and certain death...this one here speaks of life ...life that will bear fruit...specifically the Messiah.
4. Now let's take a moment to look at another of Isaiah's lists. Describe the character and reign of this king who is none other than Jesus the Messiah. (See Isaiah 11:2-5.)
  - a. He is equipped for the wonderful task of bringing peace upon earth. Peace will come only through the One who comes forth from the stump of Jesse.
  - b. The 3<sup>rd</sup> person of the Trinity is with Him...the way it is written is that the Spirit Himself is "physically" with Him. Just like with all "prophets" the Spirit had to be placed upon them ...remember the dove descending upon Christ just before His baptism. This Spirit of Yahweh brings all the gifts listed here...while some of them may have appeared in men at one time or another they will all appear together in the one man Jesus Christ.
  - c. "He will delight in the fear of Jehovah" (verse 3a). The Hebrew word has the root meaning "to smell," "to smell with pleasure," and hence, "to delight in." Thus the Messiah is pictured as "breathing in the invigorating atmosphere" of the fear of the Lord; and being Himself governed by that holy fear,
  - d. He shall carry out the rule assigned to Him by His heavenly Father. (see Is. 9:6-7) From verses 3b-5 we learn that He will not base His judgments (decisions) upon superficial, outward appearances; rather,
    - (1) He will look upon the heart and judge with true righteousness.

- (2) Consequently, the poor and the meek shall receive justice and the wicked shall be condemned. What is described here is the righteous reign of the Lord Jesus Christ when He returns at the end of the age (note 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10a).
  - e. He is righteousness
  - f. He is faithfulness
- 5. What will conditions be like when Jesus the Messiah exercises His reign? (See Isaiah 11:6-10)
  - a. Verses 6-9 describe the universal peace that shall permeate the Lord's great kingdom when He comes to establish a new heaven and a new earth.
  - b. Verses 6-8 are describing the peaceful co-existence that shall prevail throughout nature and between man and nature; it will be Paradise.
  - c. From verse 9 we learn that the entire world shall be transformed into the kingdom of God. Note: the kingdom of God, the earthly manifestation of which in Old Testament times was concentrated on holy Mount Zion, shall expand over the entire earth (note 2 Peter 3:13).
- 6. Now let's look at vss. 11-16. Which day is Isaiah talking about? The day of deliverance from Exile that is yet to happen. When was the first time He extended His hand this way in deliverance? When they came out of Egypt...with a strong hand and an outstretched arm He delivered His people from their captivity. What is another possibility in how to see this passage given the context of this book thus far? Given the context of the last chapter vs. 17, 21,;10:4...where the text speaks of God outstretched arm in judgment he may be emphasizing a further use of His outstretched arm....one of recovering His exiled people . The first outstretching in the immediate context was one of discipline on His people the 2<sup>nd</sup> time was to deliver. What will the affect be of this in-gathering on the people of God?
  - a. Restoration/ unity between the tribes...Israel and Judah will reconcile...when they return from Exile the all 12 tribes will be represented and they will worship together and work together to rebuild the temple and the wall of Jerusalem.
  - b. There will be freedom from oppression at least from their old enemies...
  - c. The remnant will participate in the destruction and humiliation of their enemies...
  - d. God will deliver them in a dramatic way...there is even a hint about the role the River will play in their deliverance..
  - e. The LORD will lead them home along the Way that He provides.
- 7. One of the first things God talks about after in-gathering His people is unity among the tribes. Why is unity in the LORD so important to the Church and its witness for the LORD?
- 8. What does all of this talk of in-gathering have to do with us? What hope can we gain from these promises?

#### D. Chapter 12

- 1. Read Chapter 12. Let's become theological for a moment as we are apt to do.☺ Using verses 1-2, construct an apologetic for election!
  - a. Vs. 1 has Isaiah speaking as if he is speaking for all the people of God when they return from exile. God was angry with them because of their sin...wrathful because they were deserving of His wrath...But God turned His anger away giving the gift of comfort to these sinners who could care less. God looked down in His righteous anger but then in His time He sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice a substitution for us and by His blood the wrath of God was satisfied and the judgments of the law appeased. (I John 4:10)



- b. Vs. 2 we see this phrase, “Behold, God is my salvation...(he is speaking as if all Israel ...that is the remnant that will return... were one man). This is written in an imperfect tense in the Hebrew which expresses continued action...They have been justified by faith and they are being sanctified in the faith. Look, see understand...your deliverance...your salvation has come by the hand of God alone...you didn’t and couldn’t do anything on your own to affect a change in your condition unless God did it...
  - c. Also, by saying that God is my salvation the Hebrew once again confirms what I just said ...for this phrase makes it clear that He alone is the initiator and the source of this salvation. Hebrews 12:2
  - d. When Isaiah speaks of strength, song and being his salvation he says it is Yahweh Adon...the mighty God Yahweh...the covenantal God who has done this and it could not be accomplished except through His power and by His promise to redeem.
2. In Isaiah 12:3 what imagery is used to describe the salvation bestowed upon His people by Jesus the Messiah? What aspects of that salvation are emphasized?
- a. Verse 3 speaks about the comfort and privilege given to the believer in Christ: “Therefore, with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.” The imagery is that of an abundant supply of refreshing, life-giving water (very meaningful to people living in the arid Middle East).
  - b. We reminded of the abundance of grace and divine blessing that is offered to us in Christ (think John 1:16 and 4:7-14). Here is a divine abundance that is presently ministered to us in measured portion, but that shall finally be poured out upon us in unlimited and eternal bounty in the kingdom of God.
  - c. And just a side note John 6 speaks of us being drawn up out of our pit/well of our sin by God...we could not come to Him unless He draws us to Himself.
3. With this salvation comes a changed heart and nature. What characteristics will the people exhibit when that day comes according to the rest of this chapter?
- a. Brothers and sisters will exhort one another to give thanks...
  - b. They will remind one another to tell the stories of God’s deed for the people and the next generation need to hear and know...
  - c. They will freely sing to the LORD...in captivity they were not allowed to sing the songs of God’s praise...many did not want to even...
  - d. In verses 6 the people are called upon to shout and sing some more so that all will hear and so all will know...we have been given a mandate to proclaim God and His word to all for He is in our midst! His presence is real and should motivate us the way a loved one’s presence motivates us to do our best!
  - e. What does this say to us who have been delivered in our day and age? Vs. 6 uses the feminine form for the word inhabitant...so the people are personified as a woman...not a harlot this time but a purified bride...the Bride of Christ...us!

Next Time: Chapters 13 and 14

Bible Study  
The Book of Isaiah  
January 16, 2013

- A. Prayer
- B. Review of the last 12 chapters

1. What would you say, after re-reading these last 12 chapters, would be the main themes captured here? How do they speak to us today?
2. In Chapter 1 how bad are things? Can they be any worse really!!?
  - a. Because of the grace God has willingly shown to His elect peoples the nation's rebellion appears even more striking and more hateful. How base is the sin of ingratitude? This is the basic nature of the fallen side of things.
  - b. In verse 4, Isaiah identifies these people as "a sinful nation" (or, "a sinning nation.") "Sinning" is the adjective that most accurately describes these people: they are devoted to the practice of their sins; they love their sins more than they love their God. Furthermore, he describes them as "an offspring who are evil doers." Note: the text literally reads, "an offspring of evildoers"—but this does not mean that they are the children of evildoers; on the contrary, they are the children of godly forefathers. But, unlike those forefathers, they are a generation of evildoers. Then they are "children who deal in corruption" (or, "children who act destructively.") By their lifestyle of sin and disobedience they are bringing estrangement (a separation from God, their Father...separation that would be in the form of discipline not loss of salvation) upon themselves.
  - c. Their sin is described as personal transgression against the Lord Himself: "they have forsaken Yahweh; they have despised the Holy One of Israel."= "Yisrael Kedoshim"
  - d. How do we do these today?
  - e. Is anything good in this chapter at all for God's people? What? God Keeping His promises to punish and to bless...as in the language of restoration in vss. 26-31. We need a God who keeps His promises to discipline and to bless.
3. In the midst of impending discipline and judgment against God's own people what is it specifically that we find here in this chapter and more specifically in chapter 2:1-5? Words of hope! God has a day that they will finally be vindicated among God's enemies. Salvation is coming!
4. What does Isaiah see happening in this period known as "the last days", the days between Christ's birth and His 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming according to chapter 2:1-5?
  - a. *God will take control...has control over all things...*
  - b. *"It shall come to pass..."* is God's guarantee by the power of His Word that all that He says will happen! This has the same force as *Thus says the LORD...!*
  - c. Verse 2b and following speak of God's kingdom...His Church... being revealed to be permanent, durable, unshakeable and everlasting...it will be *"...established as highest or chief among the mountains..."* But we must not forget that this has been a kingdom that has always been see Ps. 93:1-2.
  - d. Next the text tells us that *"...all the nations shall flow into it..."* See Rev. 5:9-10. These nations are the Gentile elect that will be called from every nation tongue and tribe...like a mighty river "flowing into the city" ...the kingdom of God with its ultimate picture of all those coming into the heavenly city on the New Earth of Rev. 21.
  - e. In verse 3, not only do they flow in but they come to praise and worship the one true and living God and they desire to be instructed and to KNOW their God and they also have a desire to walk with Him. They want to be discipled that they might be affective followers to bring Him glory. Doctrinal purity is crucial for this to occur...for the type of teaching is that which interprets God's Word correctly and effectively so that lives are changed.
  - f. Can you think of a specific event this may be speaking to? Note: this statement *"For out of Zion shall go the law or the instruction* (which is a better translation of

- the Hebrew word) *and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.*” Probably points to a specific event in the future...Pentecost. See Luke 24:46-47.
- g. Verse 4 speaks of the Lord’s peaceful rule over the nation’s... beginning with His church in this life as we seek unity and harmony in God’s blessing...with an eye to the day of rule of the Godhead after Christ’s 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming. (See Eph. 2:14-18) this is a picture of the type of peace that can be had when believers live together as God has prescribed but one that won’t be fully realized until the consummation.
  - h. There is finality in that wars will not start up again or people won’t sin again.
5. What is the definition of an idol from these chapters? Something that is valued over God! Martin Luther defined it this way: *“Anything we look to more that we look to Christ for our sense of accountability, joy, significance, hope and security is by definition our god...something we adore, serve, and rely on with our whole life and heart.”* Why does the Bible go to great lengths to so clearly define this? Why is a clear understanding of this important for us today?
  6. In chapters 3-4, why does God describe the society by means of the lifestyle of the women?
    - a. One author put it this way, “When the women are wholly vain and self-centered, the cancer of moral decay is truly consuming the nations heart.”- E.J. Young .
    - b. What does he mean by this statement and how would such a statement be heard and received today? By not using proper adornment and relying on true beauty given by God to be a reflection of God women are rejecting God’s work as not complete or not good enough and attitudes like over concern with youthfulness and dress then permeates the rest of their thinking thus rejecting God and His purposes. What is significant in the repeating of the phrase, *“the daughters of Zion”*? The World may act this way...but NOT the daughters of Zion for they are held to a different and higher standard. The Scriptures says that Israel had been out whoring and that the nations around them saw right through them.
    - c. The leadership/headship principle has been laid aside. Since the men are unwilling or unable to lead as God prescribes the women step up to lead in the home and in business and in government... this is not what they were created to do...not the duties they were created to perform. Now this does not mean that women cannot serve in certain areas of leadership (that would go against some of the basic assertions of Scripture)...in this case God through Isaiah is saying that they have taken these positions for the wrong reasons...the men have passively given them up...the whole order established by God is purposefully turned on its head.
    - d. Their actions were symbolic of how the children of Israel was trying to make themselves attractive to the nations around them...so that they could be “like” them and be accepted by them...they were throwing away their position and relationship to God to be an adulteress with other nations.
    - e. Since twice in this section we see the use of the words “in that day” we also know that this speaks of THAT Day when the LORD returns and judges the earth... and it speaks of THIS day-now- the period between Christ’s comings.
  7. In Chapter 5 it is obvious that God was “expecting” a good crop, what does this say about God’s sovereignty? Was He caught off guard by this action by His people? Had he simply done His best but it wasn’t good enough as in verse 4? Why or why not? (Be prepared to support your answer from the text...chapters 1-5.) If he wasn’t in control of this situation how could He have been sovereign over all the others...famine, controlling the rain, sending forth enemies to judge His people? No, His ability is not in

question here ...simply showing that He did all that He was supposed to do...no one can blame Him for these actions...the people are responsible for their own sin. While God ordains all things to happen as they do His Word is clear that that does not remove personal responsibility for our sins. He is sovereign but they/we are still responsible and because of the Fall we can still chose wrongly.

8. In chapter 6 we obviously see Isaiah being called into God's service and we see that he has a righteous fear of God. How would you describe what "the fear of God" is to someone else? Continually repenting and realizing your need for God's forgiveness...knowing God, looking to Him and then knowing you have to be moving forward to do His revealed will.
9. In Isaiah 7-9:7 how would you describe the Crisis and the Promise spoken of there? The crisis once again was Ahaz resting in his own strength and the strength of God's enemies for "salvation" against an enemy bent on his destruction...the promise is that God would send the deliverer in His time and in His way...as He always has...the crisis was that Ahaz would not rest in God for anything even when given the opportunity...hence the people are failed by their king...the promise is the same one that has always been...God will take care of His people.
10. Who is the center of that deliverance in Isaiah 9:6-7 ...its object and procurer and how is this One described? How would this have comforted the believers at this time?
11. In Chapter 9 and 10 who does the Lord hold especially responsible for the present moral and spiritual state of the nation in 15-17? Why? Anyone else? What have they done?
  - a. As 9:15-17 indicate, the political and religious leaders are held to blame for the moral and spiritual state of the nation.
    - (1) The political leaders supported the popular practices of injustice and made no effort to enforce God's moral law (10:1-2).
    - (2) The religious leaders acquiesced to the people's desire and proclaimed a message of peace and immunity from judgment, instead of calling for the repentance that would result in true peace and communion with God (Isaiah 30:9-11).
  - b. But, as 9:17b indicates, the people themselves are also held accountable for their conduct... a conduct that is specifically spelled out in the verses mentioned.
12. Let's look first at 11:1-5. In that day how badly did God chastised His own according to verse 1? There is only a stump left. What "right" does God have in doing this against His people? Because of the covenant He must hold them accountable...He must do what He has said He will do...reward them for faithfulness and punish them for unfaithfulness...He must do what He has said.
13. In Isaiah 12:3 what imagery is used to describe the salvation bestowed upon His people by Jesus the Messiah? What aspects of that salvation are emphasized?
  - a. Verse 3 speaks about the comfort and privilege given to the believer in Christ: "Therefore, with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation." The imagery is that of an abundant supply of refreshing, life-giving water (very meaningful to people living in the arid Middle East).

- b. We are reminded of the abundance of grace and divine blessing that is offered to us in Christ (think John 1:16 and 4:7-14). Here is a divine abundance that is presently ministered to us in measured portion, but that shall finally be poured out upon us in unlimited and eternal bounty in the kingdom of God.
  - c. And just a side note John 6 speaks of us being drawn up out of our pit/well of our sin by God...we could not come to Him unless He draws us to Himself.
14. With this salvation comes a changed heart and nature. What characteristics will the people exhibit when that day comes according to the rest of this chapter?
- a. Brothers and sisters will exhort one another to give thanks...
  - b. They will remind one another to tell the stories of God's deed for the people and the next generation need to hear and know...
  - c. They will freely sing to the LORD...in captivity they were not allowed to sing the songs of God's praise...many did not want to even...
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  - e. What does this say to us who have been delivered in our day and age? Vs. 6 uses the feminine form for the word inhabitant...so the people are personified as a woman...not a harlot this time... but a purified bride...the Bride of Christ...us!

Next Time: Chapters 13 and 14

Bible Study  
The Book of Isaiah  
January 23, 2013

A. Prayer

B. Chapter 13 and 14

1. What empire is the subject of the oracle recorded in Isaiah 13-14? Babylon. Here we have a "massa"= a divine oracle or declaration. This word can also mean "burden" for the divine utterance will be a burden to be sure. Babylon then is the subject of this prophecy. And unless we somehow are led to think that this could not have been written by Isaiah because the Babylonians are so far in the future, God takes care of that for us by telling us the Isaiah saw all this in a vision...the word translated "see" is the word for vision. Also if Isaiah wasn't the author it would be strange since his name appears here as well.
2. Who is the prophet commanding in verse 2-5? The armies of Medes and Persians... To what end? The instruments of His judgment on the Babylonians.

3. What is meant by the use of this interesting language to describe the armies of the Medes and Persians, like “*consecrated ones*”, “*my mighty men*”, “*my proudly exulting ones*”, and “*the weapon of His indignation*”? Simply that these people have been set aside/dedicated/consecrated by God for a specific function that God has directed them to execute. This action will bring God glory...hence calling them the proudly exulting ones= the ones in whom He glorifies Himself. God controls all actions of all nations...God is at the lead of this army where He will execute His wrath and lay waste all of Babylon.
  
4. What specifically are we told will happen to Babylon (see Isaiah 13:6-22)?
  - a. God’s wrath and He is making it clear that He is doing it...
  - b. The proud Babylon of whom Nebuchadnezzar had said, “Is this not the great Babylon which I have built?”...will in the future from Nebuchadnezzar be doing the same thing he did when God cast him into the wilderness...bowing before someone else, wailing and begging because they will be so weak they can’t stand on their own.
  - c. There is some sense by using the word Almighty= Shaddai in verses 6 as God does... that this sentence could be rendered, “*You shall know what Shaddai means at this destruction...*” In other words, there is One who is more powerful than you and His title is Shaddai/Almighty and He has come against you...
  - d. They will be desperate for food or any handout...the once proud will be completely humbled...
  - e. So humbled will they be that the land is laid waste, those who won’t believe in Shaddai are cast away...things are so bad that no one takes the time to look into the stars...all will be dark...sort of like in Narnia... “*it is always winter but never Christmas...*”
  - f. The arrogant will be dealt with completely...see Daniel 5.
  - g. They will be hunted rather than being the hunter...and those who find any will want to wipe them off the face of the earth.
  - h. God will raise up the Medes and the Persians to subdue the Babylonians who believe themselves to be unbeatable. The Assyrians, the Babylonians and now the Medes and Persians have little to no regard for life each one seems to be even more ruthless... the Medes did not care for wealth as the Babylonians had but simply conquest with no regard for whoever gets in the way.
  - i. As Isaiah 13:19-22 indicates, this great empire will be totally destroyed by the judge of the entire world. Remember Sodom and Gomorrah... how completely God destroyed these cities...
  - j. This was God’s will that they be an instrument of His will in judgment against His people but they are also responsible for their own sinfulness. How do we explain this? How are they responsible for something God decreed?
  
5. Why do you suppose the Lord reveals the fate of this future empire when in fact it was the Assyrian empire that was presently threatening the nation of Judah?
  - a. He did so in order to give them the full picture and to provide them with the assurance of God’s ultimate victory.
  - b. At about the time Isaiah was delivering this oracle, God was rising up a leader in Babylon, who would begin to re-unite the Chaldeans into a nation. His name was Merodach-baladan. He reigned approximately from 722-705 B.C. One hundred years later, 625-605B.C. , there would reign another strong leader, Nabopolassar, who would make the nation strong militarily. During his reign the Assyrian capitol of Nineveh would fall in 612 B.C. and in the last year of his reign the mighty Assyrian empire would come to a complete end. Interesting little side bar in how God works... Nabopolassar had entered into an alliance with the first king of the Medes to pull this off. This is interesting

in the fact that God will use the Medes and the Persians to bring down Babylon. When Assyria fell Egypt seemed to be the most likely player to move in to control the region, but God had other plans. The young son of Nabopolassar defeated Egypt's king decisively. Under Nebuchadnezzar (604-562 B.C.) the Babylonians became a great international empire, a type or model of every great pagan empire that would ever dominate the world. Remember the use of "the great Babylon" in the book of Revelation.

6. Isaiah 13 is depicting the overthrow of the Babylon Empire without question. But what elements in this description indicate that the victory of the Medes represents the final victory of the Lord over the whole world of sinful mankind? (See especially Isaiah 13:4-5,10,13)
  - a. The emphasis of verse 4 is on the great multitude gathered against Babylon, the terrifying noise of this multitude, and the fact that it is the Lord of hosts Himself who is mustering these forces for battle.
  - b. The assembling of the historical armies of the Medes and the Persians against Babylon suddenly takes on supernatural and cosmic dimensions: the Lord's forces are seen as coming from "the farthest recess of heaven," and the Lord Himself is leading them (verse 5). The whole universe is affected by this coming of the Lord's army (verse 10). We see how the sun and the moon will be affected ...so much so that there will be a reversal of their functions to the point of where they won't be needed any more since the Son will take care of the light. (Rev. 21:23)
  - c. In verse 11 the Lord declares, *"I will punish the world for its evil, and the wicked for their iniquity. I will put an end to the pomp of the arrogant, and lay low the pompous pride of the ruthless."*
  - d. Verse 13 describes the cataclysmic destruction of That final Day when Christ returns. The description of the conquest of Babylon revealed in Isaiah is, as indicated, also a picture and prophecy of God's final and ultimate conquest over sinful mankind and over the devil himself.
7. Once again, according to 14:1, what is God's secondary purpose (first to bring Himself glory) for bringing judgment and wrath upon Babylon? For the purpose of redeeming His people. The Hebrew word that could better tie these two chapters together is "Because"...He is doing all of this; *"Because the Lord/ Yahweh will have compassion on Jacob and will again choose Israel, and will set them in their own land ..."* "For" is good but in our day and age I don't think it ties the chapters together well. Interesting side note: when looking at this from our perspective today...the judgment of the world and the final redemption of God's people are interconnected. Look to II Thess. 1:6-10.
8. What do you suppose is meant by *"...and sojourners will join them and attach themselves to the house of Jacob..."* in the short run and in the long run of history? In Num. 18, Is. 56, Zech. 2, as well as other places we see this promise that when God shows His mercy to His people sojourners seek to join with God's people...and of course this is a further fulfillment of the Gentiles coming in to the family of God because the inclusion of these sojourners had also been prophesied...
9. What blessing for God's people is being described in Isaiah 14:2-23?
  - a. When God shows mercy to His people the relation between captive and captor is reversed...Babylon had taken them into slavery now God's work has the Babylonians becoming the slaves of His people...but an interesting context note...they are not called Babylonians...they are not named at all for that name has been wiped from existence.

This prophecy was not fulfilled on a widespread scale at all until the Gentiles are subdued by the Holy Spirit and placed into the Church and become the slaves of God.

- b. Isaiah 14:3-21 is a song or a proverb that the people will sing in remembrance of God's great provision...
  - c. These verses also describe the rest that the Lord shall give to His people on that day: the tyranny of the devil and sinful man shall be cut off and replaced by the experience of God's perfect peace—and the whole creation shall be at rest.
  - d. God caps off this song with his declaration of his final sweep of His hand of judgment.
  - e. In the kingdom of God the redeemed will enjoy the blessing of relief from our suffering and trouble and cruel bondage—no longer will we have to endure the oppressive attacks of the devil and his forces, both spiritual and physical. For the redeemed of the Lord, the eternal state in the kingdom of God will be characterized by rest and peace in the presence of the Lord. Think Sabbath rest from the book of Hebrews.
10. When considering Isaiah 14:9-23 do you think this passage is speaking only about the earthly king of Babylon, or does it look beyond him to tell us the final fate of "the ruler of this world" (i.e.; the devil?)
- a. Isaiah 14:9-23 describes the just retribution that God shall administer on That Day: the arrogant and tyrannical king of Babylon is brought down to destruction and utter humiliation. Daniel 5- Belshazzar.
  - b. Sheol, the place of the dead, is portrayed as preparing a welcome for the tyrant. Sheol rouses all the dead kings, causing them to arise from their thrones and stand in honor of the Babylonian's arrival (verse 9). The dead rulers of the world greet the conquered tyrant with astonishment: they are amazed that he has become as weak and impotent as themselves; that he, too, has succumbed to death; and that, whereas pomp and glory once covered him, now he is covered with worms (verses 10-11).
  - c. As the language of verses 12-15 indicates, this poetic description of the fallen tyrant is not only a reference to the king of Babylon but to the devil himself as the evil power behind the empires of the world—note Revelation 13:2b, a passage in which the devil, portrayed as "the dragon," is said to have given authority to "the beast," which represents the empires of this world.
11. At the end of this passage, 14:24-32 what enemy nations does the Lord promise to deal with? The Lord Almighty pledges to overthrow the invading Assyrian army that was threatening to swallow up His people...and then in 28-31 He promises the affliction of the Philistines. What is it that God swears to in verse 24 and how would that bring comfort to those who were in the midst of the Assyrian problem right then and there? How big is God swearing? What is meant? Big...he would have to cease to exist if he ever went back on his promise.
12. According to verse 26-27 this victory is a vision for what future victory?
- a. In verse 26 and 27 the Lord declares that the victory He is about to accomplish over the Assyrians is a token of His final and ultimate victory: *"This is the plan that has been determined for the whole world; and this is the hand that is stretched out over all the nations."*
  - b. Thus, that generation of God's people who experienced the threat of Assyria and who witnessed the Lord's conquest of that invader (and all God's people who read the record of these things,) are to view that conquest of the Assyrians as a token of the Lord's final victory.
13. Now why are the Philistines thrown in here?



- a. Mainly because they had been dependent upon the Assyrians,
- b. they were used to oppose the Jews,
- c. they had been sworn enemies of the Jews so God curses them as well...they will, at this time, find no one to support them...they will become inconsequential for now...

14. One last question: What does verse 32 communicate to us today?

- a. When any inquire they are to be told that Zion, the Church, is God's work...and in the Church God's afflicted may find refuge.
- b. The work of God is sure and the refuge which He provides in Christ will stand firm forever.

Next time: Isaiah 15-18:7

Bible Study  
The Book of Isaiah  
January 30, 2013

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. What is the main point of Chapter 13? Chapter 14?
2. Why are the Philistines thrown in there at the end of chapter 14? Mainly because they had been dependent upon the Assyrians, they were used to oppose the Jews, they had been sworn enemies of the Jews so God curses them as well...they will, at this time, find no one to support them...they will become inconsequential for now... Why do I say for now? Modern day Palestinians... Hamas, etc.

C. Chapters 15-18:7

1. Read 15-16:14. Who are these people of Moab? According to Genesis, the Moabites were related to the Israelites, with both peoples tracing their lineage back to a common ancestor, Terah, who is named as the father of Abraham and Haran, and Haran being the father of Lot. (Genesis 19:30-38) Lot's son Moab is described as being born from an incestuous relationship between Lot and his eldest daughter (Genesis 19:37) after the destruction of Sodom. The Moabites are described as descendants of Lot's son Moab. Moab geographically is directly across the Dead Sea from Judah. The Moabites were friendly with the Egyptians, having kinship ties with them through Joseph. The principal shrine in Moab was Beyt-baal-me'on, which means "house/shrine of the Baal/master/god of On." The principal shrine of On was in the sacred city of Heliopolis in Egypt and Joseph married one of the daughters of the high priest of On.
2. Does anyone here know why there was such animosity between "brothers"? The Moabites were to be excluded from the assembly of worshipers, because: "They did not come to meet you with food and drink when you were on your way out of Egypt, and even hired against you Balaam, son of Beor from Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse you ...You shall not seek their peace or their prosperity all your days forever." (Deut. 23:3-6) The Israelites were allowed to harass Moab, but were forbidden to wage war on them. The men of Moab and Ammon were forbidden to marry into the Israelite nation, but the women were permitted to convert without restriction. That is why King David who descended from Ruth could be

king and the mother of his grandson Rehoboam son of Solomon was from Moab. In Biblical times, the nation was often in conflict with its Israelite neighbors to the west. Interesting reason given by God...now what does that say for how important it is for us to live the way God prescribes? Everything is part of a greater plan...following God's will ensures reward in that plan for all involved.

3. How are the people of Moab described in Isaiah 15 through 16:2? Moab has now been reduced to a band of homeless refugees, carrying away with them a few personal belongings. In 16:2 Moab is described as a flock of birds, scattered from their nest, in fear and desperation gathering at the fords of the Arnon River (which formed the border with Ammon.)
4. How are the people of God to respond to these refugees who now gather at the border of the land of Judah? (See Isaiah 16:3-4)
  - a. In 16:3-4a the Lord commands His people to show mercy to these desperate Moabite refugees: *"Give counsel, grant justice"* (16:3a). In other words, the people of God are being commanded to do what is right in the sight of God with regard to these people in need...even though they are Moabites.
  - b. The people of God are further commanded to *"make your shade (over them) like night at the height of noon; shelter outcasts; do not reveal the fugitive;"* (16:3b) They are to provide relief and refreshment for such a neighbor in need, come to their aid (receive him, befriend him, provide for him for Jesus' sake.)
  - c. Then the Lord declares, *"Let (my) the outcasts of Moab sojourn among you; be a shelter to them from the destroyer."* (16:4). We are to view such a neighbor in need as precious to the Lord, a person in whom the Lord has an interest and for whom He has concern; one who needs the Lord, one whom the Lord may choose to bring to Christ through our ministry...even one who has been not so cordial to you in the past...
5. What reasons does the Lord give as to why His people are to show compassion to Moab's refugees? (See Isaiah 16:4b-5)
  - a. God's people are to receive these refugees because... *"When the oppressor is no more and destruction has ceased, and he who tramples underfoot has vanished from the land, then a throne will be established in steadfast love, and on it will sit in faithfulness in the tent of David one who judges and seeks justice and is swift to do righteousness."* (16:4b-5). The Lord indicates to His people that the remnant of Moab is not to be feared: all that once served to make Moab a feared enemy—an oppressor and aggressor—has been done away with, he is now a humble suppliant pleading for mercy and in need of compassion.
  - b. In 16:5 the Lord indicates that another reason Moab should find mercy in Judah is the fact that *"a throne (i.e.; a government) shall be established in steadfast love."* That is to say, a government shall be strong and secure if it displays mercy—indeed, the Lord's throne of mercy and justice shall be located there. As Acts 15:16-17 says, *"After this I will return, and I will rebuild the tent of David that has fallen; I will rebuild its ruins, and I will restore it, that the remnant of mankind may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who are called by my name, says the Lord, who makes these things known from of old."* All of this is done through Jesus Christ...so there would be some waiting time.

6. What was Moab's reputation (see Isaiah 16:6a)? But what is his present condition (see Isaiah 16:6b-14)?
  - a. They were going to be the easiest people to reach out to as God commanded besides these 2 people had a history...
  - b. Moab had a reputation for pride, arrogance, and wrath: *"We have heard of the pride of Moab, ...how proud he is!...of his arrogance, his pride, and his insolence, in his idle boasting he is not right."* (16:6).
  - c. But 16:6 is describing the way Moab used to be; 16:7 talks of the now he has been totally devastated. God has brought into his life something he cannot handle; consequently, his pride has been broken. *"Therefore let Moab wail for Moab, let everyone wail. Morn utterly stricken for the raisin cakes of Kir-hareseth."* (capitol of Moab...see II Kings 3:25)
  - d. Verses 7-8 are interesting verses. What do they tell Israel to do in light of the command to take care of the Moabites? Basically not to get all emotional about them...they are suffering God's just wrath but...take care of the remnant. Don't be as they were...you are to rise above but...you are not to sympathize with their plight for they are getting what they deserve...help but stay unattached...Interesting commands towards these people to be sure.
  
7. According to Isaiah 17:1-3, what is going to happen to that nation and those city states upon whom Ephraim (i.e.; Israel) relied for protection from the advancing Assyrian armies?(Note: Damascus is the capitol of Syria and the cities of Aroer were small city-states located east of the Jordan River. ) As verses 1-3 indicate, for protection from the advancing Assyrian armies, Israel relied upon her alliance with Syria and her buffer zones east of the Jordan River—but they all collapsed before the invading Assyrians.
  - a. Verse 1 speaks of the fall of Israel's ally, the nation of Syria: *"Behold, Damascus will cease to be a city and will become a heap of ruins!"*
  - b. Verse 2 speaks of the conquest of the buffer states east of the Jordan River: *"The cities of Aroer are deserted; they will be left for flocks which will lie down, and none will make them afraid."* This territory, located east of the Jordan River, had served as a protective buffer zone for Israel but it had now been reduced to a desolate wilderness.
  - c. Verse 3 is interesting in that it compares their ruin to the ruin or weakened state of Israel.
  
8. Now let's look at verses 4-9. At the time Isaiah received this oracle, what was Israel's economic condition? But what is going to happen to Israel? What imagery is used to describe her plight?
  - a. "In that day..." -Verse 4-5 speak about the prosperity and abundance of material blessing enjoyed by the nation of Israel. The nation is here compared to a fertile, fruitful field that is harvested: the reaper passes through the wheat field, cutting down the standing grain and gathering it into his arms. By way of illustration, Isaiah points the people to the fertile fields of the valley of Rephaim located southwest of Jerusalem. The point being made is that all of Israel's prosperity will be removed and the nation will be reduced to poverty—it will be like an empty field after the farmer has finished harvesting the crop.
  - b. "In that day..." - Verses 7-8 speak of a nation that comes to God as a last resort...Oh, how we do the same thing ...doing everything we can...first...then we come to God to fix it. "After you have done everything you might want to try prayer." We as a church so do this all too often.
  - c. "In that day..." -Verse 9 speaks of the devastation that will occur because of Israel's sin...they were meant to be a blessing but instead they have become the judgment on so many.

9. Why will this happen to Israel? See Isaiah 17:10 (Note: Israel's carefully crafted diplomatic strategies and alliances are compared to a carefully cultivated garden full of exotic plants.) The reason this devastation shall come upon Israel is due to the fact that the people have forgotten the God who is their Savior and their only true Refuge. Rather than look to the Lord their God, returning to Him and relying upon Him, the nation sought to carefully cultivate diplomatic and military alliances as the source of their security.
10. What does the text mean when it says they have *"forgotten the God of the salvation and have not remembered the Rock of your refuge..."*? Obviously, they haven't forgotten as we think about forgotten since they are calling out to Him in their dismay as a last resort in verses 7-8...so this must mean something else. They have decided they don't need Him in their lives ...until they do...as "if" they had forgotten and not remembered until they do... Why does God keep repeating the reason of Israel's judgment? How well did the alliances work out for them according to vs. 11?
11. In verses 12-14 the mighty Assyrian empire and its allies are described as a raging river that has flooded its banks and is sweeping away everything that lies in its path. In the face of this "raging river" what happened to Israel? (See 2 Kings 17:22-23). What happened to Judah? (See Isaiah 37:1-3a, 4b, 35-37). (Note: In the distant past, following the reign of Solomon, the original nation of Israel, consisting of all twelve tribes, had been divided by civil war. The ten northern tribes retained the name "Israel," or "Ephraim." The two southern tribes (Judah and Benjamin) became known as "Judah.") That awesome, irresistible instrument of divine judgment, the army of Assyria, swept away all the pagan nations of the Near East, including the apostate nation of Israel (2 Kings 17:22-23). That great tidal wave of divine judgment swept away all the nations until it came to Judah: there it was miraculously halted at the command of the Lord—on behalf of those who cried out to Him for salvation. Verse 14 speaks of the Lord's miraculous deliverance of Judah because they had humbled themselves before the Lord and called upon Him for mercy and salvation . See II Kings 19:32-37
12. In chapter 18:1-2, what nation is sending ambassadors to Judah? Way down the Nile River, south of Egypt, the Ethiopians/Cushites heard of what the terrible armies of Assyria were doing up north: they were on the march, they had conquered Syria, they were heading south. With a concern for the safety of their own nation, the Ethiopians/Cushites now sent ambassadors to Jerusalem, hoping to enter into a mutual defense treaty with the nation of Judah.
13. What does the Lord wish for these Cushites...Nubians to see in verses 3-5?
  - a. Verse 3...since you have come to these people a condemned people...watch what I am doing...
  - b. In verse 4... the Lord compares His present silence to "clear heat in the sunshine" (like the heat silently rippling off of a desert highway in the noon day sun) and to "a cloud of dew in the heat of the harvest" (like a wisp of cloud silently hanging over a meadow in the early morning). In contrast to the raging and roaring of the nations (Isaiah 17:12), the Lord assumes the position of majestic stillness; He is silently present, observing; sovereignly, although imperceptibly, in control.
  - c. In verse 5... Isaiah directs our attention to the field of agriculture. The farmer patiently watches over the vineyard. He watches the blossoms appear, and he waits. Then when the flower has become a ripening grape, he acts: he cuts off the sprigs and brings in the harvest. The point of Isaiah's illustration is that in the same way the farmer waits for the

appropriate time to act and he does not act prematurely so God acts right on time...a time predetermined beforehand like the seasons. Verse 5 is depicting the Lord's miraculous destruction of the Assyrian army at just the right moment to save His people, presented in terms of a farmer lopping off the ripe clusters of grapes from the vines and discarding the branches.

14. According to Isaiah 18:7, when the Lord does act to destroy the Assyrian armies, what will the Ethiopians do? (See also 2 Chronicles 32:22-23) These Ethiopian ambassadors are now sent home with the assurance that the Lord is in control, He will act at the proper time—and when He does, they will present themselves to Him as an act of thanksgiving and devotion. The fulfillment of this promise is described in 2 Chronicles 32:22-23. Note: The Ethiopians would be numbered among the nations who “brought offerings to Jerusalem for Yahweh.” See also Ps. 68:31 and also Acts 8:26-38.

Next Time: 19-21:10

Bible Study  
The Book of Isaiah  
February 6, 2013

- A. Prayer
- B. Review

1. What is the main point of Chapter 15-18:7? “God won’t tolerate disobedience.”
2. Who will the Ethiopian’s and their actions be a symbol of in the future? Why Ethiopians? A representative of the whole Gentile race that would be believers. They have ears to hear and eyes to see...they came to offer assistance and saw and knew what God had done...their knowing is even more than what the Jews “knew”. Think also of the Ethiopian eunuch and how seemingly unconnected events are in fact connected.

C. Isaiah 19-21:10

1. According to 19:1 who is going to visit Egypt? What will be the effect of His visit?
  - a. Interesting piece of information (interesting to those of us who like details that is...☺) is that while the English versions use the term Egyptian it is not in the Hebrew...only the name Egypt. It is singular to talk of the particular region that God has in mind for this particular judgment and that is the Lower Nile part of Egypt. Upper Egypt was under the dominion of Ethiopia at this time. That is why they will be included in the next chapter when all of Egypt, Upper and Lower will come under Assyrian domination and oppression. (Upper Egypt is in what we would know as the southern region of Egypt since the Nile runs north. Upper part of a river speaks to being closer to its beginning point and Lower speaks to where it empties out...In this case the Lower Nile would be at the Mediterranean Sea).

- b. In verse 1 the announcement is made that the LORD is about to visit Egypt, “*a swift cloud*” ... Yahweh comes riding in swiftly even ahead of Assyria...but he will also come in with them...
  - c. And the effect of His coming is stated as follows: “*The idols of Egypt will tremble at His presence, and the heart of the Egyptians will melt within them.*” Every unholy spirit flees and all human strength is dissolved when men have a direct encounter with the Lord God, the Almighty.
  - d. His purpose... judgment!
2. For extra points: What is the “Behold” there for to communicate?
  - (1) Immediately focuses them to focus their attention on the LORD, who is the true subject of the prophecy...look and understand what the LORD is doing!
  - (2) In this case, it is a poetic devise that is placed here for the people to remember what God had done in the past to Egypt and their idols. He is once again showing that He alone is sovereign ... and they remember and they shake to the point that their hearts melt in fear...
  - (3) You have to love the sarcasm and the way God describes thir idols that they put so much “faith” in...even the idols who are deaf, dumb and mute because they are the creation of men shake in fear....really...as if they were alive remembering what had happened the last time Egypt encountered God this way... and,
  - (4) To let His people know once again of the utter stupidity it is/was/ ever will be to place their trust in their enemy.
3. Extra-Extra points: Why do you suppose the name Egypt is referenced to 4 times in this one verses? It is the LORD who is coming to Egypt to effect His judgment upon them! By repeating it so many times it is not lost to whom His judgment will be metered out upon.... What else does this picture in vs.1 depict that will occur in the future? The terrible day of the LORD!
4. Now on to more specific action: What does the Lord declare He will do to the Egyptians? What is being described in verses 2-4?
  - a. The Lord declares that He will create a situation of internal strife, even civil war: “*I will stir up Egyptian against Egyptian—they will fight each against another, and each against his neighbor, city against city, kingdom against kingdom*” (verse 2). To stir = to prick or to excite... what happens when someone is being annoying and pick, pick, picking...this is what this word means here ...to provoke brother against brother...and not your brotherly picking but provoking to the point of death... Here is a reference to the political and social upheaval that characterized Lower Egypt at this particular time in history (approximately 745-712 B.C.). The effect of this internal strife on the national life is now described (verse 3) ... “*and the spirit of the Egyptians within them will be emptied out...*” : the national spirit of unity, self-confidence and optimism will be drained and disappear...
  - b. The Lord further declares “*I will confound their (other nations) counsel.*” That is to say, the political efforts to bring unity, stability, and re-vitalization to the nation will be thwarted and come to nothing and there will be nowhere for the Egyptians to turn for counsel. Any counsel that comes God will bring to naught and mishap.
  - c. When mere human endeavor proves to be futile, the nation will turn to its idols and to the occult: “*and they will inquire of the idols and the sorcerers and the mediums and the necromancers (spiritists of the dead).*” You have to love the ironies of Scripture...were these same idols just trembling a minute ago remembering what God did to them the last time...☺ ☺...just saying!!!

- d. *"I will give them over to a hard master and a fierce king... Assyrian and then the Babylonians.*
5. Look at Isaiah 19:5-11. Describe the natural and economic calamities that, at the command of God, befell the nation of Egypt.
  - a. In verses 5-10 Isaiah describes the natural and economic calamities that, at the command of God, befall the nation of Egypt.
  - b. Verses 5-6 are describing a severe drought: as the Nile River recedes, its tributaries dry up, becoming foul-smelling swamps. Egypt is dependent upon the Nile for her daily existence.
  - c. Verse 7 describes the effects of the drought on the countryside: the meadows and all the cultivated fields become dry and barren.
  - d. Verses 8-9 describe the effects of the drought upon the economy at large: the fishermen lament the fact that they have no fish to catch, while the textile workers are thrown out of work owing to the lack of flax from which to make textile products.
  - e. Verse 10 describes the final effects of the drought. The *"Those who are the pillars of the land (Egypt) will be crushed..."* This is a reference to the total collapse of the economy starting first with all the nobles being killed or taken away so that their influence on the economy is not had, or...
  - f. The reference to the grief stricken laborers points to the massive amount of unemployment—what is described here is a great depression....and then we have...
  - g. Vs. 11, foolishness because of fear by the foolish ones who were the leaders Hebrew rendering is this... *"Surely, fools are the princes of Zoan/Tanis, the wisest counselors of Pharaoh give stupid counsel."* (see vs. 11 concerning the influence of these rulers/princes of Tanis...the capital city of Egypt at the time...where the Ark of the Covenant was buried for Indiana Jones to find 2000 years later ☺ ☺)
6. What do verses 11-15 tell us about the political leadership of the nation during those days? In this time of intense strife and economic crisis, the wisdom of Egypt totally fails (verses 11-15).
  - a. Foolish decisions based on greed and fear to take care of themselves in these difficult times...(Verses 11)
  - b. The leaders are dumbfounded to find solutions (verse 12 ff)... otherwise "smart" people are having a hard to impossible time coming up with solutions for their struggles as nation... God is confusing them as part of the judgment ; softening them up for the eventual invasion force...
  - c. Their mismanagement is responsible for much of the suffering (as verse 13 indicates).
  - d. In verse 14 the Egyptian nation is described as a drunken man staggering about aimlessly—and it is the Lord who has mixed the strong, intoxicating drink that the nation has imbibed through the counsel of its befuddled leaders.
  - e. As a form of judgment, God gave them up to the foolishness of their own sinful hearts and allowed them to reap the fruit of their own ungodly devices.
  - f. Verse 15 describes the outcome of this pitiable state of affairs: no one can accomplish anything; no one can offer the solution to the dilemma of the nation, even though they sincerely try... God's judgment on the "wisdom" of men is complete...
7. I find it interesting that so many of the things seen here are happening in our own country today. Why do you suppose that that is? Where are our wise men today? Is anyone really asking that question? If so, who would make the list? What "wisdom" are the influencers of our time using as a guide to their actions? If it is not God's is it any wonder that what is occurring in our country now days is so similar to the days just

before the invasion? Not trying to make a complete correlation as if invasion is imminent...but to be sure the farther we walk away from God in our culture the more problems we will have as a culture economically, spiritually, and emotionally.

8. What is going on in verses 16 and 17?
  - a. Vs. 16 says, "*In that day...*" which immediately means there is coming a day not like the one that God has just said would strike them...In other words, you think everything else that I have said is bad... "*You ain't seen nothin' yet!!!*"
  - b. Verses 16-17 seem to be speaking of a holy fear...a recognition that He is in fact more powerful than their Gods like in the days of the Exodus...they know this is the hand of the LORD because of the witness of God's people (there were Jewish colonies in Egypt as far back as the 6<sup>th</sup> Century BC) and the similarity with past events...This fear of the Lord seems to result as far as the context is concerned with at least some possibly coming to faith...but before conversion comes conviction...the Spirit changes our heart so that we are convicted of our sinfulness See John 16:8.
9. What kind of spiritual awakening is described in verses 18-22?
  - a. According to verse 18, "*In that day* there will be five (of Egypt's) cities that will speak the language of Canaan... this could be a reference to Canaan in the pagan sense and all Egypt hated Canaanites (think Egyptian and Palestinian) relations today, if this is the case then it would be another judgment.... or this could simply be a symbol for the language spoken there now...Hebrew ...or this could be referencing to this language being simply "the Word of the Lord" spoken by His elect since Canaan was also the Promised Land... and swear allegiance to Yahweh of hosts. One of these 5 cities is called the City of Destruction. (Hierapolis??) 5 (which is half of 10 the number for completeness) seems best to represent that simply a certain number of the population is genuinely converted (five cities), but in the midst of this great pagan land of Egypt it is a real and substantial work of grace.
  - b. Verses 19-21 describe the evidence and effects of this work of grace among the people of the land.
    - (1) In the very heart of this pagan land there will be those who are converted to the Lord and who openly profess His great name and the religion of His people Israel (verse 19a).
    - (2) Verses 19b-20a describe their allegiance to the Lord and their oneness with His people Israel.
    - (3) A further result of this work of grace throughout the land is the preservation and restoration of the Egyptian nation(vs. 20c): "*Yahweh will send them a savior and defender, and he will deliver them. And Yahweh will make Himself known to the Egyptians, and the Egyptians will know Yahweh in that day...*"
  - c. The Lord will chastise them as He does His own. Verse 22
10. What are verses 23 through 25 depicting and when will this occur? What we see here is unity among God's children from every nation, tribe and language...we will serve/bless one another...Gen. 12 will finally be fulfilled... Yahweh is the God of the nations...something that Israel forgets over and over again throughout its history. A cool benediction of the Lord at the end of verse 25 that will be completely realized after Christ Returns.
11. Have you ever wondered about the apparent "love- hate" relationship God has with Egypt? Egypt is where God sent Joseph then Jacob and family to survive during the drought and then He destroys them for enslaving them...(Fulfillment of Gen. 12:1-3)... along the way Egypt rises to power and aggravates Israel...God punishes them/ curses them as now and



then lets them rise up again...He never fully destroys them like other peoples...Jeremiah was taken there to keep him safe from the Jews...God commands Joseph to take Mary and Jesus there for a time until Herod dies... God uses Egypt in interesting ways...and here we have this passage of prophesy.

12. Isaiah 20:1-2 begins with a history lesson: In the year that the Philistine city of Ashdod was captured by the Assyrians, what did the Lord command Isaiah to do? Isaiah introduces us to a particular historical situation, one in which the judgment depicted in the previous chapter begins to manifest itself. Egypt was to be attacked, and those Israelites who had desired to put their trust in Egypt would see her weakened and unable to provide or protect. According to verse 2, from the time of the fall of Ashdod, the Lord commanded Isaiah to remove his sackcloth garment and his shoes; thus, for the space of three years Isaiah appeared before the people practically naked and barefoot.
13. What was the message being conveyed by Isaiah's action and appearance in Isaiah 20:3-4? Isaiah's naked (humiliated) appearance is a testimony of what will happen to Egypt and Ethiopia: the king of Assyria will lead away the captives of Egypt (Upper and Lower Nile region...all Egypt)—young and old—naked and barefoot. Interesting that he is naked and barefoot...I guess a man could retain some dignity if he remain shod even if he was stripped naked...just saying! And the fact is this is true...being barefoot made you no different than a slave... the low of the low... and these were proud people that God was humbling completely.
14. When the Egyptians succumb to the Assyrian conquerors, what will be the reaction of those who trusted in Egypt for their security according to Isaiah 20:5-6?
  - a. In Isaiah 20:5-6 there is recorded the dismay and the confusion of those who had put their hope in Egypt;
  - b. That nation proved to be both unreliable and unable to fulfill the expectations of those who had trusted in her. Egypt appeared to be a strong nation to whom Judah looked for security and deliverance, but...
  - c. Actually, Egypt was living off of her past reputation of glory and power; when the Assyrians invaded her they were surprised to find how weak she was.

Bible Study  
The Book of Isaiah  
February 13, 2013

- A. Prayer
- B. Review

1. What did we learned in chapters 19-20:6 about that day and about our day? Sometimes God's judgment can look like a bad economy and foolish leader...His judgment can come in slowly like the fog...it is not always like a fire or a huge storm.
2. Have you ever wondered about the apparent "love- hate" relationship God has with Egypt? Egypt is where God sent His people to survive there during the drought and then He destroys them for enslaving them...(Fulfillment of Gen. 12:1-3)... along the way Egypt irises to power and aggravates Israel...God punishes them/ curses them as now and then lets them rise up again...He never fully destroys them like other peoples...Jeremiah was taken there to keep him safe from the Jews...God commands Joseph to take Mary and Jesus there for a time until Herod dies... God uses Egypt in interesting ways...and here we have this passage of prophesy.

### C. Isaiah 21:1-17

1. Isaiah 21:1 is an oracle foretelling the future destruction of Babylon at the hands of the Medes and the Persians. What is significant about the name given to Babylon—it is called “the Wilderness by the Sea” in vs. 1a? In the future, from Isaiah’s perspective, Babylon would rise up under King Nebuchadnezzar to become the great superpower of the ancient world. But what this prophecy focuses upon is how transitory that great empire really was: Babylon is identified as “the wilderness (or, desert) by the sea.” Wilderness is in contrast to the common phrase used of the land around the Persian Gulf as the Land of the Sea to talk about its fertility...the contrast is that a day is coming when it won’t be so fertile...it will be a wild wilderness...
2. Also in verse one we are confronted with an image similar to that in 19:1. Verse 1b reads, *“As whirlwinds/storms (sand storms) in/from the Negeb sweep on, it comes from the wilderness from a terrible land.”* What is being communicated in this phrase?
  - a. In 19:1 it was the image describing Yahweh as He comes into Egypt slowly and certainly as a Fog...which disorients... as He was softening up Egypt in preparation for the Assyrian invasion....
  - b. But here this storm is one like the sand storms that come up from the Negeb dry and parched and they leave behind death and destruction. The army described here is like nothing seen so far. This army will come up through the desert, from a land that is terrible= Negeb..., and is to be feared...the army of the Medes and Persians. So this is a reference to the initial conquest of Babylon by the Medes and the Persians (also known as Elam) under Cyrus in 539 B.C.; a conquest that set in motion the process that finally reduced Babylon to a perpetual desert. In the course of time once great Babylon literally did become a howling wilderness: the Roman historian, Strabo (born in 60 B.C.), wrote, “the great city has become a desert.”
  - c. See also Jeremiah 30:23.
3. Why is Isaiah so moved by the pending destruction of the enemy of his people in verses 2-4?
  - a. Isaiah is distressed spiritually and physically by the vision/ oracle= “burden”...it truly was a burden to bear such destruction...things are so bad...or will be... as if he forgot that this was future and that God through the Babylonians would first of all rescue Judah from the Assyrians...
  - b. This gives us some insight into the weight of bearing God’s Word for the prophet...how he probably wished he had died when he looked into the throne room...to bear the burden for such images of desolation, destruction and the things men will do to each other...things he probably would have never been able to imagine on his own...that burden is what he honestly is seeking to communicate to us...
  - c. Anytime you witness or in this case see the vision of God’s wrath you should be moved...this might be wrapped up in the modern phrase, “I wouldn’t wish this on my worst enemy”...if you truly meant it.
  - d. He also struggled with the inability to save the lost...He was after all a prophet of the Lord and I am sure he wishes there would be a different outcome for the people.
4. Why would this information be necessary for these folks to whom Isaiah is prophesying and to us almost 3000 years later?
  - a. So they could begin to grapple with the whole picture...God fulfilling His promise to deliver them...God cursing and destroying His enemies...but also that we are not to take

pleasure in their demise...for we deserve the same but we have been chosen not to suffer such an ending...

- b. What does this say to us and how we are to look and “feel” about those in our midst? We too have the Word of the LORD which quite clearly tells us much of what will happen to those who are not His...what will happen to those who are His enemies...is it perceived as a burden by us? Why or why not? Causes us to always check ourselves and our motivations...sort of a Take heed, lest ye fall kind of moment.
  - c. This also shows us that God is just...He will pour out His wrath on those He promises to be wrathful to...and also preserving His own.
5. What imagery is used to describe the destruction of that great empire in verses 5-9?
- a. Verses 5-8 speak of the Babylonian arrogance to think that they were undefeatable...and how they party when the enemy is coming...(we know them as a people who loved to party to excess)...even with the watchmen telling them that the enemy is coming and at hand...they are still self-assured...totally unaware of their own destruction...See Dan. 5.
  - b. Interesting in verse 6 and 8 the use of the title “Lord” and it not be in all capitals...This is the Hebrew “adonai”. What is Isaiah communicating by using this term? Nothing more than usual...this is not really a “lesser” title of God...all His titles reveal His transcendent nature in one way or another...this title while we sometimes relegate it to a lesser meaning actually still is speaking of God’s supremacy and His sovereignty. So let’s not be underwhelmed by the use of this title when it is used of God it is still communicating that we serve a God that is far above all things and a God that sovereignly does as His will demands.
  - c. In the end, “*Fallen, fallen is Babylon!*”... This announcement is intended to bring comfort to God’s people that God is/will keep His promise to deliver them...eventually! Look at Rev. 14:8 and 18:2. What is the connection to this text in the end times?
6. What does the image of the watchman represent for them and for us in these verses?
- a. Could be a metaphor that represents Isaiah who had been proclaiming God’s Word and no one listening...
  - b. Since Isaiah himself could not be this watchman and it is unlikely that Isaiah was responsible for placing a spy on the rampart...this one is a visionary experience put in as a person representing the fact that the message that is declared is a true one in the sense that one on watch would give an accurate accounting of an approaching army.
  - c. In verse 9 the “watchman’s” announcement is a basic theme of Isaiah’s and that being a declaration that God will eventually deliver His people from their great enemy.
7. Who is being spoken of in verse 10 and what point is God making here?
- a. Look at how God defines His children...His threshed and winnowed ones (these are actually terms of endearment as much as anything else)...
  - b. They have been weighed and measured they were found wanting and judged... now, that judgment will soon be over...
  - c. God chastens those He loves...for it is God who has done the threshing and winnowing!!!
8. Why another prophecy against Babylon?
- a. All that has been said has been said for Israel’s benefit...the oppressor will himself become the oppressed as was prophesied in Isaiah 14...Israel may have been God’s “threshed and winnowed one...” but He did this so that Israel would be thoroughly threshed...purged of its idolatries...

- b. “...all the carved images of her gods He has shattered to the ground.” Israel had been enamored with so many other gods. They had walked away from the one true God for the sake of expedience, practicality, tolerance, for being relevant to the culture and for convenience...to be like all the other nations which seemed to have so much more freedom and stuff...when they were exiled they realized how little the gods had in the form of loyalty from the people and even more, how impotent they were...and then...how powerful their God was/is...how personal...how loving even in disciplining... that is those who had eyes to see and ears to hear.
9. Once again what reasons can you come up with for God to do all of this judgment? How is this God different from the NT God?...or is He? Be ready to support your answer.
10. Now let's look at chapter 21:11-12, the Oracle concerning Edom, for a moment. From Mt. Seir (the nation of Edom) comes the question, “*Watchman, what time of the night is it?* (When will the long night of Assyrian oppression be over?)” What answer does the watchman give? What do you think is the meaning of his answer?
- Dumah= “*stillness as in death*” or “*stillborn*” also is the name for Edom...so the prophet is prophesying Edom's eventual demise to be sure...but are there some from within who are His?...
  - The watchman replies, “*Morning is coming (salvation will come in the dawn of God's morning, but for now...)—but also the night*” (verse 12a). That is to say, salvation from the LORD is coming, and the Assyrian oppression will eventually come to an end, but it shall be succeeded by future oppressive powers, such as the Babylonians, the Persians, the Greeks, and the Romans. The world always hopes that it is on the brink of a Golden Age of everlasting peace and prosperity; but the hopes and dreams of the world always prove to be vain. But...that hope will be realized at Christ's coming by His people.
  - The watchman goes on to say, “*If you will inquire, inquire; come back again*” (verse 12b). The watchman invites Edom to inquire further, to look to the prophet of God and the Word of God for true and lasting answers. Edom is exhorted to “*come back again...*” i.e., to repent and come to the Lord, and through the Savior to gain a place in the new creation. Just like in the New Testament where Jesus and His apostles command us to repent and be baptized...
  - Interesting side bar here: A morning came but it was not recognized, for an Edomite (Herod the Great, the Idumean), rather than seeing the Morning... he determined rather to kill all the children in Bethlehem of 2 years old and younger. Edom and Arabia were cast aside and the darkness of Islam covers the Arabian Peninsula...this was God's decree.
11. Okay, since they are told to come back again and they are told to inquire... does this mean then that we can seek God on our own? Is that what Isaiah and Jesus and the Apostles are saying...that we have the power to seek and chose for ourselves? If not, then what... and don't get all Reformed on me? ☺ ☺ What do we see from this text that supports the fact that it is God and God alone who choses and directs our destinies? See Jeremiah 30:12-17.
12. Now let's look at the oracle concerning Arabia..(Or the tribes of Arabia) in verses 13-17. The trading caravans of the Dedanites are instructed to seek shelter in the Arabian forests—due to the presence of the Assyrian armies, the caravan routes have become unsafe (Isaiah 21:13). But what does the Lord warn will happen to the whole land of Kedar (i.e.; Arabia, including Syria...wherever nomad or Bedouin tribes are found) and its defenders according to Isaiah 21:13-17?

- a. Interesting that the text says... *“forests/thickets..”* We can understand thickets...but forest. Some have said prior to the Assyrian and then Babylonian invasion that much of this ground was so fertile as to have great stands of forest...but after the literal “burn” campaign... much like the Romans would use later...the land never came back to its former self. The caravans would have had...in times past... bushes and trees to hide in...
  - b. Even the caravan routes through the Arabian Peninsula have become unsafe, because the Assyrian armies have even penetrated into this region and threaten to ravage all traders who would venture along the usual routes of travel.
  - c. The inhabitants of Tema are described as having provided bread and water for these harried caravans—they have provided a ministry of mercy and have offered a place of refuge (verses 14-15).
  - d. But, as verses 16-17 indicate, even such refuge shall prove to be temporary and insecure, for within a year all of Kedar (i.e.; Arabia) will be conquered by the invading Assyrians—and this has been determined by God.
  - e. What can we learn from what has just happened? The Lord is warning that there is no truly safe place of refuge in this world, no place that is invulnerable to tribulation or calamity if the Lord sees fit to visit it with such things. The only true refuge is to be found in the Lord Himself.
  - f. Just like with Edom, for Kedar there is no hope...the night will come and overshadow the land and the Light will not appear.
13. Now think a minute; what does all of this talk of nations communicate to us?
- a. First, that God does not work His salvation through political nations...
  - b. Second, that we cannot put our trust in these structures to preserve our faith ...
  - c. Third, like man in general while given certain authority by God we as God’s children have been given the calling to hold nations accountable by God’s standard...
  - d. Nothing ever really changes...sins of one nation are picked up by another since we all sin and fall short of the glory of God.
  - e. God deals with us as people...individually at first drawing us to Himself, then by placing us into His collective...His family...His kingdom...we see a glimpse in some of these oracles of those who will be called out from the darkness into the light...not whole nations but individuals that are adopted into God’s family...
  - f. God is sovereign over all the nations.

Next Time: Isaiah 22

Bible Study  
The Book of Isaiah  
February 20, 2013

- A. Prayer
- B. Review

1. What is the lesson from chapter 21? God is sovereign over all and a refuge for His people.
2. What is the reason we have yet another chapter on the destruction of Babylon?
  - a. All that has been said has been said for Israel's benefit...the oppressor will himself become the oppressed as was prophesied in Isaiah 14...Israel may have been God's "threshed and winnowed one..." but He did this so that Israel would be thoroughly threshed...purged of its idolatries...
  - b. "...all the carved images of her gods He has shattered to the ground." Israel had been enamored with so many other gods. They had walked away from the one true God for the sake of expediency, practicality, and convenience...to be like all the other nations which seemed to have so much more freedom and stuff...when they were exiled they realized how little the gods had in the form of loyalty from the people and even more, how impotent they were...and then...how powerful was their God...how personal...how loving even in disciplining them He was loving... that is those who had eyes to see and ears to hear.

C. Read Chapter 22:1-4.

1. In the preceding chapters Isaiah speaks forth many oracles/burdens against the people addressed in the oracles even up to last chapter where he speaks against Babylon Edom and Arabia. To these he now joins another which shares in common the coming of a disastrous storm. Who is this oracle written for? Who is the "Valley of vision" referring to? Please support your answer from the text. Jerusalem...vss. 4, 8. What character do we see in these people?
  - a. They are on their roof tops looking at the besieging army...the thought is that they may even be partying with the thought of their pending doom ...like a hurricane party...daring the elements to hurt them...The word for "shouting" is the word most closely related to "blustering" ..a word associated with great pride and certainty that nothing will harm them...so these people are just daring the Assyrians to make a run on God's city. Think back to Isaiah 5:14.
  - b. The people and their leaders are cowards and have run away only in cowardice...some have been captured...and have possibly become collaborators.
  - c. The day is coming soon when the people will take the threat seriously and begin to panic as they see what the prophet sees from their roof tops. Jerusalem is set on a rather steep hill and they can look down as the Assyrians make their way to their city.
2. Just for "fun". Why do you suppose God uses the image of a valley when Jerusalem is the "high" ground, if you will?
  - a. It could simply be a reference to the fact that there are some of the hills surrounding Jerusalem that are higher than the city like the Mount of Olives...But I think there is more in play here than that...
  - b. Given that God has just used a play of words when speaking of Babylon in chapter 21:1 calling it "*the wilderness beside the sea*" ....commenting on what it would become rather than what it was at the moment...it seems to be sarcasm from God against His people...or as the ESV study Bible notes says...perhaps it is an insult from God. The city that was high has now been brought low in their sin and in God's eyes. Because they thought too highly of themselves God would now bring them low.
  - c. In the valley is a play on words...again...in that when you are in a valley you can't see out so you can't see the bigger picture...So God who had given these people great revelation closed their vision in...

3. What is going on in verses 5-7? This is yet another description of the desolation that He will bring upon Judah.
4. Why is God doing this again? Because they have not listen and harkened to his voice. Because they have been disobedient. Because he promised to do so...Turn to Deuteronomy 28:15-26, 58-63...
5. When the people of Judah were confronted with the impending disaster of conquest by the Assyrians, what did they do according to Isaiah 22:9-11?
  - a. *"In that day..."*... When the people of Judah were confronted with this impending disaster of conquest by the Assyrians they looked to their own arsenal of weapons in a futile hope of defending themselves (verse 8b)....
  - b. They noticed that part of the wall of Jerusalem was in disarray...another sign of their disrespect for God and disregard for their own safety...
  - c. They stored up water for the siege... fashioned a reservoir to assure themselves of a water supply...
  - d. They tore down the houses of Jerusalem in an effort to fortify the walls...
  - e. But, as verse 11b, indicates, *"you did not look to him who had done this"*—they did not look to Yahweh, acknowledging His righteous judgment against them, pleading for His mercy, and returning to the Lord their God. How often, once again is that we do this today?
6. What had God done in verse 8 specifically to his people that precipitated the confusion seen in verses 9-11? Verse 8 is a very telling verse. God removed the covering from Judah means that He has caused their nakedness to show...he has humiliated them completely...He has removed the covering of protection...He has turned His back upon them for the time being...
7. In verse 12 we have another "in that day...". What is going on here? What is God calling on the people to do?
  - a. This is a from God... the Sovereign One of hosts=Adonia El Tz'vaot... this is His call for open and public confession and repentance and this repentance must express itself in outward signs...saying you are sorry is not enough...there must be physical signs of heartfelt change...in this case weeping , mourning, baldness and wearing of sackcloth...open and public forms of contrition and humiliation because of their sin being public.
  - b. In fact, this is how we know someone is truly repentant/contrite if they make no excuses ...make no claims for mercy or leniency...don't try to justify behavior...no excuses...no blaming of other's like "If they had done this I wouldn't have done that"...but rather openly acknowledge their sin publically before those whom they have sinned willingly accepting the consequences of their sin without complaint.
8. This is what God expected of His people...what did He get instead as seen in verses 13? When it became obvious that they could not defeat the Assyrians and all appeared to be lost, the people of Judah resigned themselves to their fate and determined to have one last wild revelry, convinced that it was inevitable that they were about to succumb to utter defeat and destruction...

9. Extra points: where in what context does Paul use this phrase in the New Testament, *"Let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die!"*? How is the application of this text different in the NT than this context? In this context there is no hope...If there is no life after this one there is no hope and the people were acting as if this was all there was left...in the NT context hope is evident in Christ's resurrection.
10. What is God's response to this lack of repentance on the part of the Jews in verse 14?
  - a. Where there is resignation...giving up on God and His promises...rather than repentance; where there is ungodly laughter where there should be godly sorrow; then there is no place for forgiveness from God.
  - b. Do we fully appreciate Eccl. 3:1-4? Are we spiritually sensitive enough to recognize when rejoicing is appropriate and godly sorrow is imperative? Note James 4:8-10.
11. In verses 15-19, what does Shebna construct for himself? Sometime after this delirious celebration, one of the chief officials, Shebna, begins construction of an elaborate mausoleum for himself.
  - a. What does Shebna's action tell us about his future expectations?
    - (1) He wants to go out in style...not the way of Jewish custom rather the way of the cultures around them...
    - (2) Hewing out a sepulcher indicates that Shebna expected to peacefully live out his life in Israel and be laid to rest in the land of promise, being at peace with God in life and in death.
    - (3) Furthermore, Shebna's act was a public declaration to the nation of his confidence that the Lord was on their side and would shelter them, no matter how they might live. Shebna had apparently concluded that the Lord would take care of His people and be tolerant of their sinful conduct. Because, after all He is a loving God who would not "really" punish His people in God's city...He may punish those outside because the real refuge was in the city...after all they were the chosen ones.
    - (4) There was such a certainty of peace because they no longer knew the Scriptures as they should...they no longer taught the people about God's covenant. Ignorance of Scripture is a not an excuse, especially for the people of God!
  - b. But what does the Lord tell him to expect?
    - (1) Through His prophet, Isaiah, the Lord declares His judgment against Shebna: like a man hurls a ball, so will the Lord hurl Shebna out of the Promised Land and into a large and distant land, and there he would die, exiled from the Promised Land, separated from the blessing of God and consigned to His righteous judgment (verses 17-19).
    - (2) Note: you have to love God's sarcasm... *"Behold, Yahweh will hurl Him away violently, O you strong man. He will seize firm hold on you and whirl you around and around and throw you like a ball into a wide land..."* 3 point swish from downtown!!! Who is stronger...really?!?...We may think we are all of that and a bag of chips but no matter what... we are not the captains of our destinies!!!
12. Again, why is God doing this with Shebna? Why is He focusing on this one leader? What is He communicating to ALL the people by this prophesy and the act that would follow?
  - a. He is an example of how the people as a whole are living...recklessly and unaware or unwilling to be aware...
  - b. It shows once again God's control...



- c. Leader's should be leading, being examples to the people not preparing for themselves ...
  - d. Leaders should be correctly leading their people in preparation for the coming invasion...
  - e. Leaders should be focused on what the Lord wants not what they or others may want...
  - f. The people should expect this and they should be listening to the LORD...
13. Now let's look at verses 20-25. What is God communicating here for them and then for us?
- a. God casts down leaders and He will build them up... That Shebna is not God's man, but He will raise up for himself one who will lead the people righteously... Eliakim son of Hilkiah...
  - b. That those who presume to be leaders will be judged harshly when they mislead the people even if they are blinded as well... they will be replaced by the one God has chosen...
  - c. God delights in keeping the Word before His people especially for the remnant of those who truly do and will follow Him...
  - d. God will make it known to His people who His appointed leaders are... in this case by placing on his shoulder the key of David... the burden of the memory and promise of this great house. His position was to manage well this house... the great treasures of grace. See Matt. 16:19-20; and Rev. 3:7... interesting connections to be sure... But even when there are good leaders the people should not place them on a pedestal for they will let them down at some point with a real issue or one that they perceive...
  - e. And then... just as quickly as he was elevated Eliakim falls:
    - (1) Though he was faithful he could not stop the judgment of God and was not suppose to...
    - (2) His usefulness was used up... he was there to encourage the faithful and then when it came time for judgment to fall he was taken out of the picture...
    - (3) Maybe it was some form of sinfulness... history seems to indicate that he became guilty of nepotism- favoritism and was not stewarding the house of David as he should have been... not open sin but a subtle one...
    - (4) Maybe he was martyred because he became unpopular by those who didn't want to be reminded of the same message of Isaiah ... they couldn't do anything to Isaiah so they took it out on him...?

Next Time: Isaiah 23 and 24

Bible Study  
The Book of Isaiah  
February 27, 2013

- A. Prayer
- B. Review

- 1. What lessons are taught in Chapter 22?
  - a. Depend not on your own vain efforts...
  - b. God holds His people accountable and responsible for their behavior...
  - c. There are consequences for not listening to God's voice/Word... from being unsettled to open sinfulness that will lead to discipline by God...
  - d. That like every good parent because of His love for His children God will discipline us...
  - e. God keeps His promises to show mercy and punishment to His own...

- f. Leaders are to lead in and by God's grace guided by His word...they know this and are without excuse again...and they will be held accountable for how they lead...
  - g. God will place leaders in leadership and He will take them down in many different fashion and we are not to put our leaders on a pedestal...
  - h. God always keeps His promises...promises made to us before...
2. What seems to be the overarching reason(s) for the judgment upon His own people? Because they have not listen and harkened to his voice. Because they have been disobedient. Because he promised to do so...Turn to Deuteronomy 28:15-26, 58-63...

### C. Chapter 23

1. Isaiah 23 contains an oracle about Tyre and her sister city Sidon. As Babylon was the "heart" of the then known world rulers...their influenced permeated the "world"...so Tyre and Sidon were the central cities of commerce/business for the world. And they were a power on the sea...perhaps the world's largest private navy to maintain control of the waters so that their good could get through. These 2 cities worked together promoting trade, commerce and establishing colonies in a peaceful way unlike how Babylon influenced the nation with coercion. They acted much like the East India Company from England and the Dutch India Trading Company of more recent history. A prime example of her commercial trade is given in verse 3: the merchants of Tyre were the transporters of the vast grain reserves of Egypt to the nations of the world. The ships of Tyre would load up with grain along the banks of the Shihor (a branch of the Nile River), that great grain harvest was then transported to the home port of Tyre and from there her ships set sail for a vast variety of foreign ports. This city has a history of expanding and receding through conquest by foreign invaders from the Assyrians to the Babylonians to a privateer from Cyprus to the Greeks and the Romans...in each case it has risen back to prominence for a time and then was crushed again only to be rebuilt later. It has never seen the prominence or power that it had before God's judgment spoken of here. Tyre or Sour as it is sometimes called today is a bustling sea port in South Lebanon...and a Shi'a Muslim community. Sidon is today the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest city in south Lebanon. This is an interesting city where Sunni Muslims, Shi'ite Muslims and Greek Orthodox Christians live together in some harmony compared with the rest of the Muslim world given the long history both have in the region.
2. What are we told about these city-states in verses 1-7? (Note: The Shihor was a branch of the Nile River.)
  - a. According to verse 2, Tyre, (also identified with her sister city, Sidon), we are told of God's judgment upon them... *"Tyre is laid waste, without house or harbor..."*--- *"destruction has been accomplished"* (this may have happened or this was the prophets vision that he was certain of)...No harbor- no ships... no commerce-no trade-no wealth...and wealth is what they lived for...
  - b. Their destruction will be such that they will "Wail" or "Howl" as in the pain of so great a loss...and they will "Be still" from the shock and horror that came upon them so quickly...or it could be translated "Be silent" as a command to not complain against the judgment for it will only be worse for you...
  - c. The surrounding nations depended upon trading with Tyre...with their downfall the "global markets" would fall...crippling everyone making them dependent upon the conquering peoples...God's judgment has so many facets to it and it is so complete...
  - d. Next he tells Sidon "Be ashamed" commanding them to be aware of their sin and bear the burden of their wrong doing...With Tyre falling Sidon falls for they rise or fall together .

Interesting that God points out this connection between Tyre and Sidon...with the phrase she has “...neither labored nor given birth, reared young men nor brought up young men...”..In other words, she has produced nothing of her own she has ridden on the coattails of Tyre...so she should be ashamed.

- e. Verse 5 is there to show us the influence of Tyre’s downfall...even Egypt’s economy is affected ...so much so that they are in anguish... suffering under financial a strain to feed and to grow economically.
  - f. In verses 6-7 we see the shame of these 2 cities continues as Isaiah commands them to flee, if they can, to run away like the cowards that they are...run away to Tarshish...probably a Tyrian colony at the time...and he makes fun of their once proud nature...she has been reduced in power and influence.
3. Look now at verses 8-12. Obviously, they wanted to know by whose hand this was ultimately accomplished for they had had trade deals with their conquerors....they had ruled the seas for years...with no one able to stop them. They did not understand the why or how of it. So Isaiah seems to be repeating their question in vs. 8 giving them an answer in verses 9-12. So who ultimately is responsible for all of this according to these verses? Yahweh Tz’vaot= Yahweh of Hosts...LORD Sabaoth. Why would He use his personal name when answering this people’s inquiry?
    - a. He is a personal God and He rules personally not like one of the pagan gods...
    - b. He would be remembered and taken seriously...
    - c. He is sending this message to His people of His power and sovereignty...
    - d. His name was known as the God of the Jews...the God of power...further described as how He controls the seas and shakes kingdoms...this also may be a direct stand against the pagan worship of Poseidon the "God of the Sea". Additionally, Poseidon is referred to as "Earth-Shaker"...the worship of these Greek God’s goes back to around 1600 BC and would have been thoroughly enmeshed in the culture of these peoples as well... just like the god’s of Egypt, the One True God triumphs over them for He is the only true power...
  4. Do we know why He was judging them?
    - a. To defile the pompous pride of all glory, to dishonor all those considered honored on the earth ...See Ezekiel 28:2-10
    - b. He is reminding them of His past condemnation of these people...by referring to them as Canaan ...He is reminding His readers and those to whom this oracle is communicated to that the work was not done that He had commanded and He is still carrying out the judgment of an earlier day...and this will continue till the end when God ultimately judges all His enemies...
    - c. As a side note from another book...Because they have spoken pridefully against Jerusalem’s fall... See Ezekiel 26:1-6
  5. What is going on in verses 13-14? Please note that the ESV note is incorrect in equating the Chaldeans with the Assyrians. This set of verses sole purpose is to remind the city of Tyre how in times past the Babylonians were violently taken over by Assyrian with similar affect. Tiglath-Pileser III, Shalmaneser V, Sargon II, Sennacherib and others maintain a strong choke hold on this land for many years.
  6. According to verses 15-17, what will happen to Tyre after “seventy years?” (Note: “Seventy years” is here used symbolically to designate a divinely-ordained length of time.)

- a. According to verse 15a, from the date of its overthrow, Tyre shall be forgotten for “seventy years.” For a divinely appointed period of time (symbolically designated as “seventy years,”) this great empire of international business and trade shall lie prostrate under God’s hand of judgment. But at the conclusion of this divinely appointed length of time, this great international empire of business and finance shall re-emerge, fitting the description given in verses 15-17, namely, as an international “prostitute” of materialism.
  - b. “The Song of the Prostitute,” probably a reference to a sailors’ drinking ballad, will truly depict what will happen in the case of Tyre. Tyre will be like the old forgotten prostitute who makes a comeback, once again strolling the streets, playing her harp, singing her songs, and seducing all passersby (verse 16). Described here is a great “prostitute” of materialism that seduces men away from God by offering them the wealth and “the good life” of this present world.
  - c. Note: Tyre spoken of in verses 15-17 prophetically represents a future nation (or future nations) that come to occupy the same position and possess the same attitudes that characterized ancient historical Tyre.
7. According to verse 18, what will finally be done with all the wealth of “Tyre?”
- a. According to verse 18, in the final analysis, all of “Tyre’s” wealth shall be “dedicated to Yahweh.” Holy to the LORD is another way of saying that this will be devoted to the LORD.
  - b. The Lord tells us that the world and all that it contains belongs to Him (see Psalm 24:1-2). At the end of history the Lord will finally “re-confiscate” the wealth of the world and bestow it upon those “*who dwell in the presence of Yahweh*”—those who give Christ the pre-eminence in their lives and over every part of their lives. The redeemed of the Lord come to enjoy the treasures of the world as “abundant food and fine clothing” (verse 18c).

#### D. Chapter 24

1. This section is often called the apocalypse of Isaiah...(Revelations of the OLD Testament). According to Isaiah 24:1-3, what is the Lord going to do to the earth and its inhabitants?
  - a. By His wisdom and power the Lord created the world, and by His righteousness He shall judge the world completely.
  - b. Verses 2-3a speak of the thoroughness of the Lord’s judgment: it shall encompass all of mankind, every rank of society without exception.
  - c. The judgment is a divinely ordained event that cannot be annulled by man or by any other creature, “...for Yahweh has spoken this word.”
2. Why will the Lord carry out His act of judgment against the world according to Isaiah 24:4-6?
  - a. Verse 4 has a hint of Romans 8 :19-25 and Romans 1: 18-23...
  - b. Verses 5-6 declare that the reason for the judgment is the fact that the world has become spiritually polluted. Originally the world was created by a holy God, declared by Him to be good, and deemed worthy of His presence (cp. Genesis 2:5-15). But now the world has become polluted—morally, spiritually, physically—by its inhabitants who are guilty of transgressing God’s law and thereby breaking “the everlasting covenant.” “The everlasting covenant” indicates the covenant of God that continues to be in effect for blessing or for curse.

- c. Therefore, because of the violation of the covenant requirement to obey the commandments of the Lord our God, “the curse will devour the earth.” The word first spoken to Adam following his disobedience (Genesis 3:17) shall finally be fulfilled in full and universal measure (note 2 Peter 3:7,10).
  - d. So, in other words, to be true to His nature He must carry out this act of judgment.
3. What is being explained in verses 7-16a?
- a. What is explained here is truly the “day the music died.”
  - b. No more satisfaction...
  - c. No more joy in life or the labor of our hands...
  - d. No more commerce...
  - e. Everything is in desolation...much like Jerusalem after its fall to Nebuchadnezzar...it lay in ruin and rubble until the “few” came back from exile to rebuild under Ezra and Nehemiah.
  - f. But speaking of that day...restoration is promised and on that day there will be great celebration...In That Day... *“At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”*
4. How does Isaiah describe his emotional state and why does he feel this way according to Isaiah 24:16b-18a?
- a. In verse 16b Isaiah describes himself as “wasting/pining away;” to “waste/pine away” here means to lose vigor and health because of grief.
  - b. Why does Isaiah feel this way? Because *“For the traitors have betrayed, with betrayal the traitors have betrayed.”* Or better translated perhaps... *“The treacherous have dealt treacherously! Indeed, the treacherous have dealt very treacherously!”* (verse 16b) Interestingly, this will be a repeating phrase in the prophecy of Jeremiah before the downfall of Jerusalem. What is described here is a complete breakdown of integrity and commitment, there is the abandonment of moral obligations—the Hebrew word translated “to deal treacherously,” means “to deal falsely,” “to act unfaithfully...to be a traitor to one’s own.”
  - c. Verses 17-18a are describing a society in which treachery reigns, in which the most fundamental moral obligations are abandoned and human bonds have been forsaken. It is a society in which no one is safe; a society in which no one can be trusted; a society in which no one is dependable.
5. Looking now at Isaiah 24:18b-23; what is the extent of the final judgment when it comes? Will it only be limited to the earth and mankind?
- a. Verses 18b-20 deal with God’s judgment upon the earth...the old earth will be done away with in preparations for the New Earth
  - b. According to verses 21-22, the Lord’s judgment shall not be limited to the earth alone. Both the spiritual powers in the heavenly places—the devil himself and all the host of wickedness—as well as the rulers of the earth, shall succumb to the judgment of the One who is King of kings and Lord of lords. The powers, both spiritual and temporal, are portrayed as being shut up in prison, and after many days visited with punishment: here is a figurative way of depicting both the guilt and the humiliation of those who once occupied such high and lofty positions but, having been found guilty by Almighty God Himself, are now subjected to His righteous indignation and judgment...Think final judgment of the wicked in the book of Revelation...The Old heavens will be done away with to make room for the New Heavens...
  - c. Vs. 23 explanation see Rev. 21:22-27

Next Time: Isaiah 25-26:19

Bible Study  
The Book of Isaiah  
March 6, 2013

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. What lessons are being taught in Chapter 23 and 24? God is judging the nations and the heavens...as Apocalyptic literature we see the prophecy of the old heavens and old earth being dealt with.
2. How is chapter 23 an example of the prophecy in Chapter 24? All human institution will be affected on that day...everything...nothing will be left untouched.

C. Chapter 25

1. What are the highlights and the of verses 1-5?
  - a. Isaiah's personal affirmation of confidence in God...a statement of faith...a confession of faith if you will...He has been called to carry so many burdens of death and destruction and yet with the weight of all of this truth he still can say without hesitation, *"O LORD, you are my God; I will exalt you; I will praise your name. for you have done wonderful things, plans formed of old, faithful and sure."*
  - b. God was bringing to fruition all the plans He had promised to fulfill...a place of hope and comfort even while they are still reeling from His discipline.
  - c. Because of God keeping His word in judgment the nations of the world will ultimately praise Him for His objectivity and justice...vs. 3... See also Philippians 2:10-11.
  - d. God had been a stronghold to the poor a refuge to the needy...a shelter in the midst of the storm for those who are His...they were preserved while others were lost...
  - e. God has subdued the noise of the foreigner...as they speak against His people... He must fulfill His promise to curse those who cursed His people...
2. What are the "low lights" in verses 1-5?
  - a. He has brought great desolation on the city of Jerusalem...the city that the people placed so much hope in...the city the people idolized God destroyed...for no place is to hold His place... purging and cleansing it from sin...
  - b. He is also talking about the cities of Nineveh as well as Babylon...
  - c. God brought great desolation on the civilization of the time in general because their usefulness to His purpose was used up...
  - d. God's people are called to suffer... He required His own to go through the storm and heat of His wrath...to feel/ experience the heat but not be burned up...Is. 43
3. As Isaiah is enabled to look into the future, what blessings does he see for the people of God according to verses 6-9?
  - a. Isaiah sees a day when the redeemed of the Lord—defined here as *"the poor and needy"*—join with Christ in the eternal feast He has prepared for us to enjoy with Him (verse 6). *"Yahweh Tz'vaot will prepare a feast...for all peoples"*—celebrating and feasting are great motivators ...something for the people and us to look forward to...it is

interesting that one of the things POW's have historically used to keep themselves sane is discussions about food...what they will look forward to when they get out. They would talk about their favorite food and how they will gorge themselves when they have the time. This is also true for the line soldier as well...they will talk about the parties they will have if they get out of this situation.

- b. There is enough for all...not like during the time of exile or the siege by the Assyrians where food became scarce. All the redeemed who shall partake of the Lord's salvation and blessing (note Matthew 8:11) will partake of all the best...riches food (full of calories, pastries, cakes, donuts, chocolate....), a feast of well- aged wines...wine on the lees...the strongest of wines( a feast ☺ ☺)...the point here is for celebration to make glad the heart...a heart which had been saddened is now extremely happy, fatty food full of marrow...another sign of celebration like when the prodigal returned and the father had the fatted calf prepared...no good thing will be held back from God's people...
  - c. Verse 7-8a tell us that on that day the Lord will destroy the veil/shroud and the burial sheet that is spread over all the nations, that is to say, Lord will swallow up death (See 1 Corinthians 15:51-57).
  - d. Verse 8b assures us that on That great day the Lord will wipe away His peoples' tears and reproach. All the reproach (scorn, ridicule, contempt) suffered for Christ shall be replaced with joy and honor bestowed by the Lord Himself.
  - e. Vs. 9 the prophet once again identifies himself with God's people...he goes in verses 1 from "*you are my God*" to "*Behold, this is our God...*"...the unity has been, is and will be restored in the recognition of what the LORD has done and is doing.
4. In contrast to the blessings to be enjoyed by the Lord's people, what lies in store for those who have defied God according to verses 10-12?( Note: The Old Testament pagan nation of Moab, an on again and off again enemy of Israel, is used here to represent all the enemies of the Lord and His people.) In contrast to all that awaits the Christian, verses 10-12 describe the utter humiliation and defeat that await those who have defied their God.
- a. Verse 10 presents a picture of the ignoble subjugation and humiliation of those who have lived their lives on the earth in defiance and opposition to their Maker: Moab shall be trampled down like straw is trampled down in the manure...or a Moabite town by the name of Madmen...how would you like to live in a town whose name meant manure? ☺...interesting since names meant so much back in the day...!!!
  - b. Even in the midst of judgment there is continued defiance in the incorrigible heart of the unconverted: verse 11 portrays Moab as stretching out his arms in an effort to swim for survival, but all to no avail, for "Yahweh will bring down his pride, despite the skill of his hands."
  - c. God will ultimately take away all things that the unbeliever takes refuge in...breaking down all the walls that separate him from God and His people... leaving them with no defense.

#### D. Chapter 26

1. In what Day is he speaking in verse 1a? And who will sing this song?
  - a. When Jerusalem was restored...after God destroys the Assyrians at the gates
  - b. Today... because of the salvation granted by Jesus Christ...the deliverance in Him...
  - c. On the Last day...
  - d. All believers will sing this song in one form or another...
2. What promises of verses 1b-6 of the song communicate to us today?

- a. Vs. 1b- "*We have a strong city; ...*" It is a city incorporated by the charter of the everlasting covenant, fitted for the reception of all that are made free by that charter... it is a strong city. The church is a strong city, for it has walls and bulwarks placed there by God; for He has, in His promise, appointed salvation itself to be its defense. Those that are designed for salvation will find that to be their protection... See 1 Peter 1:4 .
  - b. Vs. 2- "*Open the gates...*" The gates are here ordered to be opened, that the righteous nation, which keeps the truth, may enter in. In Rev. 3:7 Christ has opened the gates for His people to come in... people who were not worthy are now made worthy by the blood of Christ.
  - c. Vs. 3- "*You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you...*" That all who belong to it are safe and easy, and have a holy security and serenity of mind in the assurance of God's favor. This is here the matter of a promise... but there is an inherent action to be done on our part for this peace to be experienced... "*Whose mind is stayed on Him...*" We must remain focused on Him ... knowing Him so we can trust Him... then and only then can we experience the peace that God has promised and granted in Christ Jesus.
  - d. Vs. 4a- "*Trust in the LORD forever...*" since God has promised peace to those that stay themselves upon him, let us not lose the benefit of that promise. Trust in him forever, at all times, when you have nothing else to trust; trust in Him for that peace, that portion, which will be forever.
  - e. Vs. 4b- "*For the LORD God is an everlasting rock.*"- In Him who was, and is, and is to come, there is a rock of ages, a firm and lasting foundation for faith and hope to build upon; and the house built on that rock will stand in a storm. Those that trust in God shall receive from Him... everlasting strength... strength that will carry them to everlasting life enabling them to trust in Him forever.
  - f. Vs. 5- He will make humble souls that trust in him to triumph over their proud enemies. Those that exalt themselves shall be brought low. Even the lofty city Babylon itself, or Nineveh, He laid them low. He can do it. He has often done it. He will do it, for He resists the proud. See James 4:6-8. It is His glory to do it... for He proves Himself to be God by looking on the proud and opposing them .
  - g. Vs. 6- On the contrary, those that humble themselves shall be exalted; for the feet of the poor shall trample upon the proud. When God will have it done, even the feet of the poor shall do it... See Mal. 4:3. God will use us in His judgment on the prideful... Rom. 16:20 .
  - h. So much of our present consternation results from projecting into the future and imagining the worst-case scenario. But this passage instructs us rather to focus on the Lord, taking confidence in the fact that He is the Almighty and that He is our God.
3. What specific assurance is given to those who are upright (i.e.; those who seek to follow Christ as His disciples) in verse 7?
    - a. Just so we are clear in Isaiah 26:7 we are given the assurance that the Lord will direct the path of the righteous: "*The path of the righteous is level; you make level the way of the righteous.*"
    - b. As we seek to follow Christ He will show us the way, He will show us the right thing to do in a given situation.
    - c. When we walk with the Lord we can do so with confidence, knowing that the Holy Spirit watches over us and will re-direct our steps when we are in danger of departing from the way that is pleasing to the Lord (note Isaiah 30:21, "with your ears you will hear a voice behind you, saying, This is the way, walk in it.")
    - d. When we walk with the Lord He will enable us to communicate this assurance to others...



4. What does Isaiah desire for the Lord to do and why in verses 8-10?
  - a. Speaking on behalf of the whole body of Christ, Isaiah testifies, *"In the paths of your judgments, O Yahweh, we wait for you..."* (verse 8a). Note: the Hebrew term translated "judgments" is here used in the sense of God's acts of justice. The people of God wait for their righteous Lord to enact His judgments upon the earth, this statement is similar to the prayer found in Revelation 6:9-10.
  - b. Isaiah goes on to explain the reason for this longing to see God exerting Himself with works of righteous judgment: *"because your name and remembrance (your memorial name) are the desire of our soul"* (verse 8b). The Christian's desire is for the Lord—for His presence, His fellowship, His salvation, and that His name be glorified...think 3<sup>rd</sup> Commandment and the importance God places on His own name!!!
  - c. The Christian's desire is for the Lord to come and work on behalf of His people and for His name's sake. When we say this, what ALL does this mean? We do need to be careful that we understand what we are asking for when we ask God bless us or God bless America!
  - d. For when the LORD displays His judgment the whole world understands and is held responsible for the standard...Just justice is the standard that can ONLY come from one who knows all things perfectly well.

Bible Study  
The Book of Isaiah  
March 13, 2013

- A. Prayer
- B. Review

1. What are some lessons that were taught in chapter 25?
  - a. God is bringing to fruition all the plans He had promised to fulfill....
  - b. God is a strong hold for the poor and needy...
  - c. God silences His enemies...
  - d. A day is coming when we all truly celebrate without hesitation and /or fear...
2. What specific assurance is given to those who are upright (i.e.; those who seek to follow Christ as His disciples) in chapter 26:1-10?

C. Isaiah 26:11-21

1. 4 Times in verses 11-15 he begins his verse of song with "O Yahweh". What is the significance for them and for us?
  - a. Shows an intimate connection...covenantal connection with His people...
  - b. They are each dealing with a reason to praise and remember God in victory.
  - c. Verse 11 begins with a reminder of God condemnation and judgment... Yahweh, their personal covenantal God deals with His enemies decisively and His people are blessed...the nations see how well He takes care of His own...

- d. Verse 12 he speaks of how Yahweh is peace to and for His people like in verse 3...He has ordained that peace would come upon His people...so it is ours...What kind of peace is this?
    - (1) The shalom... the inner peace of completeness and satisfaction that can only come by divine work in us...
    - (2) We can't seek it on our own...we don't know what to look for.
    - (3) We can't muster it up in anything that we do...all things are cursed on their own. Our hearts are at war with God before He moves in so it is impossible for us to "find" peace or God for that matter...He must grant it to us...
    - (4) This represents possibly God's "endgame" when all war and sin will come to an end...with no opportunity to fall...
    - (5) The peace that is granted to us from God through Jesus Christ is the only thing that can filled the hole in our soul...the emptiness we carry with us.
  - e. Why don't we sense the peace of God that God has granted? Because we take our minds eye off Him...we stop reading His Word with desire to know Him...we seek our own path rather than His...we do not spend time with His people...we are not "stayed on Him so we do not trust Him. What else is promised in verses 12 other than peace that God provides? Everything that is essential for our well-being and fulfillment God has done for us...choosing us, accepting us, adopting us, and changing us into the likeness of His Son He does to us and for us for obviously we can't. But He also works through us and as such He gets the credit and glory. See Matt. 5:16 and Ephesian 2:10
  - f. Vs. 13 is another confession by Isaiah like verse 9..Yahweh-Elohim...in their sin others have ruled over them but Yahweh- Elohim is the one that they remember.
  - g. Vs. 15 O LORD is a praising of Him for rebuilding the nation...rebuilding His people...the grammar says He is still rebuilding His people...you have increased/are increasing the nation...you have enlarged/are enlarging all the borders...
2. How does Isaiah portray himself and the rest of God's people in verse 16-18? What does he regretfully acknowledge in verse 18?
- a. Vs. 16 speaks again of what the people did during the many times of God's judgment...they are remembering the many times they cried out to Him in the midst of their distress. It was not vanity but one of utter distress ...a "nothing else we can do" feeling...an act of desperation...They forgot the things God had taught them about keeping focused on Him...This quote might have helped had they had it back then...but probably not... "You can do more than pray AFTER you have prayed, but you cannot do more than pray UNTIL you have prayed." Dr. A. J. Gordon
  - b. In vs. 17-18 Isaiah portrays himself and God's people as a pregnant woman drawing near to the time of her delivery. But, regretfully, no child is delivered. There has been the pain and labor involved in childbirth, but there has been no fruit! It is not that a child was lost as in a miscarriage...there never was a child...it was all an illusion. Now, dropping the imagery and speaking in straightforward language, Isaiah admits, "*We have accomplished no deliverance in the earth and the inhabitants of the world have not fallen.*" That is to say, they had failed to bring deliverance for themselves or for the world...they had been called to be the people of God ...they had not been. Instead they sought to walk their own road of deliverance...which didn't happen...they couldn't secure deliverance no matter where they turned as long as they didn't turn to God...the only place deliverance is granted. They were also unable to control the bullies...the nations of the world. Human efforts had not brought about a downfall of the enemies of God...Human effort is never enough. They had been called to be a blessing to the world around them...they had not been...in fact they have been the exact opposite. They had

expelled a lot of energy in word and perception but it was all like passing gas...totally useless and very smelly.

3. What words of assurance does the Lord speak in verse 19-20?

- a. At this point the Lord Himself speaks; He proclaims to us the assurance of resurrection life: *"Your dead shall live; their bodies/corpses shall rise. You who dwell in the dust, awake and sing for joy! For your dew is a dew of light, and the earth shall give birth to the dead"* (verse 19). The O T is full of discussions about resurrection lest we think this to be only a NT thing.
- b. Although we ourselves are spiritually powerless and unable to advance the kingdom of God, the Lord assures us that He will exert His divine, omnipotent power on our behalf in order to accomplish His good purpose (note Ezekiel 37:1-14).
- c. Vs. 20- speaking to the remnant... *"my people"*... God tells them to go and hide...or maybe what Isaiah is seeking to communicate has to do with the people being calm in content in the midst of this darkness for God is at work...the period of oppression is not yet over...and the future glory he has just described is not yet a reality but it is coming...however, in the meantime...Don't Panic!

4. What is God's final word in verse 20-21?

- a. It is specific to the reference of what God will do during the Assyrian siege but...
- b. These verses are reminiscent of God passing through the land of Egypt to kill the first born of the Egyptians...passing over His people tucked away until morning with the blood of the lamb on the lintels/doorposts. This is God promising the same thing to these His people.

D. Isaiah 27

1. Verse 1 has caused all kind of discussion through the years. What do you understand it to be saying? (Remember to keep your thoughts in context of the passages on either side of this one.)

- a. First thing that becomes obvious, that this text goes with the end of chapter 26...God speaks of punishing the inhabitants of the earth because of their iniquity ...so here we have this interesting statement basically saying that God will deal decisively with His enemies...but no force is too large for the God of the universe...
- b. The second thing that becomes obvious, at least to the student of the Bible is that it is eschatological in nature....not just punishment upon the Assyrians and then the Babylonians...but punishment on all God's enemies...Images that Revelation describe for us in even more detail...the serpent and the dragon...and of course the serpent has been with us since Genesis.
- c. An interesting note from the ESV Study Bible; *"Behind earth's tyrants is Satan, and behind the elect is Christ."* Interesting that this comment seems to put Satan and God on equal footing. I know what they were wanting to say but this statement doesn't really convey that. Almost a Flip Wilson kind of statement... "The Devil made me do it!" (If you don't know who Flip Wilson is Google him!) ☺ ☺

2. What do we make of Leviathan?

- a. Middle Ages thinking was that this was the very first creature God created. They were disgusting and gnarly eaters of people and nations and God locked them up and they will come out again in Revelations...the end times as in "Release the Kraken!" upon the nations of men not upon His children.
- b. Some people say this is a mystical sea-creature that the sailors of the day were afraid of and God is saying that He is big and "bad" enough to take care of this scare.

- c. Others like the Creation researchers ...Ken Ham and his folks...tend to take it more literally saying this was a type of dinosaur left over from the dino age...literally a big creature that couldn't be explained... There are countless testimonies of sightings throughout ancient writings... God was using this real creature as a example of how powerful He is...
  - d. More probable meaning is that he is speaking metaphorically calling an enemy nation a monster and using the name given to the mythological creature
3. What comfort could the remnant (from 26:20) take in these words? What about us today?
- a. There is nothing so large...not even a devastating enemy that God can't take down...God has His peoples back, front and sides covered!!! Our God is an Awesome God!
  - b. The image of the sword is very important...hard...great ...strong
    - (1) "hard"- not easily broken, it endures in battle, it does not become dull...the word could also be communicating the idea of relentless...
    - (2) "great"- mighty, powerful, and sufficient to slay all the enemies of the LORD.
    - (3) "strong"- not one that will fail, a weapon that fits the hand well...becoming an extension of the arm...a weapon specifically made with its user in mind...to say that the weapon is strong is just another way of saying that God Himself is strong and will effectively win all His battles...nothing can oppose Him.
    - (4) The Word of God stands as justifier and judge!
4. In Isaiah 27:2, what imagery does the Lord use? What is His ultimate purpose for His people? In other words, what does "the wine" represent?
- a. Using the imagery of a vineyard, the Lord reveals His final purpose for His people, namely, that we should become "a vineyard that produces wine." Just as a well-cultivated vineyard finally produces a bountiful harvest of grapes from which is made an abundance of quality wine, so the Lord shall cause our lives to be finally and eternally filled with the good fruit of His Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).
  - b. The Hebrew text literally reads: "On that day, a vineyard of wine—sings of it!" The terse language conveys a sudden, surprising and delightful final result: Christ's careful, painstaking work of sanctifying His church shall finally produce the blessed result of presenting to Himself a beautiful bride.
  - c. Look back to 5:1-7...our text is a striking antithesis to chapter 5 ...for this vineyard is actually fulfilling its purpose!
  - d. 2 note to consider:
    - (1) Most English translations render the last part of the verse as the ESV does, "sing of it!" or others may read "sing to her", other still may say, "sing of a fruitful vine" ...these are all possibilities as The Message transliterates all of these down to mean... *"At the same time, (the same time God is dealing with His enemies decisively) a fine vineyard will appear. There's something to sing about."*
    - (2) BUT...the Hebrew verb really leans in another direction...the easiest translation of this word translated as "sing" is "to afflict"...in fact it is the usual meaning of the word in this form in the Hebrew. The idea being if this word is taken then the enemies of God and His church are addressed and commanded to do their worst to God's people...they will be unsuccessful in their attempts to thwart God's church for He is in our midst...this rendering which goes against much tradition was first proposed by Joseph Alexander a Princeton Presbyterian who wrote what was the standard on Isaiah for many years in 1851. I believe it to be the most understandable given the rest of the context of this passage.

Next Time: continue chapter 27

Bible Study  
The Book of Isaiah  
March 27, 2013

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. What lessons are the people being taught in chapters 27?
2. How do those lessons apply to us today?

C. Chapter 28

1. Let's look at Isaiah 28:1-4, 7-8 we see a warning to Judah, Isaiah reminds them of what happened to their northern neighbor, the nation of Israel, a nation that was subjected to the judgment of God. What were some characteristics of that society? (Note: The capitol city of Israel, Samaria, was built upon a hill, and its surrounding wall resembled a crown; from its dominant position the city looked down upon the fertile valleys below.) Verses 1-6 relate a summary of the message Isaiah delivered to the people, and especially the leaders, of Judah.
  - a. The message was this: just as the spiritual state of Israel was reproduced in Judah, so, too, would Judah come to suffer the same fate of judgment.
  - b. He reminds them of the lifestyle of the northern tribes of Israel: pride, vain, decadence, and the delusion that they were safe from hostile invasion.
  - c. The nation is personified as wearing a crown of pride, arrogant, being a nation of drunkards, and a society whose once glorious beauty has now become a fading flower.
  - d. What is portrayed here is a nation that has known prosperity and plenty, but allowed itself to become intoxicated with pride, the pursuit of the "good life," but they found none...so they drank themselves into a drunken stupor to kill the feelings of frustration but all along they were also oblivious to the fact that its glory had faded and it was subject to imminent judgment.
2. How does this passage reflect the feeling in our own country today? Just like today... people's pursuit of the American Dream...if it ever really existed it is now only a dream to be sure...because even when there is success there comes with it frustration...a desire for even more....we are frustrated and bored...no challenges so we find some way to dull our minds...reality TV, drugs, alcohol, porn, extra-marital affairs, too many toys...We are perhaps the most bored generation known to mankind even with the most forms of recreation as any culture.
3. What is God doing by calling Himself the crown of glory in verses 5-6? He is making it clear that in the day...the day of their destruction...they placed their trust in themselves ...their own city wall was built in the form of a crown, speaking of what they thought of

themselves...which is the reason they are here. And that God will be that crown to His remnant.

4. How do the people of Judah respond to Isaiah's message? What was their attitude in Isaiah 28:9-10? Verses 9-10 reveal to us the reaction to Isaiah's message on the part of the people, especially the leaders of the nation.
  - a. With arrogance and contempt they ask, "Does Isaiah think he is addressing children?" (verse 9)
  - b. They are offended that Isaiah speaks to them of such elementary matters and with such repetition (verse 10).
  - c. Note: their criticism recorded in verses 9-10 is probably referring to all of Isaiah's preaching, not only this present message—all of his preaching in which he called for a secular and sinful people to repent and return to their God (note Isaiah 1:18-20)...they were rejecting his teaching yet again.
5. Because of the way in which the people of Judah have responded to Isaiah's message, what will God now do in Isaiah 28:11-13?
  - a. According to verse 11, because of their contemptuous response to his God-given message, Isaiah informs the people that soon God will speak to them by men speaking a foreign language: "*For by people of strange lips and with a foreign tongue Yahweh will speak to this people.*" That is to say, the invasion of the nation by a foreign power speaking a foreign language will be God's judgment upon a people who spurned His clear and straightforward call to repentance.
  - b. In verse 12 we are reminded that all this is about to come upon a people to whom the Lord had repeatedly made known the way of peace, but who repeatedly had refused to heed that message.
  - c. Vs. 13 speaks of the fact that Israel will once again be a child and the remnant will have to re-learn precept by precept...line by line...principle by principle God's Word...from milk to meat slowly...because they have forgotten and a people foreign to them will do this...See Rom. 11:11-29..the Gentiles are proclaiming the true gospel to the remnant of Israel.
6. What motivated the people of Judah to respond to Isaiah's message with contempt in verses 14-15? (Note: The "covenant with death" is a reference to a treaty the leaders of Judah had made with the king of Assyria whose invading armies was threatening to annihilate Judah. By means of this treaty the people of Judah thought they had averted death by making a covenant with the instrument of death, the Assyrian invaders.)
  - a. Verses 14-15 indicate that the reason these people were rejecting God's counsel and viewing it as suited for juveniles was because they were placing their confidence in their own sophisticated ingenuity.
  - b. The leaders of Judah were confident that they had made "*a covenant with death*" that would assure their safety (verse 15.) As pointed out, this is apparently a reference to a covenant contracted between Judah and Assyria (see 2 Kings 18:13-16). Having made their covenant, they now confidently assert, "*when the overwhelming whip/ scourge passes through, it will not come to us*"—i.e.; when the flood of the Assyrian army invades Palestine, Judah is confident that they shall not be "whipped or scourged too badly" because of their covenant with the invader.
  - c. Thus the leaders of Judah are confident that they have solved their problem, they now have a (false) sense of security...this is written in a way that sounds as if they know this

is a false sense of security...., and it is from that position of “confidence” that they scoff at God’s counsel for them.

7. How is verse 16 similar to Isaiah 7:14 and the events surrounding each text?
  - a. Ahaz scoffed at the LORD’s offer...
  - b. Ahaz had rejected the Word of the Lord...unwilling to trust in His promises...the people are scoffing at God’s word as well...
  - c. Ahaz had made an alliance with other forces to fend off his enemies...
  - d. Their fear led them to false security that they knew could not be trusted...but that is what happens when we are blinded by sin we are willing to make a deal with the devil...
  - e. As in 7:14 the prophet introduces his message of hope with the word “therefore”...since the people of Judah are over confident...or maybe sinfully dense and place their trust in what can only bring destruction...therefore, the LORD must act.
  - f. The prophecy was introduced with the word “Behold” in both...look understand and be amazed at what God will do to deliver his people something that man cannot do for himself.
8. Now, who or what is being spoken of as the “the foundation”; “the stone”; “a tested stone”; “a precious corner stone?” Jesus Christ the Messiah! How do we know who he is talking about? Gen. 49:24; Deut. 32:4; Ps. 118:22; Isaiah 11:1-5; I Peter 2:4-8...Same language...referring to God refers to the Son...
9. How can this stone have already been laid? God says He has laid this foundation stone in Zion...through the line of David it has been laid...but as one commentator put it we must remember, *“What is historically realized has an eternal existence, and is an ideal pre-existence even in the heart of history itself.”* What is the sign of one who believes on God’s stone? *“Will not be in haste”*...will not be running around like a chicken with their head cut off...will not be running willy nilly in fear and uncertainty...but will not be in haste...will be at peace...because of the Prince of Peace...will be content...Contentment is not the fulfillment of what you want, but the realization of how much you already have been given in Christ.
10. What is going on now, with the stone firmly in place, in verses 17-22?
  - a. The standard will be the justice and righteousness of God...The “line” spoken of here is like a level line on a brick wall...to keep things flat and level and everything has to measure up to this line.
  - b. If they are measured by God’s true line...level line...God’s truth...then they will need be punished for their rejection ...just like the wall that is not level must be broken down and rebuilt.
  - c. Since the covenant of death has been annulled all the principles of “safety” are annulled and the opposite will now happen...no safety and continual abuses will occur...
  - d. In the past the Lord has risen up to do harm to the Philistines(Mt. Perazim) and the Canaanites Valley of Gibeon...but now His deed is strange...because rather than going after Judah’s enemies he is going after Judah.
  - e. If they complain/scoff about the punishment they are getting it will become worse.
11. Isaiah 28:23-29 presents an elaborate illustration borrowed from the realm of agriculture. What is the point of this illustration?
  - a. The farmer goes about his work with skill and understanding (verse 23-25).
  - b. Verse 26 informs us that the farmer’s skill and understanding is to be attributed to God who gives the farmer wisdom: *“For he is rightly instructed; his God teaches him.”*

Where does all of this grace come from...even the grace to know how to do things?  
From God...for man to claim he can do anything on His own is outright arrogance...Ps.  
139:13-16; Acts 17:28-

- c. Vs. 27-28 tells us that there is a proper way to do things...it is not always about what is new and improved...and that proper way preserves the integrity of the product...the grain...the people...God's judgment will not "crush" His people
- d. Verse 29 provides the conclusion and application of this illustration: *"This also comes from the LORD of hosts; He is wonderful in counsel and excellent in wisdom."* The Lord is the Wonderful Counselor... Is. 9; therefore we should seek and heed His counsel (James 1:5).

Next Time: Isaiah 29

Bible Study  
The Book of Isaiah  
April 3, 2013

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. What lessons are we taught from chapter 28?- Not to be in haste as a believer and not to be cutting deals with the devil. Judgment but restoration is on the horizon!
2. Chapter 28:16 is full of hope. Why? Looking into the face of the Messiah...Jesus Christ.

C. Chapter 29



1. Let's read verses 1-4. Verse 1 is an oracle. What is an oracle and what is its purpose? (Note: "Ariel" is a reference to Judah, it means "the hearth of God," or "Lion of God" and it conveys the picture of spiritual intimacy with God, an intimacy the people of Judah took for granted and thus allowed themselves to degenerate into a state of spiritual complacency.) Ah=Woe...oracle is a burden and warning of coming judgment. He had sounded the warning on Samaria in 28 and now Judah is next.
2. The reference to "*where David encamped*" reinforces the fact that this is an oracle. How so? (See II Sam. 5:6-9) He besieged it as well when he conquered it and made it his own. (see also verse 3)
3. What does the Lord instruct Judah to do and what does He inform Judah that He will do? Why do you suppose the Lord tells Judah these things?
  - a. In verse 1 the Lord addresses Jerusalem as "Ariel." As pointed out, the term is intended to convey a picture of spiritual confidence on the part of the people...But the reality is one of a sense of spiritual complacency: assumption that all is well with the soul, that their religious observances are well-pleasing to God, that God's blessing and watchful protection shall continue to abide upon them—despite the fact that they have removed their heart far from God (as verse 13 indicates).
  - b. Because these people have chosen to entertain such a sense of spiritual complacency and (false) confidence—despite the message of the prophets warning them of impending judgment and calling them to repentance—the Lord now instructs them: "*Add year to year; let the feasts run their round.*" Because they refuse to heed the Lord's command to take warning, He now invites them to continue in their state of spiritual complacency: for one more year let them continue to observe the cycle of their religious feasts, all the while operating under their chosen false assumption that all is well with their soul and they shall continue to enjoy God's favor and protection.
  - c. But attached to this command/invitation to continue on their chosen course of spiritual complacency and false confidence comes the warning: "*Yet I will distress Ariel, and there shall be mourning and lamentation...*" (verse 2). Note: when the Lord's command for repentance is perpetually unheeded, He changes the command to fit the course the people have chosen to follow—it is a form of giving them up to their sinful desires (note Romans 1:28).
  - d. These are not believers...their lifestyle is revealed in their habits.
4. What does spiritual complacency look like among God's people, today?
  - a. We "do" church....go but with no conviction...
  - b. We don't know His Word ...
  - c. We are not moved by His word...
  - d. We figure we are safe because we are Christians...
  - e. OR we worry about our salvation thus causing us to go through the motions simply to ensure that we do the right thing...
  - f. We have stopped being authentic...we have acquiesced to the culture seeking to be relevant...
5. What, if anything, does Isaiah 29:2-4 (especially, the latter part of verse 2) tell us about the Lord's covenant faithfulness to His people?
  - a. Having declared that He will bring distress to Ariel, the Lord then adds these words: "*and she will be to me like an Ariel*" The Lord does not forget His covenant people—those who are true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ; His discipline is intended to restore

His children, not destroy them; and His true children respond to His discipline by returning to the Lord

- b. Verse 4 indicates that there is a deep humbling of His people: *“And you will be brought low, from the earth you shall speak, and from the dust your speech will be bowed down...”* The hand of the Lord, heavy upon His people in chastening, will cause them to “whisper” a prayer for mercy (See also Isaiah 26:16) and they shall be spared.
  - c. They will come to realize their complacency and repent...God’s grace not allowing His people to remain in their sin for long.
6. What is being communicated here in verses 5-8? What are the primary and secondary meanings of this text?
- a. The multitude of your foes shall be like fine/small dust: The closing image in the previous verses was Jerusalem groveling in the dust. Now, the Lord uses another image, spun off of the idea of dust - Jerusalem’s enemies will scatter as fine dust...they will be everywhere impossible to get rid of. God will humble Jerusalem in the dust, but that is not all...
  - b. “And the multitude of the ruthless like passing chaff”; after He uses this enemy to humble His people He will then scatter her enemies like chaff that passes away...chaff can be sometimes considered to be lighter than dust.... A play on words put a promise none the less.
  - c. They will be punished: This seems to be directed against the nations that come against Jerusalem. God will allow them to come against the city, and to humble it, but God will punish the nations that have come against His city.
  - d. It shall even be as when a hungry and thirsty man dreams: Because the Lord will protect Jerusalem, the nations that come against her will ultimately be frustrated. They will be like a man who dreams of food, but wakes up hungry. They will dream of fulfillment, but be unfulfilled.
  - e. An obvious “shout out” to the end times and Christ’s 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming.
7. Describe the spiritual state of the people of God as it is presented in Isaiah 29:9-12. What affect does their spiritual state have upon their ability to comprehend the Lord’s revelation?
- a. The spiritual state of the people is compared to a blind man and a drunken man (Chapter 28): they are totally disoriented and without comprehension of what is transpiring around them and to them because of their departure from the Lord their God.
  - b. Because Jerusalem chose blindness, and chose spiritual drunkenness, God sent something: the Lord poured out on them the spirit of deep sleep. As drunks will “sleep it off,” so the Lord will send blind, proud, drunk Jerusalem into the lethargy and vulnerability of spiritual sleep. But a drunk can become sober after sleep; for those who are spiritually drunk, sleep worsens their condition.
    - (1) When we are drunk asleep, we are doing nothing productive. When we are drunk asleep, we are vulnerable. When we are drunk asleep, we are insensitive. God sent these things to a blind, proud, drunk Jerusalem.
    - (2) The problem of spiritual sleep didn’t end with Jerusalem of Isaiah’s day. Romans 13:11 was written to Christians: And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. Christians need to be awake, especially knowing the time!
  - c. Because Jerusalem chose blindness, and chose spiritual drunkenness, God took away something: He has closed your eyes, namely, the prophets. As a drunk has blurred vision and poor perception, so God closed the spiritual eyes of the nation - namely, the prophets.

- (1) The prophets were silent, and the word of God was neglected because the people wanted it that way. In silencing the prophets and the seers, God simply gave Jerusalem what she wanted.
  - (2) The prophet Amos spoke of the same idea: “Behold, the days are coming,” declares the Lord God, “When I will send a famine on the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord. They shall wander from sea to sea, and from north to east; they shall run to and fro, seeking the word of the Lord, but shall not find it.” (Amos 8:11-12) See also 28:13.
  - d. Consequently, as verses 11-12 indicate, the Lord’s revelation has become to them like a book that is sealed shut or like a book given to an illiterate man. When you remove your heart from God, becoming enamored with pleasure, business, sports, unhealthy relationships, etc., one consequence is a deterioration of spiritual perception and understanding: the things of God become distant and foreign, the Word of God becomes “blurry” and “irrelevant.”
8. Again, what was the cause of this present spiritual condition as expressed in verses 13-14?
- a. These people were still saying the right thing; they were still coming to His temple, they were still observing the religious holy days and festivals (verse 13a).
  - b. But they were merely honoring the Lord with their mouth, not with their heart and their life (verse 13b). *“while their hearts are far from me...”* can also read *“They have removed their hearts far from me.”*
  - c. Their reverence for God was *“...a commandment taught by men...”* In other words, “nothing more than a tradition they have learned by rote” (verse 13c). They still displayed an outward show of reverence for God because that is what they had been taught to do.
  - d. They were simply going through the motions... there was no personal encounter with God by which they would become acutely aware of who He is and would respond to Him with a deep sense of worship, reverence and awe. Contrast this with Isaiah’s personal encounter with the Lord (Isaiah 6:1,5). Their present spiritual condition was due to the fact that they had removed their heart from the Lord their God. When you remove your heart from God your religion becomes empty, formalistic and boring. (think many in the mainline denominations!)
    - (1) Jesus quoted this passage from Isaiah when He rebuked the religious leaders of His day for their hypocrisy (Matthew 15:7-9, Mark 7:6-7). It didn’t end in Jesus’ day either!
    - (2) Only God can really know the heart, the closest we can come is by looking at the whole of their life - not just what they say or do, and especially not only at how they act at church or among Christians.
  - e. So according to verses 14 God will further take away wisdom and discernment. Isaiah calls this a “wonderful” work and a “wonder upon wonder”, for God to reject the wisdom of man and to display His wisdom. Paul was also amazed at the “wisdom” of man, and how it compared to the “foolishness” of God: “For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.” (1 Corinthians 1:21-25)

9. What images do you see in verses 15-16 that reminds you of today and the ways of men?
  - a. We try and hide our thoughts and our actions, especially the private ones... *"in the dark"* from the LORD...or think we can since nothing is done right away...We had a Bassett hound for a long time and she used to try and hide behind a tree. Well you know how long Bassett's are and her tail was always wagging as well. Anyway she figured if she couldn't see you you couldn't see her.
  - b. God knows us so well and we don't know Him well at all.
  - c. We make the truth false and what is false we seek to make the truth...because as we seek to be relevant we are willing to compromise.
  - d. We elevate ourselves... "clay"...to Potter status...and we mock Him by not speaking of Him as creator by questioning His Word and work. Science is in opposition to God...just watch the cable channels and see how they elevate our status and demote God.
  - e. *"He, God, has no understanding."* Indeed, man says exactly this today. Instead of seeing the absolute need for an intelligent designer who created all things, many believe that chance - absolute blind, random, purposeless chance, having no understanding at all - brought all things into being.
  - f. We need to remember the context of the whole chapter - the pride and blindness of Jerusalem. It is perhaps the height of man's pride and blindness to reject the Lord as our creator.
  
10. What is being communicated in verses 17? Restoration! Why does He keep reminding His people of this?
  - a. Because He is faithful to His promises...and even though they have forgotten Him...mock Him...disregard His Word and Work...He remains faithful to His own because of His covenant and His steadfast love.
  - b. *"Is it not yet a very little while"*: God's restoration will come, and all things considered, it is in a very little while. It may not seem so to us when we are in the midst of a trial, but it is true.
  - c. *"Until Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be regarded as a forest"* Lebanon was known for its mighty forests, which would be brought low and turned into a fruitful field. On the other hand, the fruitful field would become as a forest. God would cut one down and raise another up.
  
11. What time periods are being highlighted in verses 18-21? Give examples for your answers. The "Newer Testament"
  - a. Reveals what life is like since Christ rose from the grave, bringing the kingdom of God in all of its fullness.
    - (1) God's people shall hear and understand His Word with clarity: the dullness caused by sin shall be completely removed (verse 18).
    - (2) The meek (those who walk humbly with their God) will be filled with the joy of the Lord; they who have waited upon the Lord shall finally rejoice in His faithfulness and justice (verse 19).
    - (3) But the ungodly (those who have loved their sins more than their God, those who have perverted justice in the earth, those who have remained the impenitent enemies of God) shall be cut off from the blessing of God and given over to His judgment (verses 20-21).
  - b. Also the verses reveal what life will be like when Christ returns.
  
12. How do verses 22-24 confirm all of this?

- a. God redeemed Abraham by election and by covenant promising him and his descendants His presence and grace...Rom. 9:6-8; Gal. 3:7-9
- b. Jacob shall not now be ashamed: Significantly, God addresses His people as Jacob in this promise of restoration. The name Jacob, given to the father of the 12 tribes, is not complimentary. It has the idea of a “con-man” or a “trickster.” Anyone who is really a Jacob, has good reason to be ashamed, but when God restores His people, even the “Jacobs” shall not now be ashamed.
- c. *“When he sees his children, the work of My hands, in his midst, they will sanctify/hallow My name”*: The picture is of the patriarch Jacob looking over his descendants, and no longer being ashamed of them, because they now hallow the name of the Lord, and respect the holiness of the Lord.
- d. *“Those also who go astray in spirit will come to understanding, and those who murmur will accept instruction.”* Finally, in God’s day of restoration, the truth is taught and known and exalted. Those who erred in spirit now have understanding, and those who murmured know better because they know the truth.

Next Time: 30-31:9

Bible Study  
The Book of Isaiah  
April 10, 2013

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. What was the primary purpose for the oracle we find in Chapter 29?
2. How does this section of Scripture still speak to us today?

C. Chapter 30-31:9

1. How does the Lord describe His people in Isaiah 30:1? In verse 1 the Lord describes the people of Judah as “stubborn or rebellious children.” The Hebrew word used here has the meaning “to be resistant to authority,” in other words “to be stubborn.”- See Chapt.1. Thinking about this definition a minute... “to be resistant to authority”...what does this mean as far as the people are concerned? First, they know they are disobeying the Law. Second, they still know the law or at least the meaning of the Law. Third, they know they are breaking the Law. In other words, they are making a conscience choice to reject God’s Law.
2. What specifically is His complaint against them in Isaiah 30:1-2?
  - a. One dimension of their rebelliousness was their refusal to seek the Lord’s counsel (verse 1). They would not look to the Lord and His prophets for their counsel and guidance...
  - b. Rather, they made their own plans and then proceeded in their effort to bring those plans to pass. They entered into an alliance, but not with the direction and sanction and blessing of the Holy Spirit; rather, it was a covenant which violated their covenant with the Lord their God—as verse 2 indicates, they were looking to the pagan nation of Egypt for deliverance from Assyria, rather than looking to the Lord.
3. Is there anything inherently wrong with the destination of Egypt?
  - a. If it is wrong to go that direction then the destinations is inherently wrong.
  - b. You see there is something inherently wrong with the destination...it is their action to seek their own way that is being highlighted here...in wanting to go back to what they knew, their sinfulness or simply a “safer” place in their minds...the life they used to live. Going back to fishing after Jesus’s death was Peter’s Egypt...going back to a life style that had been changed by God.
4. According to verses 3-8, what consequence would Judah suffer as a result of their rebellious behavior? Verses 3-5 speak of the consequence that would be suffered by these people for pursuing their own course instead of seeking the counsel of the Lord their God.
  - a. Because they have aligned themselves with Egypt, the Lord will cause them to be put to shame and thrown into confusion and bewilderment when Egypt proves to be incapable of providing for their defense.

- b. In verses 6-7 Isaiah receives an oracle concerning the folly of Judah's chosen course of action: a caravan is seen making the perilous journey to Egypt through a wilderness inhabited by lions and vipers. The caravan is seen carrying the riches of Judah down into Egypt—a caravan is supposed to bring riches home, not transport them to a foreign land! Likewise, the futility of their present endeavor is emphasized: they present their treasures *"to a people who cannot profit them ...or will be of no help to them."* Judah may put great confidence in Egypt, but the Lord says, *"Egypt's help is worthless and empty; therefore I have called her 'Rahab who sits still'... and does nothing....or has been exterminated"* Or it seems the Hebrew may only be saying this.... *"And Egypt, in vain and to no purpose do they help. Therefore I cry concerning this, their strength is to sit still."* The reason we get this translated as a name seems to be because Isaiah calls the land "rahav"... a term used poetically by Isaiah for the land of Egypt. This Hebrew term means "to be arrogant," or "a storm," "to make a noise;"...or... "a great sea monster as in Ps. 89:10 like Leviathan (think Chapter 27)...which seems to be a metaphor for the great nations/enemies of God that God will overcome and destroy" it is used here in the sense of "empty boasting." Used as a storm or as arrogant the next word "sheveth" means "the one who sits still"...or... "they are resting...at sleep."...which is to say that they present themselves all high and mighty...all big and bad...like a storm to consume...but God simply says be still and they cease their loud noises! She is no Rehab...great monster, but rather she is a puppy dog seeking sleep.
  - c. Isaiah is then commanded to record this oracle and this description of Egypt as a witness against Judah's folly (verse 8); note also Isaiah 31:2-3.
    - (1) So it could be read for generations to come as a witness against the type of behavior that these people had exhibited.
    - (2) But also as a witness/testimony it is given authority.
    - (3) A written record holds more weight...more recognition...more stature and longevity.
    - (4) God's written Word is for all generations to read, to learn and to be moved to live as He prescribes.
5. According to verses 9-11, how did the people of Judah respond to the seers and prophets whom the Lord sent to them?
- a. First he emphasizes their character again... "rebellious people"...stubborn people, (For Clarification think rebellious teenagers who refuse to listen to their parents. This is obviously a sign of their fallen nature not the ineptness of the parent who is God!)...a lying people...actually *"Lying sons, sons that will not hear the law of the LORD."*...How does God feel about liars? See Ps. 101:7....
  - b. The people of Judah said to "the seers" (i.e.; the prophets as they received visions from the Lord as to the judgment that was about to befall this rebellious people), *"Do not see... any more visions."* In effect they were saying, *"Do not tell us what lies in store for us in consequence of our personal and national sin, such visions disturb us and are at variance with our own vision of continued tranquility and a future of uninterrupted happiness!"* They instructed the prophets, *"Do not prophesy to us what is right; rather, speak to us smooth things (tell us pleasant things), prophesy illusions!"* They desired to abandon what is right in favor of what is pleasant and comfortable to hear, fully knowing that such preaching is deceitful and damning. They were essentially saying, *"Lie to us because we are liars!"*
  - c. In verse 11, they further commanded the prophets, *"Get out of our way! Move out of our path! Stop confronting us with the Holy One of Israel!"* In effect they were telling the prophets to step aside and not block the way between them and their sins by confronting them with the Lord in His righteousness and His identity as the Holy One of Israel—they

desired to indulge in their sins without the conviction of guilt or the fear of just retribution.

- d. Interesting that the Hebrew makes it clear that they weren't telling these prophets to stop speaking. Speaking prophets were necessary for there to be the presence of religion, and these people wished to be seen as religious. Religion is always welcomed by the unbeliever; it is the preaching of the Gospel that causes controversy.
6. In what ways is this happening in the Church today?
  - a. Endorsing homosexual relationships...
  - b. Endorsing the redefinition of marriage to accommodate the cultures desire for pleasure...
  - c. Not disciplining its members for rebellious sinfulness...
  - d. Endorsing a political correct "tolerance" so that everyone feels "okay" about themselves...
  - e. Endorsing the fact that all religions may lead to the same God...
  - f. Endorsing preachers who do these things...
  - g. Speaking against those who seek to uphold biblical standards...
  - h. Tell us only what we want to hear...or get out of our way...
7. According to verses 12-17, what is the consequence of Judah's refusal to receive and heed the message the Lord has sent by His servants the prophets?
  - a. The people had requested the prophets to remove the Holy One of Israel from their presence, but the Holy One of Israel will not go away!—it is He Himself who now confronts them (verse 12).
    - (1) Indeed, it seems just to irritate them because they didn't want to hear the phrase "*the Holy One of Israel*"...Isaiah begins the next couple of sections with it...vs. 12 and vs. 15..to impress upon them that God is saying "I am God ...you will hear me...whether you want to or not...I am God ...and you are not!"
    - (2) Parents assert their authority before rebellious children. You don't back off! God is not backing of...giving in to their request...
  - b. The Lord's message is that they will bear the punishment for defying and breaking His moral law. For as a righteous Father he must punish His rebellious children...they will not get away with their sin.
  - c. Their rebelliousness is portrayed as a crack in a wall that causes the wall to bulge and suddenly to come crashing down—indeed, the Lord Himself shall break the wall, like a piece of pottery that is smashed to bits (verses 13-14).
  - d. Verse 15 God graciously tells them that He can give His people what they search for in Egypt...if they would only repent of their ways they could have quietness and trust which will obviously provide strength...
    - (1) "Quietness" here refers to our hearts not our speech..."quiet of heart...being at peace". *"It implies the absence of strife, war, or trouble on one hand, and worry or anxiety on the other...This state of peace and tranquility is clearly seen to be dependent on, and a direct result of God's blessing on an obedient people."*- Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament.
    - (2) "Trust"- *"expresses that sense of well-being and security which results from having something or someone in whom to place confidence...The cause of hope is not in one's merit with God...but only because of God's...unswerving loyalty to His covenant and His gracious kindness/steadfast love of His people."*- Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament.
    - (3) Quietness and trust grow in the heart of the one who seeks the Lord.
    - (4) See II Chr. 20:1-30 for an example of this in Jehoshaphat and the people of Judah.



- e. Verses 16-17 says that they are still unwilling...unable to do anything else but rebel...they would rather look to Egypt than to their God...they see their salvation in the horses of Egypt, but God reminds them that the ones they seek to take refuge in will ultimately be their pursuers on those swift horses they wanted...irony! See Deut. 28:25
8. By way of personal application: When we encounter a trial or a hard time in our lives, do we bring the matter to the LORD, placing our confidence in Him; or do we blame Him, spitefully turn our backs on Him, and try to take matters into our own hands?
  9. In verse 18, what is the Lord's attitude toward His people even though they are rebellious? *"Therefore the LORD waits to be gracious to you..."* Does this mean He will wait until we are ready? Why or why not?
    - a. Just like Good Friday...there must be a satisfying of God's law before redemption can be applied...so in this case as well, God must first complete His work of judgment before He can manifest the planned compassion. *"According to God's great mercy, He caused us to be born again into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."* I Peter 1:3
    - b. The waiting spoken of here is that God always has a purposed time to reveal His great mercy...but until He has kept His law and judgment is past He will not do this... *"and therefore He exalts Himself to show mercy to you."* - This is His plan but not until all things are complete.
    - c. By using His covenantal name Yahweh here we know this is what is in mind.
    - d. So in other words, God waits for no man...His plan will be done in His time... *"For the LORD is a God of justice; blessed are all those who wait for Him."* That's the conclusion to this question...we are to wait for the LORD...our covenantal God.
  10. When they eventually repent how will He respond to their repentance according to verse 19-33?
    - a. The Lord will deliver them and they will dwell in His presence...
    - b. Does this not sound like the children of Israel in Egypt before they were delivered...do you think there might be a bit of irony again in God's words toward where they want to go for deliverance and refuge?
    - c. Verses 20 simply says, *"And He will give you the bread of adversity/affliction and the water of affliction/oppression, yet your Teacher will not hide Himself anymore, but your eyes shall see your Teacher."* - A great verse that speaks of the current time of persecution of Christianity...the NT speaks of how we are to expect to be persecuted for our faith...not to be surprised...they hated the Truth and they will also hate those who follow the truth...Paul tells us to expect persecution...John, Jesus, Paul and Peter...all tell us that suffering is a mark of the true Christian...Jesus said... *"In this life there will be tribulation, but take heart I have overcome the world."* Affliction and adversity will define the life of the Christian but our Teacher is always in view through the Spirit, His Word and His Church. Interesting that he compares these things that we hate with the very staples of life...bread and water...that is how natural they will be but also how important they will be for our growth and maturity.

Next time Chapters 32-33

Bible Study  
The Book of Isaiah  
April 17, 2013

- A. Prayer
- B. Review

11. When they eventually repent how will God respond to their repentance according to verse 19-33?

- d. The Lord will deliver them and they will dwell in His presence...no more weeping.
- e. Verses 20 simply says, *"And He will give you the bread of adversity/affliction and the water of affliction/oppression, yet your Teacher will not hide Himself anymore, but your eyes shall see your Teacher."* - A great verse that speaks of the current time of persecution of Christianity...the NT speaks of how we are to expect to be persecuted for our faith...not to be surprised...they hated the Truth and they will also hate those who follow the truth...Paul tells us to expect persecution...John, Jesus, Paul and Peter...all tell us that suffering is a mark of the true Christian...Jesus said... *"In this life there will be tribulation, but take heart I have overcome the world."* Affliction and adversity will define the life of the Christian but our Teacher is always in view through the Spirit, His Word and His Church. Interesting that he compares these things that we hate with the very staples of life...bread and water...that is how natural they will be but also how important they will be for our growth and maturity.
- f. Verse 21 continues the message from what we will see and know in verse 20 to now we will hear God speak to us through the Holy Spirit directing us which way to go ...the work of the Spirit enables and directs us onward in the path that God reveals to us.
- g. Verse 22 is the result of this heart change...the giving up of our idols. When we recognize that God has not called us to a life of ease ..that somehow we are not to depend on health and wealth to guide us and direct us...when we recognize that we learn best in

adversity and we turn to God for relief He will be there and every sin will be so gross...hence “menstrual cloths” that all we can do is say is, “Be gone!”...and what is cool is that we are the ones who says it...for until we are convinced it ...the sin...will always hang around. But also...in using the term for “menstrual cloths” is their perhaps an allusion to the fact that this change is brought about because of “blood”? probably not here...for this use of this is translated by everyone as abominable, impure, gross...the thinking in context seems to be one of utter disgust that it must be thrown away...God’s people will be so disgusted with their idols that they will crush them and cast them aside.

- h. Verse 23-25 says, that in the place of suffering caused by the judgment, the people of God will experience again a prosperous land. Again we see the words... “He will give...”in verse 23, same construction as in verse 20...both are good things for they come from God for our benefit. The animals will prosper and there will be an abundance of water ..no more droughts physically or spiritually
  - i. Verse 26 is saying figuratively the same thing that is being said in Rev. 21: 22-25.
  - j. Verses 27-33 speak clearly of the destruction of the LORD’s enemies and the renewal of the earth. We see images from II Peter 3 5-13; Rev. 9; 17; 20:7-10
12. Read chapter 31. I want to highlight vs. 1 a minute. *“Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help...but do not look to the Holy One of Israel or consult the LORD!”* What points are being made here that are always appropriate for God’s people to consider?
- a. There is always the opportunity to walk back into sin...Egypt was part of them...just like sin is a part of us...just like their forefathers said to Moses that they needed to go back to Egypt for at least there was bread...(even though to receive that bread they would have to place themselves back under the yoke of slavery)we are often blind and go back into our sin when we let our guard down by thinking... “We got this...” or anything similar.
  - b. The grammar of the sentence states that these are people who often go down to Egypt...who often rebel against God...that is the reason for the WOE... the judgment...because their life is characterized by this sin not by faith.
  - c. We need to be always before the LORD and His Word consulting the shepherds He has provided... so that we don’t let our guard down so we always know from where our true help comes from...
13. Is there anything new here in Chapter 31? Is it simply a repetition of chapter 30? Why or why not?
14. What does Isaiah tell to these people in chapters 30 and 31 that are still relevant to us today?
- a. Don’t go back down to Egypt...there is no hope and security there. In other words, don’t go back to self-assurance and seeking self-fulfillment...for there is no satisfaction and no security to be found in self.
  - b. Don’t turn back...keep walking forward in the way that God has laid out...look at all things coming from God as His grace to us...to grow us, to strengthen us, to be a blessing to those around us...what doesn’t kill us will make us stronger in the Lord by His grace.

#### C. Isaiah 32

- 1. Isaiah 32:1-8 is a continuation of chapter 31. This chapter begins with the word, “Behold” to let us know that we are still in the section of time began in 31:7 with the words, *“For in that day.”*(Read 31;7-32:8) What times are being referred to in this

section? The day of Assyria's fall and the days after His ascension...the latter days...before His Return.

2. What specific things in 31:8-32:5 will God provide for His own, according to this passage?
  - a. Vs. 7- He will cast out their idols...enabling them to make the decision...He changes their hearts so that they desire to get rid of them...hence He casts them out.
  - b. 31:8-9= Sennacherib's Fall which we will see in Isaiah 37:36-38 ...where the angel of the LORD dispatches 185,000 Assyrian soldiers at the gates of Jerusalem then they remaining army flees from the sight of the LORD running and hiding in the clefts of rocks on their way home...only to have Sennacherib murdered by his own sons in the house of worship...a place he thought he would be safe. But you cannot hide from the LORD's wrath. From their perspective they killed him probably because of the disgrace he incurred...but God made that happen.
  - c. The next king...the one that rules in righteousness is Jesus Christ. When does this happen? See Hebrews 1:3-4, 12: 1-2. At His ascension! Where is Christ seated? At the right-hand of God so He is reigning now!
  - d. As He rules now He provides "princes"- faithful pastors/teachers/elders who will be like a hiding place from the wind... a shelter in the storm...like streams of water in a dry place...like the shade of a great rock in a weary land. See Eph. 4:11-14...these are given as a gift to God's people as Christ representatives before them with His Word.
  - e. The eyes, ears hearts and tongue of His children will be changed to desire to see, hear, understand and speak forth His truth.
  - f. These eyes and ears and hearts and tongue will also become attuned to the world and how backward from God's reality it is.
3. What does verse 5 tells us about the moral condition of the culture at the time of Isaiah's writing?
  - a. Verse 5 describes the moral and spiritual condition of the nation:
  - b. At the time Isaiah delivered this message from the Lord: "the fool" was called "noble," and "the scoundrel" was respected. There was a failure on the part of the people to appreciate or even recognize the most basic moral distinctions. How could this possibly have happened? With all that God has given to them specifically through the years...from His great mercy and grace...to actual deliverance to tremendous miracles...things that He has not shared with any other peoples on the earth...how do these people fall so soundly?
    - (1) The answer lies in the fact that the nation had forsaken the law of God (Isaiah 5:24b) as their standard in favor of their own human standards (note Isaiah 5:20-21).
    - (2) Isaiah 5:20 tells us that the most elementary and fundamental moral precepts (the black and white of ethics and morality) were being turned upside down, with the result being that perversity was honored and righteousness was abased.
    - (3) Isaiah 5:21 describes an arrogance that causes a man to forsake the fear of God and the law of God as a monitor upon his behavior and as a guardian over his decisions; man's own wisdom and reason are made to be the standards for ethical decisions, rather than the moral law of God.
  - c. However, all this being true, we also know that this section is speaking of the latter days between Christ's ascension and His return, so how are the cultures of the world today being depicted here as well? When a nation departs from God's moral law as its standard, freedom under God is inevitably replaced with tyranny apart

from God. this brings to mind what Abba Anthony, a Desert Father, once prophesied, "*A time is coming when men will go mad, and when they see someone who is not mad, they will attack him saying, 'You are mad, you are not like us.'*"

4. In these verses we have the definition for "fool" and the definition for "scoundrel". What is similar about them and what is distinct according to verses 6-7?
  - a. Both have as their target the poor...to keep them dependent and wanting more....they both seek to deceive and distort the truth.
  - b. The "fool" seems to be the one who carries out the plans of the "scoundrels"...the fool speaks folly or stupidity ..."foolish things" and their "*heart is busy with iniquity*"...which means they seek to distort the truth...they think they know the meaning of God's Word and they utter only error...the fool doesn't seem to know much beyond today as far as planning is concerned...his actions have ramifications that are unknown to the fool.
  - c. "Scoundrels" seek to "suppress the truth" with lies and plans that go beyond today...planning and scheming the downfall of all who he wishes to control and suppress...all his ways are always evil! To destroy the afflicted is their ultimate goal. This one knows exactly what the ramifications are from his actions for they are calculated with certain outcomes in mind.
  - d. And why are they given here? So that we will know them when we see them...they all look alike if we are discerning enough to see them. Like people who say they have been to heaven and talked with God and He sent them back...these people are NOT innocent and harmless...they are evil and deceptive...we need to call a spade a spade when comes to evil and clearly be able to tell the difference between those who seem harmless but come in as wolves in sheep's clothing.
5. Verse 8 gives us a definition of the one who is "noble." How would you put this definition into your own words so that you know what this person looks like today?
  - a. A noble person does this...Phil. 8-9
  - b. A noble person aspire to a noble task...I Tim. 3:1
  - c. A noble person speaks the truth in all things. Prov. 8:6-7
  - d. A noble person looks out for the weak and needy...telling them the truth...planning for their success, in contrast to the fool and scoundrel.

Bible Study  
The Book of Isaiah  
April 24, 2013

- A. Prayer
- B. Review

1. How does Isaiah define "fool", "scoundrel" and "noble man" in chapter 32? Why is God so specific in his definitions of the hearts of men this way?
  - a. By His grace He wants us to be able to judge correctly...

- b. He knows that we are more likely to give people the benefit of the doubt...compromising ourselves rather than correctly calling out those who set out to deceive ...for we are weak and want to believe that everyone is basically good...
    - c. God is reminding us that people aren't basically good...
  - 2. Living in a day of "tolerance" where calling anyone out for any reason makes the one holding the sinner accountable look bad, how does God expect that we should proceed?
    - a. In love, we proceed...that is that we desire that this person's heart be changed not that they would come to believe our agenda...
    - b. Recognize that standing up for the truth will bring persecution...but we must stand...the fact that the church has chosen to be passive is what has gotten us into this situation from a human perspective. By letting the children run and do whatever they want we have fostered a Lord of the Flies family...where everyone does what is right in their own eyes.
- C. Turn back to Chapter 32 and read 1-14.
1. Having looked at verses 1-8 last time now let's look at verses 9-14. We are back to Isaiah's time frame again. Why are we picking on the women of Jerusalem again?
    - a. Because in a way they are the barometer for the culture...
    - b. Verses 9 could more easily be read, "*Careless women, arise, hear my voice; complacent daughters, give ear to my speech.*"...the words "*who are at ease*" could simply be taken as carefree ...but "careless" speaks more of women who have a false confidence as to their security and believe themselves to be protected from harm...totally unaware of the approaching danger. "*When the women of a country are no overly concerned about its true welfare, its plight is tragic indeed.*" - E.J. Young. The word "arise" speaks to a change of attitude...as in we can only hear God speak when we are awake.
    - c. Pay attention for this time next year all that I have said will happen. Vs. 10.
    - d. 11-14 speak of all things being affected and all things being lost...even the women...things will be so bad that they will be so desperate for understanding and comfort and they will find none...
    - e. Women thrive on protection and security, when they are not demanding or expecting it from men...men being men stop providing it...complacency sets in and no one cares but the women still believe it is being seen to they are just not paying any attention any longer and so the men that they are supposed to be complementing are not held accountable with the result that the young men grow up doing even less than their fathers and the women are left unprotected and insecure driving them to usurp the roles God has given them...leaning into the curse only leads to more confusion.
  2. Looking at verses 11-14, especially verse 11... does any of this sound familiar? We see something similar in James 4:9-10. What is God preparing these people to do? God, by His discipline (by the disaster we see in 9-14), is leading these people to humble themselves before Him and to return to Him.
  3. According to Isaiah 32:15, how long would the state of moral degeneration continue? Or in other words, what would bring it to a halt and transform the situation? Verse 15 indicates that this state of degeneration and the consequent devastation would continue "*until the Spirit is poured out upon us from on high.*" Man is neither able nor inclined to return to the Lord his God and truly reform his life, there is the need for the operation of the Holy Spirit—and the Lord here promises to His Old Testament people just such an outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

4. Once again, what time periods are in mind in verses 16-20? The Latter days and the last days! Why is knowing this important? Just as for them...God promises a brighter day...it helps us to know we are in better days on one hand even as things get worse all around us.

Also, the ESV Study Bible has a really good note for verses 17-18:

quietness and trust forever... The word translated “complacent” in 32:9 (Hb. batakh) is from the same root as the word translated “trust” in v. 17 (Hb. betakh) and the word translated “secure” in v. 18 (Hb. mibtakh). In addition, the word translated “at ease” in v. 9 (Hb. sha’anan) is translated “quiet” in v. 18. The worldly counterfeit is replaced by the real.

#### D. Chapter 33

1. Note: Isaiah 33 is referring to the treachery perpetrated by the Assyrians against the people of Judah. King Hezekiah had made a treaty with the Assyrians whereby, in exchange for a large indemnity payment, the Assyrians agreed to withdraw from Jerusalem (see 2 Kings 18:13-16). But now the Assyrians have broken the treaty, have returned to Jerusalem, and are determined to conquer the capitol city. What does verse 1 tell them and us will happen to Assyria? Why is that important to be reiterated?
2. Verses 2-6 are a prayer. What is Isaiah praying for?
  - a. That God would be gracious...merciful to them by...
    - (1) Being their strength every morning...
    - (2) Their salvation in the time of trouble...
    - (3) Otherwise they would be prone to run away at loud noises of battle...
  - b. That God would exalt Himself in victory revealing for all to see the things He has promised.  
How might we put this prayer in our own language to be prayed today?
3. How does Isaiah describe the state of the nation of Judah in verses 7-9?
  - a. Verse 7 describes a scene of despair: *“Behold! Their heroes/brave men cry in the streets; the ambassadors/envoys of peace weep bitterly.”*
  - b. Verse 8 describes a nation under the control of the enemy armies:
    - (1) *“The highways lie waste/are deserted; the travelers ceases/no travelers are on the roads.”* – Think the movies that have been produced on the apocalypse...where cities are totally deserted and roadways that were full hours before are now desolate and empty.
    - (2) *“Covenants are broken; cities are despised; there is no regard for man.”* – It becomes everyone out for themselves...old promises and agreements are no longer valid...and there is no regard for the life of one who was just a neighbor.
  - c. Verse 9 describes a land that is being devastated by the enemy: the splendor of Lebanon and the beauty of Sharon are reduced to a wilderness by the armies of Assyria.
4. What is God saying here in verses 10-12?
  - a. He is getting ready to intervene against the Assyrians.
  - b. All the enemies’ efforts will be in vain at this time... *“they conceive chaff”* - all their plans are nothing at this time ..in carrying them out God diffuses them in defeat.
  - c. And they will be dealt a final blow as they are finally annihilated.
5. Why does he repeat the word “now” 3 times in verse 10? Decisive action!

- a. *"Now I will arise, declares the LORD."* - a near future action that is getting ready to begin...He has held of action upon the Assyrians...He has waited until the right time to intervene and Now is the time to engage the enemy!... *"Declares the LORD!"* ...like an exclamation point!
  - b. *"Now I will lift myself up..."* - see verse 3..All will know it is He. He exalts Himself!
  - c. *"Now I will be exalted."* - He says this twice to emphasize His majesty and to leave no doubt who the victor is!
  - d. And considering the immediate context, when is "now"? *"Now" that Judah has been brought low, led to repent and trust in God instead of themselves and other nation— now that Assyria has served its purpose (remember, it was God who sent them).*
6. Now let's look at verses 13-24. What are the promises spoken of here for God's people and when will they actually occur?
- a. Vs. 13- a day will come when people will look back on God's judgments and confess that His ways were the right ways...
  - b. Vs. 14-16- the day of repentance will come and the eyes of God's people will be opened and they will wonder who can stand before the LORD? See Ps. 15!
  - c. Verse 17 presents the promise that the people of God, *"Your eyes will behold the king in His beauty..."*...at His first coming and His 2<sup>nd</sup> and the security of the New Earth.
  - d. Verses 18-19 present the promise that the people of God *"Your heart will muse on the [former] terror"* and *"You will no longer see those insolent/fierce people."* In the eternal kingdom of God the present terrors that threaten body and soul shall be looked upon as nothing more than a quaint memory. See Rom. 8:18,37-39.
  - e. Verse 20 presents the promise that the people of God *"Your will see Jerusalem [as being] an untroubled habitation, an immoveable tent."* Here is the description of the perfect peace and undisturbed tranquility that characterizes the kingdom of heaven, note Revelation 7:17, *"the Lamb who is at the center of the throne shall be their shepherd; He will guide them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."*
  - f. Vs. 21-promises God's majestic presence with us in this time and all will be made new...
  - g. Vs. 22 promises that we will be able to praise God in all His works without hesitation...without doubt...without questioning.
  - h. In verse 23 there is a promise that the enemy will be decisively dealt with and the lame/weak/destitute...which is all of us before we are saved and then afterwards there are the spoils of God's blessings and then in that Day the totality of those spoils. among God's people take the spoil.
  - i. Verse 24 promises that every aspect of the divine curse will be excluded from the kingdom of God because *"the people who dwell there will be forgiven their iniquity."*

Next Time: Isaiah 34-35



Bible Study  
The Book of Isaiah  
May 1, 2013

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. What is specific to Chapter 32 that we need to remember? Chapter 33?
2. Why does God spend the time that he does defining for us character traits like “fool”, “scoundrel” and “noble”? How are they helpful even for us today?

- C. Introduction: There was cause to fear: over the face of the earth moved the wrath of a great evil; the cause of Zion appeared in danger of being swallowed up and its place usurped by the kingdom of darkness—it was a time of fear and trembling. But the message of these chapters is: Fear not, don't lose heart; on the contrary, take courage, for your God will come to defend His cause and to save His people. Even as we look at the world around us, and witness the pre-dominance of evil, let us heed the message of Isaiah 34-35, Don't Lose Heart!

D. Chapter 34

1. Isaiah 34:1-7 foretells the coming day of God's judgment of this present world. How is that day described in these verses?
  - a. Verse 1 may be seen as a divine and universal subpoena being served upon the nations. The announcement contained in verse 1 is reminiscent of Psalm 24:1-2, reminding us that mankind, being created by God, is ultimately accountable to God.
  - b. Verse 2a tells of the Lord's indignation against all the nations and all their hosts (note, also, Psalm 7:11).
  - c. Verses 2b-3 portray the execution of God's judgment in the most fearsome of terms—portraying the judgment in terms of a great battle in which the Lord slays His enemies and then treats them with the utmost contempt.
  - d. Verse 4 indicates that this day of final judgment will be of cosmic proportions (note, also, 2 Peter 3: 10). The Old Heaven will waste away and be rolled up like a scroll...(See also- Rev. 6:12-14)

2. What reasons does he give for this great judgment in verses 5-7?
  - a. Verse 5- the sword is drunken/at its full...not with the blood of men but with righteous wrath and anger. Wrath has so filled the sword that it will swagger forth to execute judgment...is the image that is in mind. Edom represents all those enemies of the LORD...the nations that are not among the elect.
  - b. Verse 6-7- Now Isaiah declares the LORD has a sword full of blood. Blood. The best rendering from the Hebrew would be, *"A sword to the LORD; it is filled with blood."* This speaks of the great battle as a sacrifice...not an atoning sacrifice but a blood sacrifice a devoting of these things to the LORD for His own glory. See Lev. 27:28. Just like the peoples, cities and animals in the promised land were devoted to the LORD these too on the last day will be sacrificed to His glory.
3. According to Isaiah 34:8, what is one reason why the Lord will carry out this judgment?(Note: "Zion" represents the kingdom of God, including His cause, His honor, and all that belongs to Him.) Verse 8 defines the day of divine judgment as "a day of vengeance...for Zion's cause." The Lord has appointed a day of reckoning at which time He will punish sinful man for what he has done to Zion: for how he has mocked God's name, trampled down God's honor, usurped God's prerogatives, violated God's law, hated God's rule, and persecuted God's people. The Anti-Christ, embodying all the attitude of sinful mankind is described as the one who "opposes and exalts himself against all that is called God...proclaiming himself as God" (2 Thessalonians 2:4).
4. How do verses 9-15 describe the day of vengeance? (See II Peter 3:8-14) What day or days is God talking about in these verses?
  - a. First, this condemnation is leveled against the area and people of Edom...this curse has continued to remain in place...some of the most desolate ground in the world...never held much influence except during the time of the Herods and even then they were puppets at best...puppets of the Romans and puppets of God in His plan of redemption.
  - b. "Indeed" nothing can live there but those animals that prefer solitude and can act best in the night...in the darkness...evil personified in THE BIRDS!
  - c. Second, the end times again ...when the old earth is swept away and the New Heavens and New Earth are established.
5. Extra points: What is so interesting about vs. 11b, *"He shall stretch the line of confusion over it, and the plumb line of emptiness."*? What point is he trying to make?
  - a. "confusion" = the word from Genesis 1:1 "formless"
  - b. "emptiness"= the word from gen. 1:2 "w/out form or void"
  - c. The land will become such a desolation that no man cannot receive inhabitant unless God does something for that to occur...like a New earth!
6. In what ways do verses 16-17 testify to the certainty of that coming day of judgment?
  - a. Verse 16 testifies to the certainty of that approaching day of holy vengeance by declaring that the Lord Himself has spoken the word, and His Holy Spirit shall carry out that appointed judgment.
  - b. The Lord has furthermore guaranteed it by putting it into writing: it is inscribed in "the book of Yahweh." Christian, as you look at the world around you and witness the predominance of evil, don't lose heart, be assured that the Lord will come with a holy vengeance for Zion.

- c. Verse 17— “He has cast the lot for them...”- God’s enemies have no say in their doom. This is God’s promise to His own of His presence, provision, protection...fulfilled!

#### E. Chapter 35:1-10

1. What, if anything, jumps out to you about these 2 chapters? The contrast between a desolate place...Edom...and the flourishing of God’s place...Isaiah likes to use contrasts in his writing to make his...that is God’s point about the difference between what the world offers and what He promises!
2. According to verses 1-10, what awaits the redeemed? (Remember, something else about Isaiah.... he has a propensity for lists.)
  - a. Vss. 1-2 says that the entire creation, devastated by the judgment of God (Isa. 34:13-15) shall be completely renovated and completely renewed, it shall be transformed into a beautiful and fruitful habitation for the LORD and His redeemed. The picture here is that of a barren wilderness thoroughly transformed into a beautiful paradise. Note the emphasis on the wilderness being glad and the desert rejoicing; the testimony of the Apostle Paul in Romans 8:19-22 is in keeping with this great future expectation.
  - b. Vs. 3-4 are wonderful verses for those of us who have a hard time waiting on the Lord...We need not lose heart...but we do need to stop and pray (vs. 3 as God strengthens our weak hands and makes firm the feeble knees)...this requires us to wait...and then those in the Church need to remind us when we get anxious, “Be strong in the LORD, and fear not”...for our anxieties are based on some fear or in this case a lack of assurance that God will do what He has said and that is deliver us.
    - (1) Maybe we are anxious because we don’t think we are worthy...someone should remind us... “Be strong; fear not! Behold, our God...He will come and save you”
    - (2) Maybe we are anxious because we think God isn’t moving fast enough in our lives...someone should remind us ... “Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God...will do as he has promised...to complete in us what He has planned for us on the day of Christ Jesus.
    - (3) Maybe we are anxious because of some personal sin that God is not dealing with fast enough for us...someone should remind us...Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God has already taken care of it...walk in His deliverance...because we forget.
  - c. Vss. 5-6a shows us that this wonderful transformation will serve to reveal the glory of the LORD, as His own beauty and excellency are reflected in His renewed creation. In the new creation there shall be the restoration of health and life in all of its vigor; the effects of the curse are replaced by the abundant blessing of God: *“Then the eyes of the blind will be opened, and the ears of the deaf unplugged/unstopped; then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute will sing for joy.”*
  - d. Vss. 6a-7 *speaks metaphorically of God’s salvation and the peace and hope and provision that comes from His act of re-creation.*
  - e. Verses 8-9 describe “the highway” the LORD has prepared to bring His redeemed to Zion.
    - (1) That highway is marked, “The Way of Holiness.” (vs. 8a.) It belongs to those who walk on the way.
    - (2) The Highway of Holiness is described as being secure from lions and every beast of prey (vs. 9.) Here is the assurance that the LORD will guard our souls from the deadly clutches of the evil one. See John 10:27-30.

- f. Verse 9b-10 shows ,“...but the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the LORD shall return and come to Zion with singing...” The Hebrew term, usually translated “to come,” also has the meaning “to enter,” which is preferable in this particular verse. Viewed in the light of New Testament fulfillment, here is the assurance that you, as one who trusts in the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, and has been redeemed by His sacrifice at Calvary, shall surely arrive at Zion and gain entrance into that heavenly kingdom of God; note John 14:1-3.
3. What things specifically in this text point to Christ and His work?
  4. In verse 8 there are a couple of things said we need to look at a bit closer.
    - a. There is a particular highway...the Way of Holiness...and
    - b. Only certain ones can use this highway...those who walk on the way...particular atonement/limited atonement...
    - c. There are 2 classes of people ..those who have been redeemed and those that are not=unclean
    - d. The way is so easily marked that even a fool would not go astray...Think Rom. 1:19-20.
    - e. But the Hebrew leaves something open for our contemplation as well...the ESV translate this last part of vs. 8, “...*even if they are fools, they shall not go astray.*” It seems that along with the fact that they are without excuse...that they are also influenced by it when they see it. God’s common grace...
      - (1) our laws used to be influenced by God’s law...
      - (2) our “morals” used to be influenced by the morality of the Law of God...
      - (3) our “good” actions when taken back to their lowest common denominator are found to be rooted in the law as well.

Next Time: Isaiah 36-37

Bible Study  
The Book of Isaiah  
May 8, 2013

- A. Prayer
- B. Review

1. What is specific to Chapter 34 that we need to remember? Judgement Chapter 35?  
Restoration

2. What, if anything, jumps out to you about these 2 chapters? The contrast between a desolate place...Edom...and the flourishing of God's place...Isaiah likes to use contrasts in his writing to make his...that is God's point about the difference between what the world offers and what He promises!

### C. Chapter 36

1. This section of Isaiah, chapters 36-39, give us a glimpse of a period of reprieve from all the prophesy of condemnation that will come on the people. We see the story of a good king, Hezekiah, is leading his people and how the prophet of God is giving a message of hope in the midst of great turmoil illustrating the judgment restoration theme we have seen and the theme that will be with God's people until Christ returns.
2. The superpower of Assyria had been aggressively expanding, advancing ever closer to the borders of Judah, posing a threat to the very existence of the little nation. Now we are told that in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib invaded Judah, destroying all of its fortifications (Isa. 36:1.) It was at this point that Hezekiah had sued for peace, seeking to buy off the Assyrians by robbing the temple of the LORD and depleting the national treasury. (See II Kings 18:13-16)
3. See II Kings 18:13-37 and II Kings 19 for almost a word for word accounting of these chapters.
4. What are some of the reasons in verses 1-10 that the Rabshakeh had for being so arrogant towards King Hezekiah's top officials?
  - a. Assyria has taken their fortified cities and they have a great and powerful army...
  - b. They have no fear of Israel's God...
  - c. He thinks they think that diplomacy will work against the most powerful army in the world...
  - d. He knows there has been some talks between Hezekiah and Egypt...but he knows and we know how that connection would turn out..
  - e. He mistakenly thought that the high places and the altars that Hezekiah removed were part of the worship of the true God...
  - f. Then he taunts them to see if they could even generate enough men for a good fight and he will even throw in the horses...a cavalry Judah didn't have....but Assyria was known for theirs...
  - g. Pulled out his ace of spades with the last one, *"Moreover, is it without the LORD that I have come up against this land to destroy it? The LORD said to me, Go up against this land and destroy it?"* (See Is. 10:5-6) What is going on here?
    - (1) He could be saying...that they don't need the LORD's help from their prideful perspective to carry out this conquering and then mockingly he says the LORD told them to do this...
    - (2) And maybe that had heard the prophesies (See Is. 10:5-6 as one example). Elsewhere in Isaiah the prophet says that it is the LORD that placed in their hearts to come and conquer these people as if they weren't on the radar before.

5. What was the response of King Hezekiah's representatives in verse 11? Fear...they wanted him to speak to them in a language the average person couldn't hear (that is, understand) so the people wouldn't be afraid.
6. What seems to be the difference between King Hezekiah and His representative based on the response of the Rabshakeh to the people in verses 13-21? Their fear has driven them to despair ...but obviously Hezekiah has held fast for the LORD...oh he is not without his lapses in judgment as well but not right now. (See II Kings 18:1-8) 4 times the Rabshakeh speaks about what Hezekiah believes...really making Hezekiah's case for the people to stand firm though he is trying to break their resolve as he has the representatives.
7. What is the Assyrian commander's view of the Lord Jehovah in verse 18-20 and how might this type of mocking give credence to what the LORD was getting ready to do?
  - a. In verses 18-20 the commander disparages the Lord by foolishly equating the Lord with the idols of the world who were not able to deliver their people from the advancing Assyrians (verses 18-19).
  - b. Furthermore, he arrogantly exalts human might as though it were able to combat and defeat the Lord Himself (verse 20).
  - c. God deals with all people who seek to place themselves above the God of all creation.
8. The only courageous thing these representatives did was to hold their piece as King Hezekiah had commanded. What makes their silence courageous? Being obedient to the word of the king...when everything within them spurred them to defend their king and their God before one who could not and would not hear. And when is it appropriate today for us to keep quiet?
  - a. Putting aside our pride...
  - b. We are not to throw pearls before swine...when someone is coming with the purpose of arguing against you...with a purpose to fight...or a purpose to get you to stumble in your witness...these take great discernment because these also may be the way of the other person to check out your faith or to push you to see if we really believe it because they need something. People often will push us to the point of breaking because they really want what we have. This is why being people of the Word and prayer is also so crucial to know when to be silent and when to speak.

#### D. Chapter 37

1. When the Assyrian commander's words are reported to Hezekiah, what is his response in Isaiah 37:1-4 and how is it NOT a result of fear of the Assyrians?
  - a. When the Rabshakeh's blasphemy was reported to Hezekiah, Hezekiah was grieved, "he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and went into the temple of Yahweh." (Isaiah 37:1).
  - b. But rather than confront the Rabshakeh, who at this point would not have considered the truth but would have taken the opportunity to further blaspheme the God of heaven, Hezekiah took the matter to the Lord in prayer. He calls upon the prophet Isaiah to pray (verse 4) and he himself engages in prayer (verses 14-20).
  - c. His actions were not that different than when the Chief Priest believed that Jesus blasphemed...repentance was called for in this situation so that God's people were not seen as possibly capitulating to the blaspheming. It was always the custom that when you have been in presence of a blasphemer to repent and humble yourself before the LORD. To be around such filth required repentance on the part of God's people so that this would not influence us in a negative way...weigh us down...cause us to doubt our faith. Sort of like how important it is to talk about things (especially traumatic things) rather

than keeping them bottled up inside. But in this case this is about God and His Word and requires that we look into ourselves and to seek cleansing from God. not that we are to blame but none are innocent concerning what evil and mockery is thrust upon us, so we are responsible to seek cleansing from its influence. As people of the Word we are to seek purity/holiness above all things which requires us to recognize the filth all around us and to repent and humble ourselves before a great and powerful God.

2. How do we see God taking care of His own honor in verses 5-7? He promises to deal decisively with the pagan king...this Rabshakeh was speaking for the King of Assyria and so this promise was against the king and all Assyria.
3. In verses 8-13, the Rabshakeh continues with his taunting from the King of Assyria a repeat of 36:18-20. With this continual taunting, how is Hezekiah's approach to this situation different from Ahaz in Isaiah 7?(See vs. 14-20) Obviously, Ahaz spurned the Lord's offer and Hezekiah repents, and prays for deliverance from the Assyrians by the Lord.
4. What if anything does the Lord reveal to Hezekiah because of his obedience in verses 21-29?
  - a. Reaffirms the promises that He has given him before...
  - b. that God will deal with these people that He has used but now their usefulness is used up!
5. Now, the rest of the story. How specifically does the LORD keep His promises in verses 30-38? What does this tell us for today?

Next Time: Isaiah 38-39

Bible Study  
The Book of Isaiah  
May 15, 2013

- A. Prayer
- B. Review

1. What was going on in chapters 36-37?
2. What made the officials of Hezekiah's silence courageous? And when is it appropriate today for us to keep quiet?
3. What if anything does the Lord reveal to Hezekiah because of his obedience in Chapter 37? Reaffirms the promises that He has given him before that God will deal with these people that He has used but now their usefulness is used up!

#### C. Isaiah 38

1. Let's consider verses 1-3 for a moment.
  - a. What time period are we talking about as the text opens with "In those days..."? What days are we talking about?
    - (1) Probably during the siege on Jerusalem by the Assyrians...so the wolf is at the very door. ..
    - (2) But then we have Chapter 39 that begins, "At that time..." which seems to be a reference to the same time as the beginning of chapter 38 and if so then the events of chapter 38-39 occur prior to the siege maybe even prior to the invasion by Assyria.

Hezekiah began his reign in 727 BC...Sennacherib's invasion occurred in 701 BC towards the end of King Hezekiah's reign which seems to have come to an end around 698 BC when his son Manasseh took the reins after his father's death and him being only 12. Merodach-baladan reigned on Babylon from 721-710 BC and then again for a while in 703BC.

- (3) Prior to Hezekiah's son being born...because he was sonless until after God granted him 15 more years of life.
- (4) Had Assyria been pushing at the doors of the city it is doubtful that Hezekiah would let in an envoy from Babylon and show him the goods as if nothing much was going on.
- (5) And besides if this had been during the siege there wouldn't have been anything to show the Babylonians since just as the Assyrians were on the march he sent all the gold and silver from the temple to try and buy off the Assyrians...see II Kings 18:13-16

b. What are we to make of the message that God had Isaiah bring to King Hezekiah?

- (1) Emphatic and definite message...
- (2) This is a sign that God has not abandoned the king, even in his hour of death...or apparent death...whatever he was sick from most people found it to be terminal.
- (3) Even a man about to die must have his affairs in order...it is proper stewardship. "Set your house in order..." is more properly translated, "Command with respect to your house for it to be put in order, for you are about to die." This is an interesting command...it has a few working parts to it:
  - The king must leave his financial and business affairs in order as we would expect so there would be no undue burdens on his heirs...physical order
  - But also he is to see to the final blessing and instruction about how his heirs are expected to walk after him...spiritual order.
- (4) The king will surely die unless God intervenes on his behalf? Thus Hezekiah is being taught just how God controls all things even his life.

c. How does Hezekiah respond to the message from the Lord that he is going to die in Isaiah 38:1-3?

- (1) Since Hezekiah is a man of God he goes to the LORD in supplication...he has no heir so I am sure he has this in mind, he did not want to die... he was only 39 at the time and OT times showed old age to be a blessing from God...He like all men would be afraid when he heard for sure that his time had come...
- (2) If he was to die without an heir how would the Davidic line continue...from his perspective he would have desired for a son from a God honoring perspective...
- (3) He turns to the wall...not in a childish rage/tantrum as some have suggested... but in an attempt to be somewhat alone (rolled over as if to try to sleep)...not facing any of his caregivers...to speak with his God undisturbed.
- (4) Vs. 3, he calls out to God using His covenantal/personal name asking Him to remember Hezekiah's manner of life thus far that has been lived Coram Deo...
- (5) He is not pleading his merits before God, as if to claim some form of deserving God's favor...he knows he already has it as the Davidic King, as the one God has blessed, but he is merely pointing out the obvious to God that perhaps it would be better for His righteous king to continue to reign for the good of the people...this is similar to Moses speech to God about why God shouldn't just kill all the children of Israel and start over with Moses and his children...
- (6) He claims God's promises found in Ex. 20:12, Deut. 5:30 and Deut. 30:16...



(7) Unsure of God for the moment he breaks down in tears...but in his doubt he had gone to the LORD not inward or he did not become bitter...

2. How does the Lord respond to Hezekiah's plea in Isaiah 38:4-8? Why?
  - a. God seems to give an immediate answer to Hezekiah's prayer. See II Kings 20:4. "Then the Word of the LORD came to Isaiah."- Not a word by the prophet but a word from the LORD Himself to the Prophet.
  - b. He makes Himself known. Why all the names and titles in verse 5? So there would be no mistake as to who it comes from and to whom it was to be given and for what purpose.
  - c. The mention of David translate clearly to Hezekiah that he is the appointed ruler by God...the one to carry out God's will before the people... and this reminder of the promise would give him hope that God would see fit to uphold His other promises of longer life and an heir to the throne. In his doubt, God gives Him confirmation of who he is and whose he is...God's grace in action before this obedient king.
  - d. God hears Hezekiah's prayer and grants him 15 more years of life...along with a promise to deliver him and the city from the hand of the Assyrians that are surely coming.
  - e. He also grants him a sign to prove His word...the gracious gifts of our God are absolutely amazing. Hezekiah had asked for a sign in contrast to another king, Ahaz...see II Kings 20:8 and also here in verse 22 at the end of his song.
3. Does God change His mind here? If so, why? If not, than how do you explain what is going on?
  - a. God is unchangeable so for that reason alone we know that he does not change His mind concerning Hezekiah.
  - b. God is uninfluenced so Hezekiah's prayer could not have influenced His decision.
  - c. God is sovereign so His plan was established before the foundations of the world.
  - d. God's plan all along was to move Hezekiah even closer to Himself than he had been for what lie ahead...the steadfastness of Hezekiah in the face of mockery and potential destruction that we saw in the last couple of chapters...could be accomplished. God's people learn to trust Him in adversity and struggle. In His turning to God, seeking aid from Him alone Hezekiah grew and matured more and more as God is preparing to use him down the road as the Davidic king doing as he was supposed to do for the good of God's people and for God's glory.
  - e. God pledges in verse 8 that He will fulfill His promise and He marks in with a sign...
  - f. What other signs in His Word has God used to confirm His Word?
    - (1) Miracles of all kinds...OT and NT.
    - (2) Sacraments
    - (3) The Cross
    - (4) The empty tomb

Bible Study  
The Book of Isaiah  
May 22, 2013

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. What things do we learn about God in Chapter 38:1-8?
  - a. God is near and with His people.
  - b. God is merciful
  - c. God doesn't change His mind.
2. How would you defend the unchangeableness of God when confronted with such a text as this?

C. Chapter 38 continued...

1. This section concludes the section of Chapter 1-39 that could loosely be seen as covering God's Sovereignty as seen in Judgment and Promised Restoration of Judah. Chapters 40 -66 will be highlighting the salvation and future blessing of the True Church of God.
2. Verses 9-20 are a song written much like one of David's Psalms.
  - a. What more do we learn about the king through his lament in verses 10-16?
    - (1) Broken and sorrowful...submissive to God's will.
    - (2) Trusting God being in control
    - (3) He knew the affliction was from God and he knew he would be restored because of God's promise.
  - b. With what vivid metaphors does Hezekiah describe his deathly sickness (38:10-14)?
  - c. What do we see about the king's faith and how it has grown from vss. 17-20 that helps us to understand him better? Also, helps us to understand what God had in mind for him?
    - (1) He writes a psalm to God...just like his father David.
    - (2) Hezekiah testifies that this close encounter with death has had a profound impact upon his life; he will never be the same (verse 16-17). His affliction was for his own strength and growth.
    - (3) He now recognizes and confesses the spiritual benefit derived from this horrible experience (verse 17). He has an even greater appreciation for God's forgiveness.
    - (4) In gratitude for answered prayer, Hezekiah promises to make known God's truth to his children and to ever sing praises to the Lord in His temple (verses 19-20).
    - (5) What reassurance does Hezekiah find in God's love in 38:15-20?
3. How is King Hezekiah healed?

- a. By God who has the power to give life...what brought healing to Hezekiah was the Word of God...God simply used the means of the figs to show God's power at work...apart from the Word the figs would not have healed the king.
  - b. God uses means to carry out His will. Figs, pagan kings, His own people! Notice it is YHWH who heals, but court physicians who apply medicine (i.e., figs). Again the ancients did not differentiate between the divine cause and a natural cause as we do. All causation is attributed to God. He is intimately involved in His world, His covenant people, and individuals! This verse has three Hebrew JUSSIVES-a grammatical tool that expresses an absolute willful act...
    - (1) Let them take – BDB 669, KB 724, Qal IMPERFECT used in a JUSSIVE sense
    - (2) Let them apply it (lit. rub) – BDB 598, KB 634, Qal IMPERFECT used in a JUSSIVE sense
    - (3) Let him live – BDB 310, KB 309, Qal JUSSIVE
4. What abiding truths do you find in chapter 38 to hold on to firmly in times of sickness and misfortune? God's in control and that is a good thing!
  5. In what ways does this passage expand or change your understanding of who God is and how he answers our prayers?
    - a. God brings affliction so we can grow...
    - b. When we experience suffering God is with us

#### D. Chapter 39

1. In the light of this miraculous answer to prayer, what attitude seems to have taken possession of Hezekiah's heart in Isaiah 39:1-4?
  - a. Hezekiah may have promised to live in grateful devotion to the Lord, but the visit by the Babylonian ambassadors demonstrated his well-intentioned promise to be unreliable for the moment. "Hezekiah received the envoys gladly" (literally, "he was glad because of them"); i.e., it made Hezekiah feel good and important to entertain these foreign dignitaries. In his pride, Hezekiah showed them all that he had, all the treasures and wealth of the nation of Judah.
  - b. Thinks of himself as bullet proof at this moment...his pride tells him he is going to live 15 more years no matter what.
2. What was the consequence of this behavior as seen in Isaiah 39:5-7? As a consequence of that pride, the Lord declared that He would cause the Babylonians to take away all that they had been shown of the wealth of Judah (verses 5-7). Furthermore, some of Hezekiah's own sons would become emasculated eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.
3. What has happened to this great king? Nothing in particular...like all of God's people we occasionally lose our head and forget to stay focused on the LORD.
4. Did Isaiah's prophecy in verses 5-7 come about BECAUSE of Hezekiah's pride and stupidity? Why or why not?
  - a. His actions were perhaps the earthly catalyst that got things...invasion by Babylon...in motion...he didn't know this, of course, but letting his pride get in the way...he was thinking of himself.
  - b. But this had been God's plan all along...Isaiah has prophesied it many times and Jeremiah would continue in the prophesy...God works through means to carry out His will.

- c. At the commencement of His plan it was time now to reveal the rest of the plan. In God's timing everything occurs just as it was supposed to.
  - d. Hezekiah was supposed to do this but he is also responsible for his sinful behavior as well.
5. What is verse 8 all about?
- a. Some say or imply much like the ESV study note that this response is a negative ne...one that shows little concern for his own descendants or his people...
  - b. But I rather think that there is more going on here:
    - (1) He has been brought once again to recognition that he was wrong and sinful in all that he has done so...
      - He acknowledges the Word of the Lord is good or rather...just and right...it is true and more gracious than it could have been
      - He acknowledges Isaiah as an upright man who has done his duty before the Lord almost perhaps in contrast to this one act of pride that Hezekiah has displayed
    - (2) The 2<sup>nd</sup> statement seems to be a general acknowledgement of the punishment that is to come...but in his days there will be peace and security for the LORD has promised that Jerusalem would not fall to the Assyrians. He is making a matter of fact statement. There will be 15 years of peace and that is a good thing...it will come at a cost...but for now my people will have peace. This comes not from pride or arrogance but as a king concerned for his people.
    - (3) Hezekiah is not attributing this peace and security to anything he has done put rather to the good word of the LORD...which also speaks of judgment. His justice is always good.
    - (4) While Hezekiah may be spared he will have to live with the knowledge of the consequences of his actions.
    - (5) The truth is that the mercy of God would not be removed during Hezekiah's lifetime... Hezekiah would not have to lead his armies in war and he would not see the people carried into captivity.
6. What would you say are lesson that can be learned from this chapter?
- a. First answer came from the gallery from R.R. "Don't mess up, you never know when God needs a good example!"
  - b. But more seriously:
    - (1) God acts according to His nature...not necessarily what we might think is the best plan but it is the best plan because it is God's plan.
    - (2) Never be prideful with God's stuff.
    - (3) Never trust the world.

Next Time: Chapter 40...in September 2013...See you then.

Bible Study  
The Book of Isaiah  
October 2, 2013

A. Prayer

## B. Review

1. If you were to sum up chapters 1-39 in a few words or a sentence or two, how would you describe what they were about? Judgment on Israel, Judah and the nations for their sins and the promise of restoration for God's remnant. God keeping His promises from His covenant.
2. What were some of the "highlights" for you along the way? "Low-lights"?
3. Y'all come...thankfully...and we have great discussions, but...how is all of this helping you fulfill the mission God has given to each believer...to you? What do you do with what you are learning? (I know this is PERSONAL, but I think we have moved beyond concern of what others may think.)
  - a. The themes of judgment and redemption help us to see our life in the Bible...
  - b. It may "feel" like God is judging for the sake of judging but then His total plan becomes evident and it is different...
  - c. To know that God never changes...that He does what He says He will do...
  - d. Reading the OT and then seeing it fulfilled in the NT confirms the above for us day by day...
  - e. He helps us to understand that we are not going to get struck down and that we have no hope...God is holy...trustworthy...God's people will be saved, in fact, the truth of this has been accomplished in Jesus ...so now all we need to do is go in and do it.

## C. Chapter 40

1. As we move forward in this book we will see ultimately...restoration... the remnant of the children of Israel coming back from exile, which is a picture of the future restoration of all God's children at Christ's return. So we see in the big picture blessing...Fun Fact: Which is exactly the way the book of Deuteronomy ends with blessings on God's people as they prepare to go into the Promised Land for the first time.
2. Chapters 36- 39 served as a bridge between the 2 main sections of Isaiah. Chapters 36 and 37 show us the conclusion of the Assyrian Period and then chapters 38 and 39 give us an introduction to the Babylonian Period where the exile is announced. Chapter 40 and following serves to answer the dark picture that chapter 39 created. These chapters see the children of God in bondage, yet these chapters go deeper and look at the people as being in spiritual bondage, subject to a greater taskmaster than the Babylonians...sin. From this bondage there will ultimately be a deliverer...the LORD.
3. Interesting though, the people are not yet in Babylon in chapter 40 and the following chapters, but Isaiah sees through the lenses of the prophecy of God sees the time when his people will suffer bondage.
4. Now let's look at the text. Let's focus our attention on verses 1-2, a minute. Turn back to chapter 1:2-3. Compare these two sections of Scripture.
  - a. How are they similar?
    - (1) Both sections of Scripture talk about the sins of God's people.
    - (2) God uses His covenant name in both sections.
    - (3) They both begin with a command.
    - (4) The command is connected with the speaking of the Lord.
    - (5) In both places Israel is addressed by God as "my people"- "ammi" in the Hebrew.

- b. How are they different?
  - (1) One is concerning a coming judgment and this one is concerning comfort...coming deliverance.
  - (2) It was this people...God's people...that first needed to hear the message of judgment from Isaiah so that they now could hear the message of comfort.
- c. Now to verses 1-2; who is talking, who is He talking to, what is he ( the one who He is talking to) to say and how is he to say it?
  - (1) It is God speaking.
  - (2) God is speaking to His prophets specifically to Isaiah. After all Isaiah was the one God command to proclaim judgment now he is to be the one to proclaim comfort/deliverance. He was to be a burr against the people calling them to repentance because of their sin...now he has words of comfort to give to the remnant that will return...those who can hear his voice...the voice of the LORD.
  - (3) "My people" are the object of the comfort. The people belong to God, for He has chosen His people, so even though they may forsake Him, He will not abandon them. It is necessary that He punish them in exile...He only disciplines those He loves...but God does not forsake His people.
  - (4) God tells His prophet(s) to speak tenderly to Jerusalem...to His people..."tenderly" is the translation for "upon the heart of"... As in "*Speak upon the heart of Jerusalem.*" These words will then be words of comfort and refreshment when they are remembered in exile by the remnant. For they touch something deep in the heart...even if the people pay little attention to them now...they will remember and will be comforted by the promise. Just like the disciples didn't fully comprehend Jesus' words but Jesus said they would when the Spirit came to them. Next the text says "...and cry to her..." this is like a herald bringing news of victory, pardon and blessing...in this case double blessing! Is this what they deserve? How has He spoken to them up to this point? Harshly and poignantly because of their sin and lack of repentance.
  - (5) If it is not because they deserve it, or have earned it or are entitled to it; WHY then does God speak of such comfort?
    - Because God likes the process...the waiting to help His people learn and expand our knowledge about Him .
    - Because we need comfort after having experienced His wrath.
    - Because of His covenantal promise to deliver His people. His grace is always more abundant than we deserve or expect.

## 5. Now let's look at verse 3-11.

- a. How do verses 3-5 show us that Isaiah is talking of future deliverance?
  - (1) "Prepare"...tells us to get ready, this also communicates as does the text that there is a lot of work to be done before this is all accomplished... "Shall be"... tells us that these things are yet to happen...they will happen with certainty.
  - (2) He purposefully doesn't tell us who it is that is saying these things...he simply says, "The voice of one crying..."
  - (3) We see this (vs.3) in the NT...Matt. 3:3; Mark 1:3; Luke 3:4 and John 1:23...so it must be important...and refers to that time...the voice is John the Baptist.
  - (4) But it is a wonderful voice...with wonderful words for the people to hear and be comforted by...
  - (5) Next verse 4 records even yet a more future time...the new heaven and new earth.
  - (6) So these 2 verses speak of the first and second coming of the Lord when the LORD's glory will be revealed as said in verse 5.

- b. In the beginning of verses 6-8 we see, once again, Isaiah being addressed by God who says "Cry!" And Isaiah basically says "Cry, what?" What does God tell him to cry that will be comforting to the people?
  - (1) God is in control.
  - (2) That God is aware of the hardships of this life...
  - (3) He is not only aware but God has ordained whatsoever comes to pass...even the affliction... "*...for the breath of the LORD blows against it...*" causing it to wither and fade. Just like the grasses of Palestine which come up green in the spring but within a few weeks they wither before the hot desert winds.
  - (4) But... there is something that endures forever...His Word will stand forever... And as His Word endures so doesn't He endure forever...Matt. 3:18, Matt. 24:32-35; James 1:11...so all who stand in His word will have eternal life.
  
- c. Now what are verses 9-11 telling them and us about?
  - (1) The coming of the LORD!
  - (2) Verse 9 says:
    - That they are to proclaim His coming far and wide...hence the command to go up...for the voice carries farther pointing up than down...is the idea. To declare the greatness of God.
    - "*Herald/ Bringer of Good News*" is this John the Baptist again from verse 3? The Hebrew Word is in the feminine form...so...
      - It is the church; the Bride of Christ...invisible/everywhere and the church visible the local church...that is in view here...all believers everywhere (See Chap. 2:3)...we are to proclaim the whole counsel of God but then...
      - John the Baptist is probably in mind but not as a prophet but simply as part of the Bride of Christ...
    - And the Church is to be bold to proclaim this message of the coming of the LORD... "*Bringer/Herald and Lift up*" all signify "loudness", "firmness" "boldness" in proclamation so that everyone everywhere hears "*Behold, your God!*"
    - The Church is never to pose as a seeker of truth before the world but be the one with the truth that the lost needs...it is to be as one commentator put it, *to be vigorous and militant with getting this message out...the message of the Gospel!*
  - (3) Verse 10 indicates that on that glorious day the LORD will place His full reward of grace upon those He has loved and those who have faithfully served Him.
  - (4) Verse 11 indicates that on that day the redeemed will experience the full intimacy of the LORD's tender care, which is compared to a loving shepherd for his sheep. (John 10:12) None will be lost...His Sheep are absolutely safe in His arms...this image would be a comfort to these people in exile.
  
6. Many people pick up the prophets and are overwhelmed like they would be with say, reading Revelations, and they do not receive any comfort from something like that. So, since all scripture is profitable for teaching, reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness how are these words comforting to us today?
  - a. Helps us to see that God loves His own and keeps His word.
  - b. God disciplines those He loves...and we wish sometimes He didn't love us so much! Not Really!
  - c. Promising redemption before the exile shows:
    - (1) He is control of all events...
    - (2) He is the one who will secure deliverance...

- (3) He is the only one who can do this...we can not and would not choose to rescue ourselves.
- (4) There is comfort and joy in knowing that He does what He says He will do.
- d. God has a purpose in history...all history is moving in the direction He established and is guiding it toward and nothing we can do can change that...and if we were honest we would all say that this is a great thing...that someone else is handling it all. Less pressure on us! ☺
- e. An obvious progression:
  - (1) Verses 1-5- God promises made known
  - (2) Verses 6-8- God gives us a reason why we can believe it
  - (3) Verses 9-11- Our response to all of this.
  - (4) This could preach...thanks Troy! ☺ ☺

Bible Study  
The Book of Isaiah  
October 30, 2013

A. Prayer  
B. Review

1. What were they commanded to sing a new song?
2. What are some of the messages that are timeless from Isaiah 40-42:17?
  - a. God's Word stands firm forever.
  - b. God is just and merciful.
  - c. There is no one like our God.
3. Why are these still comforting and hopeful 3000 years later?
  - a. We can understand them and how they speak to us in all generations.
  - b. They are easy to remember...they quickly come to mind especially when we need them.
  - c. God is still and always the same.
4. Why are these important? How do they enable us to honor God appropriately? If He changed He wouldn't be trustworthy...so since He doesn't change He is absolutely trustworthy. Since His word is memorable we can have it with us always to bring us peace in times of darkness and even more celebration in times of joy.

C. Isaiah 42:18- 44:1-5

1. Starting back in 41:1, we hear God saying, "*Listen to me in silence...*" and then in 42:1, where God says "*Behold...*" along with many other areas where that word is



used and then multiple uses of the phrase “I am the LORD” we see God asserting Himself pretty forcefully to the people. Now in our text this evening we see this again in many places. In the midst of comforting His people why does He seem to be “shouting” at them? Why does God seem so forceful? They seemingly aren’t hearing and they aren’t seeing...sooo... Remember that this is pre-exile ...the same people...though maybe for the moment a bit humbler after God’s rescuing them from the Assyrians...but it is a broken people in the process of rebuilding...King Hezekiah’s reign was mostly a fruitful one spiritually for the people but obviously there is still much blindness in the people. Just like today...the Church is alive and well in many segments of society but is obviously having little impact...for while the true believers are there, there is little effect on the culture or the religious community.

2. Who is the servant spoken of in Isaiah 42:18-20? What does the Lord say about this servant?
  - a. It is God’s own people, Israel.
  - b. My servant is blind...this seems to describe an intentional blindness and deafness.
  - c. Speaking to His servant, the Lord summons the deaf to hear and the blind to look so that they may see (verse 18). The command seems to indicate that there is here a willful spiritual deafness and blindness; the command is to pay attention and become spiritually alert.
  - d. The questions posed in verse 19 serve to indicate the incomparable blindness and deafness of the Lord’s servant. Vs. 20 answers the question of vs. 19.
  - e. The point is that Israel, uniquely called to be the Lord’s servant, was spiritually blind to their responsibility and obligation to serve the Lord.
3. What is going on in verse 21? It seems to be just dropped in here from our perspective?
  - a. This is an indictment to a certain degree...Look at what I have done for you and you are still blind.
  - b. God is pleased to reveal Himself.
  - c. Verse 21 declares that it pleased the Lord “*to magnify His law and make it glorious.*” That is to say, the Lord determined to honor His law and abide by it; and He determined to do so for the sake of His righteousness—the Lord is righteous and He cannot deny Himself, He cannot allow His law and His covenant to be broken with impunity.
  - d. What this means for His covenant-breaking people—those who are willfully blind and deaf to God’s moral demands—is now revealed in verse 22.
4. What has happened to the Lord’s unfaithful servant in verses 22-25? (See also Deut. 28:15-68 for the prophecy that is foundational to all the things that the LORD has said and done against His covenant people.
  - a. As the consequence of their disobedience, the Lord in His righteousness has brought the curse of the covenant to bear against His people—the punishment taking the form of foreign invasion by the Assyrian armies.
  - b. How would you ask verse 23 in contemporary language? Verse 23 asks the question... “Is anyone listening...Is anyone paying attention to what just happened and why it happened?”
  - c. The vs. 24 asks the question, “Who is responsible for all of this destruction, oppression and exile?” ...and 24b makes clear, it is the LORD Himself who has subjected His people to this plight, the LORD answers the question for them as to what their response should be...since they are Blind and deaf... “*Was it not the LORD, against whom we have*

*sinned, the one in whose ways they would not walk, and whose law they would not obey?” (25)*

- d. Therefore He poured out upon them (i.e.; the nation of Israel portrayed as a collective individual) His burning anger and the violence of battle” (verses 24b-25a).
5. After all of this what words of comfort and assurance does the Lord now speak to His people in 43:1-7?
  - a. Now, in striking contrast to what has just been described—the righteous judgment of the Lord being enacted against His sinful people—there comes this word from the Lord: *“But now thus says the LORD/Yahweh, He who created you, O Jacob, He who formed you, O Israel: Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.”* (Isaiah 43:1). He promises once again His presence...it is His presence that has always given definition to His people. Christ in us gives us our definition.
  - b. Vs. 2 defines the redemption...rescue that He has just talked about. They will come through affliction to His rest.
  - c. In verse 3 and 4 the Lord reminds His people of what He did for them in the days of the Assyrian invasion: He gave Egypt, Ethiopia and Seba to the conquering Assyrians instead of giving Israel (i.e.; Judah) to them. (Note: the name “Israel” as it is used here is not a reference to the ten northern tribes who were carried away into exile by the invading Assyrian armies; rather, the name is now being applied to the two remaining southern tribes of Judah—they alone are left and they alone now constitute the nation of “Israel.”) To appreciate the significance of this act of God we must bear in mind two important facts:
    - (1) the conquering Assyrian armies were the instrument of God’s righteous judgment (Isaiah 10:5), and
    - (2) this instrument of judgment was sent against the sinful nation of Israel/Judah (Isaiah 10:6). But in His mercy to Israel/Judah, the Lord caused His judgment to fall upon Egypt and the other nations instead of upon Israel/Judah (note Isaiah 20:3-4 and Isaiah 37:33-35).
    - (3) Here is the principle of substitutionary atonement: God causing His righteous judgment to fall upon a substitute instead of upon His people. His willingness to give other people’s lives for the lives of His own. The ultimate Substitute, the One to whom all the Old Testament types and sacrifices point, is the Son of God Himself, the Lord Jesus Christ.
  - d. And then again He says, *“Fear not, for I am with you...”* as a guarantee for what He is about to say and what He has said many times before. As you read verses 5-7 what more is going on than just a simple restoration from exile? What else is in view here? And why is this important?
6. Look closely at Isaiah 43:8-13. Given the context how would you interpret what God is saying here?
  - a. He is calling them to come to their senses and to be faithful witnesses again.
  - b. He is describing His own character and nature.
7. The Lord is able to fulfill His promise because of who He is. How does He describe Himself and what does He say He is going to do for His people in Isaiah 43:11-21?
  - a. The Lord is able to fulfill His word because He is the Almighty God. The Lord emphatically testifies that He is the living God, and the only Savior (verse 11). The One and Only Savior.
  - b. He testifies that in the past He has spoken and fulfilled His word by saving His people (verse 12); no doubt referring primarily to the Exodus out of Egypt, but also to the many

other Old Testament era deliverances accomplished by God for His people...like the Assyrians.

- c. Furthermore, He testifies that He is God from the beginning of the creation (verse 13). He always has been God, and because He is the true and living God, there is no one who can take His people out of His hand.
  - d. The Lord declares that He will do yet another mighty and irresistible work of salvation: "I work, and who can turn it back...who can hinder it?" (verse 13b). For the sake of His people, and for their redemption, the Lord will cause the mighty Babylonians to be conquered and will thus set His people free (verse 14).
  - e. At the beginning of vs. 14 and then in vs. 15 the LORD using all the titles and name confirms what He will do in His Name...
  - f. Vs. 16-21, the LORD goes from His deliverance from Egypt by referring to the loss of the Egyptian army in the Red Sea to the way He will make in the wilderness...His provision of Christ to bring the salvation to His people appeasing the wrath and satisfying His law.
  - g. Don't miss verse 20b, "...to give drink to my chosen people, the people whom I formed for myself that they might declare my praise." Why is this verse particularly encouraging and hopeful even for us today? We live in a parched land today, as well...but He provided us with Christ the Living Water.
8. The Lord has proclaimed all that He will do for His people, but what have they failed to do in Isaiah 43:22-24? And what had they not failed to do? Why the listing?
- a. They had failed to do as God had directed in worship and in their personal life...they had not sought Him to obey Him... they had not sought His Word to know His will...they had not done as He had clearly directed them.
  - b. They had not failed in burdening God with their sin or wearying Him with their iniquities. Obviously, God does not "tire" as we know the term...so what is He communicating here in these words.
  - c. Isaiah likes lists they are a good teaching tool.
  - d. It is an indictment by God and here are the charges.
9. There is a lot going on in verses 25-44:1-5.
- a. What is He telling them in verse 25 that is significant to us even today?
    - (1) Salvation is of the LORD alone. He is the only one that can and does provide this. The people don't get it...just like today.
    - (2) They didn't earn His favor...in fact just the opposite.
    - (3) They didn't deserve His favor.
    - (4) Obviously they weren't entitled to it.
    - (5) They didn't even ask for it this time...by His grace alone...He gave it to His people. "...for my own sake..." That is the way He has worked throughout all of time...see vs. 20b-21 again. Another way to say the last part of 25 would be, "The sins you have done against my Law, I will not call to mind...I will not hold over you ever again."
    - (6) Deliverance is only a work of God and in no sense of the people.
  - b. There have been a few challenges thrown before the people by God over the course of the last few chapters. What challenge does He throw out to them in verses 26-28? Show me how you have merited any favor from me ever! Help me to remember anything you have done that is perfect without blemish! And what is the upshot of the challenge? Since their first father was a sinner...whether that be Adam, Abraham, or Jacob all men since the Fall have been sinners so nothing they do on their

own is worthy of any merit or favor from God. the entire nation has always been sinful and as such cannot make a claim for God's merit. Nothing we do is worthy of salvation. The Lord informs His people that in consequence of their disobedience He has brought upon them the curse of the covenant—banishment from the land of Canaan and the presence of His sanctuary by the hand of the Babylonians (verse 28).

- c. After talking about their banishment and exile in 43:28 for their sin, how does the Lord identify Israel in Isaiah 44:1 and how does He exhort them in verse 2?
  - (1) Even though Israel has been banished from God's presence, the Lord still identifies him as "*Jacob, my servant, and Israel, the one whom I have chosen*" (Isaiah 44:1). He informs them that they are His possession whom He will not give up; and
  - (2) He once again reminds His people that He made them and He will help them (verse 2a). The Lord exhorts His people, "Fear not, O Jacob, my servant; Jeshurun, the one whom I have chosen" (verse 2b). Note: "Jeshurun" means "the righteous ones;" the people who possess God's righteousness and who shall be made righteous by God—the Lord views His people in their final state of being transformed into His divine righteousness. Look at how He sees them...just like He sees us for those who were His children have received His righteousness as we do from Christ.
- d. In Isaiah 44:3-5 Israel is portrayed as a man dying of thirst in a dry, desolate wilderness. What all does the Lord promise to do for His people in this desperate condition?
  - (1) The Lord declares, "I will pour water upon the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground." Not only does the Lord promise the provision of life-sustaining water, but He promises that there will be a most abundant provision: He will pour out water upon the thirsty land and cause streams (plural) to flow upon the dry ground.
  - (2) In other words, God will do something miraculous again...something they couldn't and wouldn't expect...that will reveal His lasting long term commitment...again.
  - (3) The imagery of providing water for the thirsty gives way to the spiritual reality: the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the Lord's people... the children of the promise...Abraham's offspring...the Church. As a result of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit there will be an abundance of spiritual fruit and blessing (verse 4)
  - (4) that shall also encompass the Gentile nations, bringing many of them to the Lord (verse 5). "*The one will say, 'I am the LORD's'...another will call on the name of Jacob...(obviously there will be saved Jews in the midst of the true Church)...and another will write on his hand 'The LORD's,' and name himself by the name of Israel.*" You gotta love this imagery of people from every tribe and tongue and cultures wanting the whole world to know who they belong to...national ties are replaced with kingdom allegiances.

Next Time: Isaiah 44:6-45:25

Bible Study  
The Book of Isaiah  
November 6, 2013

- A. Prayer
- B. Review

1. What was God telling His children in Chapter 42:18-44:1-5 that is still pertinent for us today? God IS sovereign over all of History....that includes today.

2. In speaking about “His servant” what does He reveal that is important for His church in all time?
  - a. That he has a remnant in all ages
  - b. “He done the choosin’”—He elected His own from before time.
  - c. Speaks to His covenant and that God keeps covenant with His servant.

C. Isaiah 44:6- 45:25

1. Chapter 43:27-28 has Isaiah telling the children of Israel of their pending exile. But they are reminded in 44:1-5 that they are still God’s people. They will be cast into a land of desolation but they won’t be alone and God will deliver in His time and in His way. Now we come to an interesting section in 44:6-8. Why does God speak so before His people?
  - a.
  - b. Knowing our propensity toward idols He reinforces who He is. As we follow up on verses 1-5, they still need the reassurance...but He also seeks to make a point...that no matter how dark things are...He is still there...Even though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, we will fear no evil, for He is with us...
  - c. In verse 6 the LORD identifies Himself as, *“Thus says the LORD/Yahweh, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD/Yahweh of hosts: I am the first, and I am the last.”* The LORD alone is the true and rightful king over His people. Although they may find themselves presently given over into the hand of the king of Babylon, the LORD shall yet reclaim them and exercise His sovereign kingship over them, for He is our “Redeemer, and as “LORD of hosts, the First and the Last,” He has the power to redeem us and bring us under His holy rule.
  - d. To demonstrate that He alone is God, the LORD challenges any other “god” to come forth and show themselves to be comparable to Him (vs. 7.) Let such gods prove themselves by reciting an account of all that has happened since the time the LORD began history and first created men on the earth (such seems to be the sense of the phrase, “the ancient people”), and then let them declare all that is yet to happen in the future—but none can come forth to meet the LORD’s challenge.
  - e. The LORD now proceeds to exhort His people, *“Fear not, do not be afraid.”* Or *“Do not tremble and do not be afraid,”* assuring them that He, indeed, is God and there is none beside Him (vs.8)...and that they will be His witnesses...See Acts 1:8.
  - f. What is God communicating when He says, “There is a no Rock; I know not any”? See also Deut. 32:4,15,18,30; Ps. 95:1; Isaiah 26:4, 30:29; and Matt. 16.
2. What is God communicating to His people in verses 9-11?
  - a. Who really does this? They are those who search and can not find the truth. They know instinctively that they need to worship so they do it...but they do not know...none of us know instinctively WHO we are to worship.
  - b. God tells His people, Behold...look understand, discern...perceive the kind of person who does this...he wishes His people to see and understand the folly of man without God.

3. Describe the construction of the pagan idols as the Lord presents it to us in Isaiah 44:12-20. Why do you suppose the Lord presents such an elaborate picture of the folly of idolatry?
  - a. The blacksmith forges an idol—this is hard work (he becomes weary), but he persists and is dedicated to his task (verse 12).
  - b. Although some idols were made of metal, (the work of the blacksmith), most were carved of wood, so the Lord now gives a description of the carpenter and his labor (verse 13). Note the sinful perverseness of idolatry: it was God who created man in His image (Genesis 1:26-27), but here we find men making “gods” in the image of man.
  - c. We now accompany the craftsman as he goes to the forest to select a sturdy tree from which he will eventually fashion his idol, perhaps a tree he himself planted as a seedling and has carefully cultivated (verse 14).
  - d. After chopping down his tree, the craftsman will use the wood to build a fire over which he will warm himself and roast his meat; and from the scrap of wood that is left over he will fashion his idol! (verse 15)
  - e. Verses 16-17 express the incredible folly that a man should take the residue of the wood, build a fire from it for his food, exclaiming, “I made the fire.” and use it to fashion an idol before which he bows down and to which he calls for help.
  - f. Verses 18-20, He shows us that God Himself has hardened the heart and blinded the eyes of men... and because of that man on his own is totally incapable of seeing his own folly... *“Is there not a lie in my right hand?”*...He knows something is not right, but he doesn’t know what it is!
  - g. Also, He does so to further emphasize the fact that He alone is the true and living God, the Lord over all. It was the Lord who gave Israel into the hands of the Babylonians, not the idol/gods of Babylon; and it is the Lord who will redeem Israel from their captivity—and none of the idol/gods of the world can prevent Him from doing so!
4. What things does God expect His people will remember in verses 21-22? Why?
  - a. We are called to do His bidding whether we want to or not.
  - b. We are His servant...not some idols.
  - c. He formed us...no one else...just Him. He is the crafter...He formed us.
  - d. That we will never be forgotten by Him.
  - e. That He has blotted out our transgressions and sins.
  - f. That He is our Redeemer...He alone purchases back His people so that they can praise His name...
  - g. He alone enables us to return to Him.
5. Verses 23-28 tell us many things about God that the children of Israel are supposed to see and know. As you read through these verses about God what do YOU see?
  - a. He is total control...intimately involved in every small...formed us in the womb ( the molecular level) to every large detail...the spreading of the heavens.
  - b. Vs. 23... think Rom. 8:18-23
  - c. Once again God speak of His being the creator...there is no other God like Him...He did in fact stretch out the heavens and spread out the earth by Himself...forming all things out of nothing by the power of His word...in contrast to the blacksmith in verse 13 who stretched a line to use materials that already existed...who exhausted himself from his labor.
  - d. He frustrates the signs of the liar
  - e. Makes fools of the diviners
  - f. He turns worldly wise men back to their folly making their knowledge foolishness
  - g. He confirms the word of His servant

- h. Fulfills the counsel of His messengers
  - i. And He fulfills His promises. As the people of Israel/Judah were carried away into captivity, they witnessed the desolation of the city of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple of the LORD. But the LORD declares that Jerusalem will once again be inhabited and the temple shall be rebuilt.
  - j. Having affirmed that Jerusalem shall again be inhabited (vs. 26b), as a means of assuring them of His ability to make good His promise, the LORD now reminds His people of how He dried up the waters of the Red Sea at the time of the Exodus (vs. 27.)
  - k. In this passage of Isaiah 44, written some 150 years in advance of the event, the LORD declares that He shall raise up the Persian king, Cyrus, as His shepherd who shall do His bidding of releasing His people from their captivity and commission the rebuilding of the holy city of Jerusalem and the LORD's temple (vs. 28.) (See Nehemiah 1 and Ezra 1:2-4)
  - l. We can be assured that the LORD has good plans for you, and may that encourage you to return to Him.
6. Whom does the Lord address in Isaiah 45:1? What promises does the Lord make to him in Isaiah 45:2-3a?
- a. In verse 1 the Lord addresses His servant, Cyrus, the Persian king. The Lord pledges to him His own all-powerful support and pledges to make him a victorious conqueror.
  - b. In verses 2-3, speaking directly to Cyrus, the Lord declares, *"I will go before you and will level the exalted places/ mountains;"* the Lord will remove all obstacles that stand in the way of the Persian's conquests. *"I will give you the treasures of darkness and the hoards in secret places;"* the Lord will grant Cyrus to take for himself the closely guarded treasures of the nations.
7. What are the reasons given in verses 3b- 7 why the Lord will do all this for Cyrus?
- a. To make known among His people that God is doing these things...God is directing all of this for the sake of His chosen people. The Lord announces to Cyrus that He, the Lord, has raised him up for the sake of His people, Israel.
  - b. Even though Cyrus is not consciously acting as the Lord's servant at the time of his conquests, the Lord had in fact called him to be His servant in order to accomplish His divine purpose of bringing about the release of His people Israel from their Babylonian captivity. It is interesting how God carries out His will...through deliverance by a foreigner...non-believer...pagan king.
  - c. Verse 7 in an interesting verse here as God describes Himself. What does this verse say to you and to all God's children? God controls all things...light and darkness are His to do with as He pleases...and we need to remember this.
8. What word of caution does the Lord speak in Isaiah 45:9-13? What imagery does He use in these verses and to whom does it refer?
- a. Verses 9-10 contain a word of caution, a word of warning, to those who would criticize God and forget with whom they are dealing.
  - b. It appears that the children of Israel had become fearful and confused, they did not understand what God was doing and they did not like what was happening to them. In their hearts and with their voices they raised their objections and their criticisms.

- c. In these verses the Lord describes Himself as our Maker, our Potter and our Father. God's people, and, indeed, all of mankind, are identified as "potsherds" and "clay" and children who are the offspring of God.
  - d. Who can stand before the Creator and even speak to him on an even playing field? Consequently, we are in no position to criticize Him for His dealings with us.
  - e. These verses are intended to remind us of God's sovereign rights over us and the fact that His ways are far beyond our ability to fully comprehend.
9. Look closely at verses 14-18. What does Isaiah see, in the future in vs.14, that causes the reaction that he has in verses 15-18?
- a. The salvation of ALL God's people.
  - b. He witnessed the fact that the Lord's people shall inherit the wealth of the world.
  - c. Furthermore, the Lord's people shall share in the Lord's dominion.
  - d. Finally, the Lord's people shall witness the nations acknowledging that the Lord is God.
10. Of what divine attribute (s) does the Lord remind His people in Isaiah 45:19? The Lord declares, *"I am the LORD, and there is no other. I did not speak in secret, in a land of darkness. I did not say to the offspring of Jacob, Seek me in vain"* (verse 19a). A better rendering of verse 19a would be, *"I did not say, Seek me in emptiness...referring back to verse 18 where he said I did not create it empty or void...without form."* That is to say, the Lord will not lead us into a wilderness to die; on the contrary, the Lord's desire is to lead us into a land flowing with milk and honey, although the road may pass through a wilderness. The Lord goes on to declare, *"I the LORD speak the truth; I declare what is right"* (verse 19b). The Lord is the God of integrity; He is faithful to fulfill His Word.
11. Why does the Lord call men to turn to Him in Isaiah 45:20-22?
- a. One, because that is what men are created to do.
  - b. It is not true that the whole world worships the same God, merely calling Him by different names and serving Him in different ways. On the contrary, the Lord contrasts Himself to the so-called gods of this world.
  - c. The Lord calls men to turn to Him because He alone is God. In fact He declares that 3 times...2xs in vs.21 and then again in verse 22. He declares, *"I am God, and there is none other"*
  - d. There is no other name under heaven whereby men may be saved! Turn to Him and be saved.
  - e. According to Romans 1:21-23 and 25, what has sinful man done? According to Romans 1, men have refused to glorify the living God or give Him thanks. On the contrary, instead of worshiping the God who is their Creator, sinful mankind has chosen to worship and serve created things—and man fashions images in the likeness of those things to assist him in his apostate worship.
12. What oath does the Lord swear in Isaiah 45:23-25? What does this tell us about the Lord's character? What does this tell us about one important element of true worship? The Lord has sworn by Himself, that is His name... that every knee shall bow before Him and every tongue shall acknowledge that He is the Lord. (See Phil. 2:1-11) The Lord is a jealous God, He will not tolerate the giving to any other the worship due Him; He will not tolerate the giving to any other the devotion due Him. Note that one important element of true worship is devotion. Indeed, devotion is one of the greatest expressions of worship; worship apart from devotion is empty and hollow, it is detestable to God; the Lord demands that He be the first and the supreme object of our devotion. See also Rom. 9:6-8.



Next Time: Isaiah 46-47

Bible Study  
The Book of Isaiah  
November 13, 2013

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. What is God doing in these chapters up to this point to prepare His people for exile? Why?

2. Why is the image of the Rock so important in Scripture?

C. Isaiah 46-47

1. Let's look at 46:1-13. How are the Babylonian idols described in verses 1-2?

- a. As verses 1-2 indicate, far from saving anyone in time of trouble, the Babylonian idols themselves had to be saved! "*Bel bows down, Nebo stoops (low)*"—the chief gods of Babylon are brought to a state of humiliation.
- b. Isaiah here envisions the great golden idols of Babylon being taken down by their worshipers to be transferred to safety from the approaching Persian invaders.
- c. As Isaiah goes on to say, the idols of Babylon "*could not save the burden*"—indeed, the burden of saving their people proves to be too great for them, they cannot save those who trust in them. On the contrary, "*they themselves have gone into captivity*"—the idols of Babylon prove to be unable to save their people, and there is none to save them.
- d. Why is God giving His people this image?
  - (1) To remind them that idols have no power ...are ineffectual...and that they are high maintain with no return
  - (2) To remind them again that He alone is God...
  - (3) To remind them of how far down He will take their captors...
  - (4) To remind them that even these foolish ones have been given a purpose of doing God's will...and
  - (5) To remind them that He will deal with them decisively in His judgment since they are NOT His.
- e. What do these first 2 verses say to us today? Anything that placed in front of or in the place of God needs to be set aside...we need to have a better understanding of who God is so we desire to set aside these other things...without this knowledge of God everything else we continue to get in the way of God....See II Peter 1:1-11 on how important is the knowledge of God.

2. In contrast to the so-called gods of Babylon, how does the Lord describe Himself in Isaiah 46:3-4? In contrast to the so-called gods of Babylon, the Lord declares that He has carried—and cared for—His people from the time of their birth, and He will continue to do so throughout the years of their old age. He is the God who is able and faithful. In contrast to the

idols that have been made by man, the Lord, the Creator of all things, is the One who has made His people and He will ever take care of them. From a NT perspective ...He is the author and finisher of our faith.

3. With what does the Lord compare and contrast Himself in Isaiah 46:5-7? Gold and silver of the people. In other words ... the wealth of the people. Why?
  - a. In verses 5-6 the Lord compares and contrasts Himself with the gods of gold and silver.
  - b. The Lord, who is the incomparable God, asks, *"To whom can you liken me? ...and with whom can you compare me...?"* (verse 5) There is no response to His inquiry, because there is no one with whom He can be compared, He alone is God and there is none other.
  - c. As the Lord Himself points out, the gods of the nations are nothing more than idols of gold and silver (verse 6). A man donates a lavish amount of gold, with his silver he hires a goldsmith, and the smith fashions for him an idol of gold that he and his family then bow before in worship.
  - d. What is the point being made in verse 7?
    - (1) Verse 7 is indicating how utterly foolish it is to trust in such "gods." The man carries his golden idol home; there he sets it in its appointed place—the place from which it cannot move. It sits there firm and immovable according to the Hebrew meaning, but in this case these are not positive for they also seem to point out the idols lifelessness...it being deaf and dumb...and only a fool would cry out too it for it cannot save him from affliction and struggle that is surely coming. Just like the gods of Egypt...they too were deaf and dumb...all idols are lifeless. This is the 4<sup>th</sup> time in recent chapters where the making of idols has been described. 40:19; 41:7; 44:9-20.
    - (2) This is a direct contrast with verses 3-4.
    - (3) Their idols need men to care for them...
    - (4) God is talking to us ...revealing Himself to us ....speaking to us through His Word...our hope is based on this relationship designed and implemented by God...why would we want anything else?
  - e. How does this speak to us today? What are the expensive idols of American culture that we think will save us from affliction and suffering?
4. Why does God make this point to a people who haven't been carted off to captivity yet? He takes care of the details...they need to lean into Him...follow His law...love Him with all that they are....and he will take care of the things they cannot...
5. What is the LORD expecting of these people concerning Himself in verses 8-13?
  - a. He is expecting that these people would know the difference between Him and idols and so He commands them to remember ...He is God, there is no other...He will also hold them accountable for this knowledge...Rom. 2:1-5.
  - b. When push comes to shove ...when the time comes to decide to come back they will not do as some of their forefather and seek to stay or to go back to Babylon.
  - c. That they would be a people loyal to Him alone.
  - d. God does not pull any punches in vs. 3 He loudly calls out to them "Listen to me"; next He says in verse 8 "Remember this..." and then in verse 12, "Listen to me, you stout of heart...hard hearted ones..." God's people are hardhearted from their own doing and He is calling them to remember what He has done and what He has taught them about His nature.
6. What does God reveal about Himself that should cause these people to want to follow Him in these same verses?

- a. In verse 8, God tells us to remember these things He has just said from vs. 1-7 and stand firm... “put yourself on a firm foundation...” in contrast to the idols that have no foundation or standard or life for people to follow. He gives purpose...as they remember God and His ways and His Word we desire to stand firm in the foundation of the truth.
  - b. The Lord once again asserts that, in distinction from the idols of the world, He, indeed, is God, and He alone is God. he answers the question put forth in vs. 5. He is right and He will do as he says...no one or nothing else can really do that.
  - c. As God He is able to foretell future events, declaring the final outcome at the beginning, long before the events have materialized on the stage of history.
  - d. Indeed, because He is God, the Lord is able not only to conceive His plans, He is able to fulfill His plans, bringing them to final fruition....vs. 10 b says, “*My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purposes...*” The Hebrew actually adds a word in meaning by His good pleasure.... “*I will be pleased to accomplish all my purposes...*” ...as a biblical statement concerning why God does what He does it always means that nothing can prevent God from doing all that is His pleasure to do from Creation to the salvation of His elect to the consummation and the renewing of heaven and earth...all of this is done by and for His good pleasure...nothing can thwart His pleasure.
  - e. One such purpose that He reveals in verse 11 is His plan to raise up Cyrus as king of Persia in order to use him to effect the release of His people from their Babylonian captivity.
  - f. He does all that he does by the power of His Word...vs. 11b
  - g. He alone gives His righteousness to an unrighteous people...He alone will put salvation into Zion. Without the work of the Holy Spirit no one can do anything righteous or in any way be righteous.
7. Now let’s look at 47:1-15. This is an oracle. Anyone remember what an oracle is? A weighty word given to the prophet that is usually a judgment against the people. How is the great empire of Babylon portrayed in verses 1-3?
- a. Isaiah had been proclaiming judgment last chapter on their idols now he moves to the judgment of the city itself which represents the nation.
  - b. The great empire of Babylon is portrayed as a queen who is brought to disgrace and humiliation. The Lord issues the command, “*Come down or Get down (from your lofty throne of power and prestige), and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon!*”—The queen which is a metaphor for the city itself will lose its place and be dethroned from among the nations.
  - c. Note: “*virgin daughter of Babylon*”... indicates a nation that has known no defeat in battle.
  - d. The Lord further gives the command, “*remove your veil or strip off your robe; uncover your legs or lift up your skirt, wade through the rivers...(like a servants girl)*” This great queen must remove her royal apparel and conduct herself in a most unladylike manner: splashing across a stream like a common peasant girl, instead of being conveyed across in a stylish coach carried by servants.
  - e. The Lord declares that He shall reduce this great world power to nakedness and humiliation as an act of righteous vengeance and judgment (verse 3). No one will remain untouched.
8. Based on what God is going to do to these people, how do you think the people should react? How do they react in vs. 4?
- a. Upon hearing the pronouncement of God’s righteous decrees against proud Babylon, the people of God cry out in praise and thanksgiving: “*Our Redeemer—Yahweh of hosts is*

*His name—is the Holy One of Israel.*” They proclaim that the LORD their God is both the Holy One of Israel and their Redeemer.

- b. I think it is interesting to note that they know “God is their Redeemer” even though they have and will run after idols and their own pursuits. They know these things...so they intentionally set them aside until they are in need...these are the kind of transgressions God spoke of in chapter 46:8.
9. What does God tell the Babylonians in verses 5-11?
- a. Sit down and shut up...if you think you have been in charge you are sorely deluded.
  - b. No longer will you be the queen among the nations.
  - c. Yes, I used you...decreeing all things that you did because of my children’s disobedience.
  - d. But you revealed your lostness, your unelected status by declaring yourself to be the queen of the world...by sitting securely in your folly.
  - e. By saying that you are the master, “*I am and there is none besides me*”...just like Nebuchadnezzar would do...Daniel 4:28-33. You are about to be separated from your pleasures...your health, and prosperity. You sit securely in your deluded mind...all of this is about to change.
  - f. What specifically is being referred to in vs. 9? Just like Pharaoh set in place the last plague...death on the first born so Babylon does the same in her arrogance. 2 things will happen... they will know the loss of children and they will experience widowhood...in other words their race would die! And none of their sorcery or enchantments will help them...just like in Egypt.
  - g. Vs. 10 speaks specifically of their deluding themselves
  - h. Vs. 11 talks of their condemnation...their final swift end. Daniel 5 shows the depth of their delusion as the Babylonians partied while the Medes and Persians had the city under siege and it was during the party when they were purposefully unaware that the city is taken in one night...immediately when God had willed it to occur.
10. As a side question, maybe...based on what He has said in vs. 11 what is God commanding these Babylonians to do in verses 12-13 and why? He essentially says to them...”give it your best shot!” He is talking about the spiritual charmers in their culture...astrologers, magi, diviners, necromancers. He is commanding them to stand with their diviners as the end comes being oblivious all the time the end is at hand. (Just like Elijah’s prompting the evil priests of Baal to call him forth on Mt. Carmel...they honestly believed they could do it... a sign of folly, sin and the hardness of heart they possessed because they had been destined to fall. Many have speculated about why they were partying on the night of Babylon’s overthrow...but God had obviously hardened their hearts not to see the inevitable. And what are the children of Israel supposed to “behold”... that is understand in verses 14-15? The destruction of all these diviners is something that will be seen and understood to be the hand of God...also how quickly they will be consumed...like stubble tossed into a fire.
11. How do you “feel” about the fact that God uses Babylon to discipline His people and then condemn her and humiliate her completely for the work she did? Remember they were condemned before God used them by virtue of not being His people...
12. What are we to learn and take away for our growth and discernment today? See Proverbs 3:5-6

NEXT TIME: Isaiah 48-49

Bible Study  
The Book of Isaiah  
November 20, 2013

- A. Prayer
- B. Review

1. John Calvin said, *"Respecting the origin of idols...we may infer, that the mind of man is, if I may be allowed the expression, a perpetual manufactory of idols... The true stat of the case is, that the mind of man, being full of pride and temerity, dares to conceive of God according to its own standard; and being sunk in stupidity, and immersed in profound ignorance, imagines a vain and ridiculous phantom instead of God."*(Calvin's Institutes, 1.11.8) Given all the talk about idols that we have seen thus far, what does this communicate for us today? Question was asked: When is the first mention of idols in the Bible? Answer: Exodus 20:4 seems to be the first use of the actual word...while Gen. 31:19 may be the earliest reference to idols... (when Rachel steals her father's household gods.)...but in Gen. 30:27 we see what the idols were used for. However, given the reference to the evilness of man's heart in Gen. 6:5 we know from biblical history that this evil was always combined with some type of idolatry...placing something in front of God to be worshiped. Since man knows instinctively that he must worship...because of his

fallen nature he doesn't know what to worship...cannot even conceive of the holiness of God...his evil heart will always produces idols.

2. What promises did we see God make to His people in chapters 46-47 that will become vitally important to them after they are carted off to exile?
  - a. Salvation is available and will be secured by Him.
  - b. He would carry them through this coming adversity.
  - c. He would rescue them as only He could.
  - d. He would deal decisively with Babylon.

### C. Chapter 48

1. What is God charging the children of Israel to hear in verses 1-7 when He begins by saying, "*Hear this...*"?
  - a. God's purpose is to remind them of their sinful and unworthy condition.
  - b. The emphasis is on hearing...an obedient nation is a hearing nation... a disobedient nation does not hear their God... and they have not heard Him. This is a main theme of these chapters.
  - c. The Lord confronts Israel with the fact that they have not been true to their high spiritual calling. They have been named "Israel"—they are identified with the Old Testament patriarch as his descendants and they are numbered among that body of people who are designated as God's own possession. They "*who swear in the name of the LORD and confess the God of Israel*"—they acknowledge that the Lord is God, and they confess Him to be their God; and they engage in public acts of worship addressed to Him. But they do not do these things "*in truth or righteousness*"—their state of heart and mind does not conform to God's standard, does not conform to the name they bear, does not conform to the religion they profess and the identify they assume to possess.
  - d. Vss. 3-7 is where He makes His case. He has told them...declared...announced to them...but they have not heard
2. Why haven't they been able to hear according to vs. 8?
  - a. Original sin...their natural propensity is to run after idols and rebel. Leviticus and Deuteronomy are full of what God knew they would do...See Lev. 26:14, 17, 25-26, 31-32, 38-39; Deut. 28:36-37 and 45-50 and 62-68.
  - b. Not all Israel is Israel.
3. Having brought charges against His people and having proven them to be spiritually unworthy what does the Lord say in verse 9-11 that could seem out of place?
  - a. Against this background of holy accusation supported by the hard evidence of spiritual apostasy, is seen the wonder of the Lord's grace in verse 9: "*For my own name's sake I will defer my anger, for the sake of my praise I restrain it for you* (refraining from expressing His wrath against them), *that I may not cut you off.*" Sinful lives, characterized by superficiality of worship, stubbornness of heart, and absence of obedience, provoke the Lord to righteous anger—an anger that should move the Lord to cut His people off from the covenant and consign us to the judgment of everlasting punishment.
  - b. But in His mercy He defers that holy anger (literally, He "*makes His anger long,*" He restrains Himself from inflicting the sentence of everlasting judgment...He is longsuffering which is an attribute of God)—and this He does for His own Name's sake: faithfulness to His covenant... See Lev. 26:44—45.

- c. The Lord subjected His people to the refining process, as one would test precious metals. They did exactly what He said they would do...their actions were not worthy to be compared with silver.
  - d. He subjected them to *"the furnace of affliction;"* that is to say, He subjected them to various trials to strengthen them...that is His remnant...and to separate the dross from the fine /precious ones.
  - e. What is so significant in the words, *"For my name's sake or For my own sake"*? He says this 3 times, what is he communicating by saying this?
    - (1) He is doing these things by His own decision...
    - (2) For His good pleasure as we saw last week...
    - (3) For His honor alone....God will not allow His name to be profaned by not keeping His covenant.
    - (4) Nothing that His people did moved Him to do these things.
  - f. What do you make of this statement; *"My glory I will not give to another"*?
    - (1) On one hand He is stating the obvious...if He breaks His covenant His honor would go to someone else.
    - (2) But on the other...in the NT we read that He will give His glory to His Church to reflect Him.
4. How is the Lord able to have mercy on His sinful, unfaithful people without violating His justice? Note Romans 3:25-26. The Lord is able to defer His anger and show mercy to His people because His justice has been executed upon the Person of our Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ. Or in this case would be...looking forward to the finished work of Christ. Note, also, 1 Peter 3:18, *"For Christ also suffered/died once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God..."*
5. Once again we see the LORD calling out to His people to *"Listen..."* in verses 12-19. What did the Lord desire for His people to hear in verses 12-16?
- a. The LORD called His people...they did not choose God.
  - b. The LORD defines Himself... *"I am He: I am the first and I am the last."*
  - c. The LORD is the one who created all things.
  - d. The LORD alone calls His people into personal relationship.
  - e. The LORD has chosen His servant to destroy the Babylonians...to do as He has proclaimed for Him to do...to deliver His children.
  - f. The LORD has not held back...He has revealed all that His people needed to know.
  - g. Which person of the Trinity is talking here in these verses? *"And now the LORD God has sent me and His Spirit."* Jesus is speaking and verse 16 speaks clearly about the Trinity...for we have the Father, the Son and the Spirit. There is only One who was truly obedient to the LORD GOD—Jesus Christ our Redeemer—he is also the great deliverer, even greater than Cyrus...and it is by faith in Him that we enter into His righteous life and God's purpose with regard to us is realized (note 2 Corinthians 5:21).
  - h. What would have been the result had they complied in verses 17-19?
    - (1) Vs. 17 says He our Redeemer teaches us to profit...this speaks to good works...that have been planned before hand for us to do. He also promises His continual presence as He will lead us in the way we should go.
    - (2) The Lord implores His people to walk in His ways, *"Oh that you had paid attention to my commandments!"* (verse 18a), with the promise that by so doing they would experience the blessings He enumerates.
    - (3) *"Then your peace would have been like a river..."*—the blessing of peace with God is compared to the idyllic scene of a peacefully meandering river,

- (4) “*and your righteousness like the waves of the sea*”—the life of the individual and the people of God collectively would overflow with the fruit of righteousness just as the waves cover the sea.
  - (5) “*your offspring would have been like the sand, your descendants like its grains...*”—God’s covenantal promise will be fulfilled still.
6. What is the LORD (remember this is Jesus talking) saying in verses 20-22 to His children? Deliverance will in fact happen, but this deliverance is made in the form of a command. When the time is right flee the Babylonians! God’s Sovereignty is in view here but also human responsibility in what God has revealed! They are to make an absolute break... they are not to look back as if they are missing out on something. By leaving the old way of life they are celebrating and giving testimony to God’s great deliverance...if they look back they are only rejecting Him and His deliverance...hence there is no peace for the wicked.
7. These people can’t hear...won’t hear. So why does God keep speaking the same truths to them?
- a. So they will remember when they are in exile...the remnant that is.
  - b. Preparing them for the day that he will open their ears to hear.
  - c. So that they will have no one else to give credit to...not their idols or themselves...they will know who is rescuing them and praise Him.

#### D. Chapter 49

1. Who is still talking in verses 1-4 and what is He saying?
- a. Jesus again.
  - b. He is announcing His divine calling to the world.
  - c. He calls upon the distant islands and the Gentile nations to listen to Him—His divine calling is of universal significance, it does not just relate to the nation of Israel, it has bearing upon all the nations of the world (verse 1a).
  - d. He declares that the LORD God has sovereignly chosen Him and called Him to be His servant (verse 1b).
  - e. His Words are powerful and effective unto salvation.
  - f. In verse 4 the Lord’s servant raises the complaint: “*But I said, I have labored in vain; I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity...*” He has faithfully fulfilled his calling, but there appears to have been no results, He sees no fruit. He has served the Lord faithfully, but far from being rewarded with an abundance of faithful disciples, He has been forsaken and crucified (note Matthew 26:36-56). Nevertheless, despite the bitter things He has experienced, He places his trust in His Father: “*...yet surely my right (the justice I deserve) is with the LORD, and my recompense is with my God.*” (verse 4b)
2. How does God the Father respond to the Son’s complaint in verses 5-13?
- a. By calling Him to lead His people from all nations tribes and tongues...all the children of the promise. See Is. 9:1-7.
  - b. The LORD GOD Himself pledges to honor His servant who has been despised by the world (verse 7). The Lord speaks as “the Redeemer of Israel” and “his Holy One”—in His righteousness He must honor and reward His righteous servant (note Acts 2:24-25a, 27). The faithful servant of the Lord, the one who was despised by man and abhorred by the nations (See Isaiah 53), shall finally be recognized and honored by the kings and princes of the world (note Philippians 2:9-11). And the promises of the Lord are sure “*because of the LORD, who is faithful, the HOLY ONE of Israel, who has chosen you.*”



- c. The Lord pledges to fulfill His promises to His servant in His “appointed time”—and until the time of fulfillment He shall preserve Him (verse 8).
  - d. The Savior will enable the prisoners to come out from their sin and darkness.
  - e. The LORD is our Shepherd and He will lead us “from one spring to the next...establishing the path for us to walk in it...(See Is. 30:19-21).
  - f. Nothing will impede the advance of the Gospel.
  - g. Vs. 12 is saying that even from His birth wise men from the east... Syrene... would come to worship Him.
  - h. The LORD will cause great rejoicing on that day when He comforts His afflicted.
3. With all of these promises why aren't the people buying it in verse 14? Here is the accusation that the LORD, the covenant God, has broken His covenantal vows of commitment to His people. Now the people of God feel that they have been forsaken: the Lord has sent them away and consigned them to captivity in the land of Babylon.
4. What assurance does the Lord give to His people 15-18? In verses 15-16 the Lord tenderly assures His people that He cannot forget us nor forsake us.
- a. His compassion and care is greater than that of a mother for her infant child (verse 15).
  - b. He cannot forget His children, redeemed by the blood of Christ, because we are engraved on the palm of His hand (verse 16).
  - c. He is delivering them from the enemy after a time...(vs. 17)
  - d. He is giving their enemies into their hand...as before the servant will become the ruler in God's economy.
5. What ALL is God promising in verses 19-26?
- a. What we see here is a further explanation of vss. 6-7. The Jews may not have fully understood...they would have thought that God was going to grow the Hebrew nation to such a size that the old borders would not be large enough much like how King David had expanded the borders under His reign.
  - b. In this day there will be no fear of enemies.
  - c. They will once again grow organically.
  - d. But so many will be coming into the family that it cannot be explained simply by organic growth.
  - e. God then tells them clearly, He will be bringing in the nations to His salvation...while they may have heard that He is calling all the Jews in...just like they hear today...this call is so much bigger than this small and insignificant people...He is calling in the Church.
  - f. Even from within the old enemies we once had there will be those who once oppressed that will come to faith...Paul.
  - g. Judgment will come to those who aren't the LORD's in verses 24-26 just as He had promised it would...and when this is seen there will be no doubt that this is the LORD our Savior and Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob....that is the One who wrestled with Jacob and overcame Him.
6. How is this relevant to us today?
- a. Reminds us that we are to proclaim the gospel universally...to the ends of the earth...God knows who are His and He openly proclaims to all knowing that His own will hear when He opens their ears to hear and eyes to see.
  - b. Common grace ...this grace gives even non-believers some momentary comfort...they just don't know where it comes from and why...they rack it up to luck or coincidence...not God's grace.

7. What are the key words in these 2 verses? Listen, hear and behold...which includes understand and see what the LORD has done, is doing and will do.

Next time: Isaiah 50-52:12

The Book of Isaiah  
January 15, 2014

A. Prayer  
B. Review

1. What promises did we see God make to His people in chapters 48-49 that will become vitally important to them after they are carted off to exile
2. What are the key words in the last 2 chapters? Listen, hear and behold...which includes understand and see what the LORD has done, is doing and will do. Why? Because a listening people are an obedient people...a people who can see and understand are God's people.

C. Chapter 50

1. Let's look at verses 1-3. What is the LORD saying with His questions in verse 1?
  - a. The first question the LORD asks His people Israel, "*Where is your mother's certificate of divorce, with which I sent her away?*" According to Old Testament law, a husband could divorce his wife and give her a certificate of divorce if he found just cause (note Deuteronomy 24:1)—but the LORD has not done so to Israel. And they can produce no proof of His forsaking them in this way.
  - b. The LORD further asks, "*Which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you?*" Again, under Old Testament law, a father had the authority to sell his son into servitude if he deemed it necessary to do so (note 2 Kings 4:1)—but the Lord has not dealt so with Israel.
  - c. It was not because He has forsaken them...as they complained in 49:14...but Israel's separation from God is the result of their own sin. Because of their sins...because of their disobedience to the covenant they have been separated ...the Law demanded it...a law by the way that they swore to uphold with their lives as well....But there is good news...God still calls the church His wife...by referring to her as your mother!
  - d. Note: here is that word "Behold" again...I hope from now on whenever you see this word it will at the very least give you pause as to why it is there.
  - e. Note: The prophet addresses the children in distinction from the mother; at the same time it is to be understood that the children and the mother are part of the same whole...God's people. Yet by addressing the children, the prophet enables them to look more objectively at the whole and think about the reasons for her sad estate. God's wife?!? An interesting picture that comes to its full fruition in the Bride of Christ.
  - f. Vs. 2 and 3?
    - (1) Affirming once again that this separation between God and His people cannot in any way be attributed to a lack of steadfast love on God's part. He came to His own and they did not receive Him... just like Jesus. He called to them and no one answered...they weren't hearing...they were being disobedient children....
    - (2) The last 2 questions seem to actually speak clearly about His ability and willingness to redeem them...His rhetorical questions... "*Is my hand too short?*" Or Am I not strong enough? To redeem...and powerful enough to deliver?...speak to His ability and willingness when the time is right.
    - (3) And this power is displayed in His rebuke...that is His control over nature/ the elements...and the heavens in vs. 3. In other words only He can deliver and redeem and He will in His time...just as He has said...but He can't be blamed for the coming catastrophe as if He had forsaken them...this was all a result of their sinful behavior.

2. Now let's consider vs. 4-9.

- a. Who is speaking here? God the Father had been speaking (verses 1-3) of His complete control over all things...and from the role of the just judge...Now the Servant...Jesus jumps in here to speak.
- b. What is He telling us?
  - (1) The Lord God...Adonai Elohim...occurs 4 times in this section speaks of what God the Father has done for Him so He can carry out His role.
    - He has given Him a tongue of learned men...authority to proclaim His Word...learned men are usually men who have been instructed by the Lord and illuminated by the Spirit...so He speaks of His prophetic office.
    - He has been given this Word...His truth to help and sustain the weary...those elect who are lost making His Word a delight to His people... a desire in our lives to be people of the Word..vss. 4-5. For God has opened the heart of his people...their ears to hear...remember a hearing people are an obedient people...those who walk in the way of their God.
    - He has been prepared to suffer for God's people...this had been the plan from the beginning...that he would suffer the humiliation due to us.
  - (2) Because God has prepared His Servant in this way He will not be disgraced because He is doing what He was sent to do...there is no disgrace in doing the Father's will.
    - So He set His face...He is determined...He is so confident in the righteousness of His cause that He stands firm knowing that His actions and the actions of His Father are righteous and they will both be vindicated.
    - Vs. 8. Because God is near He is basically saying..."Bring it on! Let's roll!"
    - Vs. 9 is much like Rom. 8:31-38.

3. What counsel is offered to us in verse 10?

- a. Addressing those who are among those who fear the LORD and are walking in the darkness of the age, He says, that they are to follow the example He has set...the example of the servant and to lace their entire confidence in God.
- b. Something else that is interesting concerning the text is how it is said...That is in the form of a command like "Let there be light..." It is as if things may be so bad that even His own are having a hard time seeing so He commands and they are able to see...that is trust in the LORD. Those who obey His voice means those who walk in His ways and even those who walk in His ways have to be reminded how they can get out of the darkness.
- c. Interesting as well is what the remedy is for the darkness...trusting and rely on God.

4. Conversely, what warning are we given in verse 11?

- a. The picture here is of men rejecting the Lord as their source of wisdom and light in favor of pursuing their own wisdom—they will not walk in the light the Lord provides, rather they will provide for themselves their own 'burning torches' to light their way. The Lord exhorts such people to go their own way, if that is what they insist upon doing; but He warns them of what their final end will be: "This you have from my hand: you shall lie down in torment."
- b. Depending on themselves eventually their fires will go out.

D. Chapter 51

1. Who is God's audience specifically in this section? His children those few who are returning from Babylon/ Persian rule specifically...but it is for all believers...all the children of the covenant from Rom. 9:6.

2. What does He instruct them to do in verses 1-2?
  - a. "...look to the rock from which you were hewn, and to the quarry from which you were dug." This is covenantal language...look to the One who cut us from the quarry and the rock from whence we were created...Someone else's action to bring us out to cut us out...just like God cut a covenant...He redeems His people...it is not His people's choice or decision for we couldn't cut ourselves out.
  - b. These Old Testament people of God are instructed next to look back to their physical and spiritual forefather, Abraham. They are to consider their spiritual forefather in order that they may renew their confidence in the Lord, being reminded of His faithfulness and power. They are being reminded of the fact that the Lord protected Abraham, preserved him, provided for him, and fulfilled His promises to him.
3. What is the result of the people's obedience in verse 3?
  - a. Just as the Lord watched over Abraham and fulfilled His promises to him, so shall the Lord do the same for Abraham's spiritual descendants—those who, like Abraham, pursue righteousness and seek Yahweh.
  - b. He comforts His people...think Isaiah 40:1. And He will renew their land.
4. Look at verses 4-6. What is He communicating for them and for us?
  - a. Law and Light to the peoples...think Isaiah 9: 1-7. The messiah will come to save His people from every tribe, tongue and nation.
  - b. The day of the LORD:
    - (1) This will be the day when the brilliance of His glory will shine so intensely that the entire world will see His majesty...His righteousness will be on display and God will vindicate Himself and His people...
    - (2) The day of God's final judgment when all things will be burnt up as in the sacrifices...that which is unworthy for sacrifice is taken outside the camp and burned. All things will be made brand new...see II Peter 3:10.
    - (3) A day of blessedness for the faithful but a day of utter destruction for the non-believers...you gotta love this phrase in the Hebrew... "*and they who dwell in it* (the earth...getting all that they are from it) *will die in like manner*"...or like gnats when they fly over a fire...they will be consumed.
5. Now let's look at verses 7-11.
  - a. How are verses 7-8 similar to what we have just seen in the previous verses and why would God need to repeat Himself so soon after saying what He has said?
  - b. What is Isaiah saying in response to what God has said in verses 9-11?
    - (1) Being reminded of the promise of the Lord, Isaiah is encouraged to call upon the Lord in prayer, exhorting the Lord to fulfill all that He has spoken: "Awake, awake put on strength, O arm of the Lord, awake as in days of old" (verse 9a)
    - (2) Isaiah now proceeds to remind the Lord of His past works of power and grace on behalf of His people (verses 9b-10): Egypt had shown itself to be an insolent, arrogant nation ("Rahab"), a great demonic monster; but the Lord slew that monster and cut it into pieces (verse 9b). Think Exodus.
    - (3) The Lord demonstrated Himself fully capable of removing the obstacles that stood in the way of His people and making a way for their salvation—verse 10 is a reference to the Lord miraculously parting the waters of the Red Sea at the time of the Exodus.
    - (4) In verse 11 the plea for the Lord to rise up in power now turns into a prayer of praise: Isaiah expresses his confidence that the Lord will come to the rescue of His people and bring them safely to Himself.

- c. When will the events of verse 11 occur? ...at the restoration from Babylon...when Christ came the first time...even right now...and when He returns...?

Next Time: Isaiah 51:12- 52:12

Bible Study  
The Book of Isaiah  
February 19, 2014

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. Listen again to Chapter 53 verse 1-2. Speaking to His own...for they are the only ones He has been speaking to of late and they are the only ones who had ears to hear and eyes to see He gives some pretty blatant clues as to what His Servant will look like and How He will live. Describe Jesus in modern day language based on these 2 verses.
2. Why do you suppose this is the way God chooses to describe His Servant/ Jesus at this point?
  - a. So that we would the difference between what God was sending and what the world expects.
  - b. Because the other prophecies spoke of Him this way...Scripture interprets and supports itself.
  - c. Because it wasn't in what was seen that should draw someone but by the power of His Words...He may not have looked like anything special...for what we see can be misleading.
  - d. When He spoke, all people, especially His people listened. We fix our eyes on Him not because of His physical beauty but because of the gift He has given by being our substitute...our sacrificial Lamb...and like the kings we are silent before Him in awe of what He would do and has done to secure our salvation.

C. Now let's get back to the text. Isaiah 53:3-12.

1. How was the Lord's servant treated by men according to Isaiah 53:3? From the description given of the Lord's servant in verse 2 it is no wonder that in verse 3 comes these words: *"He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces He was despised, and we esteemed Him not."*
  - a. *"Despised"*—The point is that our Lord in His physical appearance and demeanor (note Matthew 11:29 for a further revelation of His demeanor) came far short of what the Israelites envisioned their Messiah would be like—He did not match up to what natural

man looked for and admired in a leader. He was not a King like David. Consequently, men looked upon Him with contempt and totally dismissed Him as a potential leader.

- b. *“Rejected”*- the terms seems to indicate that a person is aware of something like a manuscript, a proposal, applicants for a job or to a school, produce at a store because of something wrong with it.... indicating at least some knowledge of a thing before it can be rejected. Let’s be clear, they were fully aware of this prophesy...after all Isaiah was the favored prophet...but their blind ambition drove them to want something else...and their straying from the written word left them bereft of the knowledge of texts like this one. (To be a little fair however, the people were not allowed to handle the word like we can today so they couldn’t confirm or deny what the “spiritual leaders” of the time were telling them. Just a little fair...for this was a popular section of Isaiah...who doesn’t like to hear about deliverance!) Note: when our Lord displayed His divine and miraculous power the crowd was attracted by that power, but when it became clear that He would not employ that power as a conquering general against the Romans and the religious elite, they forsook Him.
  - c. *“A man of sorrows”*...the Hebrew term essentially means that this One entered into the full reality of the human condition as we experience it...but even more so...
    - (1) He knew He could not trust men to do right ...
    - (2) He knew He would be rejected...
    - (3) He knew He would be despised...
    - (4) He knew He would be beaten, abused mocked, spit upon dishonored to within an inch of His life...
    - (5) He knew all of this and carried it all...but,
  - d. *“...as one from whom men hide their faces...”*
    - (1) They were ashamed that they had followed Him...
    - (2) They were ashamed that He had let them down so they turned their proverbial backs on Him...
    - (3) Also, He became hideous after His mutilation by the hand of the Roman guard so He was hard to look at.
    - (4) He was unclean and they were not supposed to look upon Him
  - e. *“...He was despised, and we esteemed Him not.”*-
    - (1) Doubly despised since He didn’t measure up to what was expected...
    - (2) He was treated as a leper among men...and you cannot esteem a leper in this culture for it is the lowest form of scum in their culture.
    - (3) This does not mean that they did not give lip service to some of His deeds and teachings as today, many will say He was a good man, a good teacher, He spoke of ethical and moral issues, even a great revolutionary, questioning the status quo of the day...but they will not acknowledge that they are sinners deserving His divine judgment or recognize their need for a Savior. The word “esteem” means a full recognition of who He is and what He has come/come to do. Think Romans 1:18-27.
2. What all is verse 4 communicating to them and to us about the Suffering Servant?
- a. He entered into our human condition but He does more than just enter into the full reality of the human condition...in particular:
    - (1) *“...He has borne our griefs...”* the word is best translated *“took away or lifted up away from something”* ...in this case, our griefs and;

- (2) then “...(He) carried our sorrows;” or rather “made His own our sorrows or shouldered the burden of our sorrows”... so to get the full impact of what is being said it should read, “Surely/ Absolutely He has taken away our griefs and shouldered the burden of our sorrows.”
    - (3) In other words, He has taken away and placed upon Himself all our sin and sorrow. This is substitutionary atonement as we see in the form of the scapegoat. (See I Peter 2:24)
  - b. We see another reason that people could not look upon Him from verse 3...it is that they thought that His hardship was being caused by God because of His sin... and He was to be treated as one who had leprosy.
  - c. And in fact according to verse 10 He was afflicted by God. That is to say, we saw Him as one upon whom the full brunt of the wrath of God was administered: “stricken, smitten, and afflicted.” We witnessed Him being executed as the vilest criminal (Deuteronomy 21:22-23), we heard Him cry out that He was forsaken by God (Mark 15:33-34).
3. What is verse 5 actually telling us caused the death of this Suffering Servant? Our sin caused His death. The ESV and other translation say “*He was wounded for our transgressions; He was crush for our iniquities...*” ...and that is okay but the word is more forceful than this...the actually Hebrew word is “because.” Thus rendering the reading, “*He was wounded because of our transgressions; He was crushed because of our iniquities...*” So there is no question, our sin caused Jesus’ death...just like the sins of the people caused the death of the ox, the sheep, the goats as a substitute for the people’s own blood. So we are all to blame...not just the Jews or the Romans...but all of us who have ever sinned!
  4. What is said of the people in verse 6? Who are the “all”?
    - a. Verse 1 tells us that He is talking about His people in rebellion...prodigal sons if you will...these are the ones who have gone astray like sheep. This was the reason the Servant had to suffer. Why do sheep easily get lost? And what happens when sheep get lost usually?
    - b. But in this case we are not dumb in the sense of sheep having no directional compass...we purposely turn away to our own way...since the Fall this has always been mankind’s default.
    - c. What does this verse say about Christ’s and the Father’s activity toward His people?
      - (1) The Hebrew reads this way actually, “*Yahweh...yes, Yahweh! Laid on Him the iniquity of us all.*” This is something that He delights in being able to do for His people. Remember Heb. 12:2- “*...who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame...*” Not only does He take this on Himself but God the Father participates in laying this on Him as well...there is no getting out of this decision.
      - (2) The Hebrew term translated “laid on” actually means “strike violently”... so each of the strokes of the whip would remind Him of our sin that God had cast on Him with each blow. As our complete substitute He bore the punishment that was due us physically, as well.



- (3) At any time could God's people have asked or expected that their sins be completely dealt with on their own merit or even if they had actually used God's sacrificial system correctly? Why or Why not? If not here with all of these promises in place, then why can we think that today that we have anything to do with our salvation?
5. How do verses 7-9 match up to the Gospel accounts? Be specific.
- Interesting picture in the Hebrew for us here at the beginning of this verse. The ESV says, "*He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth;*" The grammar actually causes this to be better read, "*He let Himself be brutalized, and He let Himself be afflicted; and He opened not His mouth.*" This was a willing, deliberate and sustained acceptance of following through on the Father's will. Remember Jesus's Words, "*I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my accord. I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.*"
  - He was cut off...BECAUSE OF...the transgressions of my people!
  - The whole tomb explanation as well. Vs. 9...why He was buried in a new unused rich man's tomb... it was a fulfillment of prophesy...God said it and it happened just as He said. Turn to John 19:38-42. Normally one who was crucified for sedition was either left on the cross until the birds picked his body clean or was taken down or thrown into the eternally burning garbage dump outside the city where Israel had once sacrificed their children to Molech. But accordingly, God had not intended for either of these to happen to His Son's body...He did not want Him to suffer a moment of humiliation any longer than necessary so He provided for His Son to be taken down from the cross before His body would begin to disintegrate naturally or by the birds work. By God's will alone...for it was not practice of the time...Pilate was inclined to stretch the law in this case and Jesus was laid in the unused tomb of a wealthy man. Jesus' family could not have ever provided for such a burial even if it had been allowed...which would not have been allowed by the law...for He had been crucified...the worst punishment reserved for the worst of criminals.
6. Now let's look closely at vs. 10. Can anyone take credit for this action? Why? See also verse 6...God laid on Him all the evil, ugliness, uncleanness of His people.
7. Why was His punishment so severe...He was bruised/crushed?
- First of all, it had been prophesied. When and where? Gen. 3:15!
  - 2<sup>nd</sup>, we must remember that this was the punishment that was decided before time began by God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit and that God the Son willingly accepted the shame of the cross because of the joy set before Him...seeing His children be reconciled with the Father. "*Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush Him...*" can also be translated... "*Yet it pleased the LORD to crush Him...*" How can this be a true interpretation? How are we to understand such a translation?
  - 3<sup>rd</sup>, if you read about the sacrifices for atonement in the Pentateuch we come away with realizing how bloody these were...how they mutilated the body of the animals and how

each part was offered up to God. It had to happen this way to fulfill the Law...as in the covenant of works perfect obedience was required in keeping the Law and the One who was perfectly obedient was also the perfect sacrifice as our substitutionary atonement as none of us could even come close to fulfilling the bill for the needed sacrifice.

- d. The particular offering seems to be the trespass offering for guiltiness...a lack of contriteness. This word guiltiness or lack of contriteness has in mind...
    - (1) the act that incurs the guilt,
    - (2) the condition of the guilt,
    - (3) the penalty for the guilt,
    - (4) and the restitution necessary for the act that incurs the guilt.
    - (5) The servant's work covers all of this...it is a complete atonement.
  - e. Freedom comes with a cost...usually a great cost paid by a few and in the case of our deliverance from the controlling power of sin... the One!
  - f. This one act ought to cause us...like the kings of 52:15...to be silent before God.
  - g. Should drive us to live well to honor His name, His willing sacrifice, His love for us!
8. What are some corresponding verses in the NT that deal with what is taught in verse 10?
- a. Acts 2:22-24- God's will is defined... *"Jesus was delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God....God raised Him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for Him to be held by it."*
  - b. Hebrews 2:10-17- speaks of His sacrificial ...substitutionary atonement for the children that God had given to Him...His offspring...and... *"...all that the Father has given to Him will not be lost..."* meaning that *"the will of the LORD shall prosper in His hand."* All that God has said will be accomplished and secured by Christ's death, resurrection and ascension has been and will be accomplished in His return.
9. What is being communicated here in verse 11-12?
- a. Because He has suffered so great punishment He will have abundant satisfaction. (It is unfortunate the English translation do not translate this using the fullness of the word satisfaction because it clearly should be translated as *"abundant satisfaction."*...showing cause and effect...a common Hebrew grammatical tool.
  - b. As the 1<sup>st</sup> was given by the hand of God so to the 2<sup>nd</sup> comes from God. *"This is my Son, in whom I am well pleased."*
  - c. Because God's will was so carried out as a result of His good pleasure He has given life to His Son who would in turn give life to those who had been chosen before the foundations of the earth... *"...make many to be accounted righteous and He shall bear their iniquities."*
  - d. A more accurate translation of verses 12 could be, *"Therefore, I shall divide to Him among the many and with the powerful He will divide the spoil, because He*

*poured out to death His soul, and with the transgressors He suffered/permitted Himself to be numbered (think the other 2 on the cross! And the rest of us He hung out with!); and He the sin of many did bear and for the transgressors He makes intercession.*” Does this translation help you in what is being communicated in these verses? The servant will be successful and He and His subjects ...the powerful ones...will receive the spoils of the war... We have this now and we will have it in its fullness when He returns.

- e. We see another specific fulfillment of prophecy here as well as the LORD permitted Himself to be numbered among the transgressors...as I said above this was specifically fulfilled as He hung between the 2 criminals on the cross.
  - f. The Servant will make intercession for transgressors...this is not merely ongoing prayer but also includes the bearing of sin. This is not for everyone. Remember Jesus said in John 17:9, *“I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours.”*
10. Based on this passage how would you answer this question? For whom did Christ die? Defend your position from this text and context as well as anywhere else from Scripture. No opinions wanted on this one.
- a. The term “of many” is used here 3 times to clearly speak of only those who are His...and it is only those that He bears their iniquity.
  - b. He has taken on Himself the sin of all who are His from Adam forward...our sin was imputed to Him so that when He fulfilled the requirements of the Law thus appeasing the wrath of God a by satisfying His Law...He could then impute to His own His

### Bible Study The Book of Isaiah February 26, 2014

#### A. Prayer B. Review

1. When we consider especially Isaiah 52:13-53:12, how would these words be words of comfort for God’s people?
2. In what way are they words of comfort for us today?
3. Why did I make such a big deal about the doctrines of grace in this text?
  - (1) Because they are there and undeniable!
  - (2) Because Isaiah does it to bring comfort to a people who are heading into the worst tribulation they have ever known.
  - (3) To focus on the real priority...that being God and His promises rather than what we as men think we can do...when it is clear throughout this book that we cannot.

#### C. Now let’s look at Isaiah 54.

1. How is Jerusalem portrayed in Isaiah 54:1-5?
  - a. A barren wife of the LORD God...vs. 1 and 5... and she is instructed to sing for joy—because the LORD shall bless her with an abundance of children.
  - b. The tent in which this woman presently lives in a solitary existence must be enlarged, because it is no longer adequate to house all the children the LORD will

give her (verse 2). She is to prepare for the large number the LORD will bring to her...she (the Church) doesn't bring in the increase but she is to prepare for its eventuality based on God's Word and promise.

- c. Indeed, the LORD declares, "*You will spread abroad to the right and to the left, and your offspring will possess the nations and will people the desolate places.*" (verse 3); that is to say, God's people will expand in every direction.
- d. Her shame will be taken away and dealt with so she need not fear her position being used against her...the shame and reproach of barrenness will be forgotten since it will be removed. (vs. 4)
- e. The reason for this sure word of comfort and confidence is given in verse 5.

(1) "*For your Maker is your husband*"—the very God who made us and to whom we must give an account is also the Christian's loving Husband who will receive His people as His precious bride on that last great day when the betrothal period is over and Christ Returns.

(2) "*The Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer*"—the God who is Himself infinitely holy and who demands holiness is at the same time the Redeemer of His people. He Himself has satisfied the demands of His holy law and provided us with His own perfect righteousness.

(3) "*The God of the whole earth He is called.*" – this One, our husband is all powerful...all sovereign...so all things that have happened and will happen are because He ordains whatsoever comes to pass.

## 2. How do these verses support what the LORD has promised in 53:12?

## 3. Now as we turn to verses 6-8, how does the LORD describe His people and His relationship to them?

- a. The LORD describes His people as a wife who has been restored to her husband. Israel in her rebellion is compared to a wife who has been divorced for her unfaithfulness, but now she is restored and brought back into covenant relationship with her husband who is none other than the LORD Himself (verse 6).
- b. The LORD declares, "*For a brief moment I abandoned (deserted) you, but with great compassion I will gather you back. In overflowing anger for a moment I hid my face from you, but with everlasting love (steadfast love) I will have compassion on you, says the LORD (Yahweh), your Redeemer.*" (verses 7-8)
- c. In Old Testament terms, here is a reference to Israel's exile into Babylon and their restoration to the LORD and His presence in the Promised Land of Canaan. In ultimate terms, here is a reference to Christ's atoning death at Calvary and the believer's union with Christ in His crucifixion and resurrection and subsequent restoration to God.
- d. Furthermore, just as Christ was raised from the dead on the third day, so we are united with Him in His resurrection life and will finally experience the resurrection of the body on the last day. (See Rom. 6:4-5,10)

## 4. To what previous promise does the Lord refer His people to in verses 9-10 as evidence that they can trust the promise He has now made to them as recorded in verses 7-8?

- a. In verses 9-10 the LORD alludes to His sure covenant with Noah (the divine pledge that He would never again destroy this present world with a flood) as evidence and

assurance that His restored “wife” can have full confidence in her husband’s renewed marriage vows.

- b. In describing that moment of absolute abandonment (experienced by His people in the Babylonian Captivity and ultimately experienced at Calvary), the LORD had used the term “*overflowing anger*,” or, “*overflowing wrath*” (verse 8). Now, picking up on that term, the LORD compares that outpouring of righteous wrath to “*the waters of Noah*” (i.e.; the universal flood with which He judged the world in the days of Noah)—and He does so as a further means of providing comfort and assurance for His people. The LORD swore to Noah that never again would He cause the flood waters to cover the whole land (verse 9a). Likewise, the LORD now swears that He shall never again inflict His judgment against His people the same way (verse 9b); note, also, Romans 8:1.
- c. Indeed, the promise of God now made to His people is even more sure (i.e.; of longer duration) than even the promise made to Noah (vs. 10.)

- (1) As recorded in Genesis 8:22, God promised Noah that there would never again be a universal flood for as long as the earth remains, “*While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night shall not cease.*”
- (2) But now the LORD assures His people that even when this present creation is brought to its end, His covenant faithfulness will continue: “*For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed, says the LORD, who has compassion on you.*” (vs. 10)
- (3) This is our Christian heritage: as believers in the LORD Jesus Christ we shall experience complete acceptance with God on the day of judgment and for all eternity in Christ Jesus our Savior. In the words of The Westminster Shorter Catechism, (Question and Answer #38), “*What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection?*” “*At the resurrection, believers being raised up in glory, shall be openly [publicly] acknowledged and acquitted on the day of judgment, and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity.*”

**5. What promises does the LORD make with regard to Jerusalem in Isaiah 54:11-17?**

- a. In verses 11-12 the LORD promises to rebuild Jerusalem into a city of priceless and breath-taking beauty: the foundation stones will be sapphires, the towers will be made of rubies, the gates will be sparkling jewels, and the walls shall be precious gem stones.
- b. All the children will be taught by the LORD...His Word would once again become primary...because of the Word’s influence there will be great peace...living in God’s covenant. (vs. 13)
- c. His righteousness would define them...they would be holy and different from the world... They/we shall be preserved and protected (vs.14).
- d. Vs. 15 tells us not to worry concerning invaders or those seeking to undue us...we will never have to worry again...See also Gen 12:1-3.
- e. Vs. 16-17 make God’s power absolute...defeat is no longer in our vocabulary...Christ has won over the controlling aspects of sin and death...we are guaranteed life.

#### D. Isaiah 55

1. Read vs. 1 and tell me, what do you believe would be the response to this statement by just anyone seeing this for the first time? There would be a discussion perhaps about the absurdity of this statement and then no one would come... on their own that is. So in context what is actually being said by the LORD in Isaiah 55:1?
  - a. Redemption is accomplished/ secured for God's people now all they have to is come and receive what He has accomplished for them on their behalf.
  - b. We don't need money because He has paid the cost...
  - c. Those who aren't His will look at the absurdity of such a statement and go away shaking their heads at the stupidity and shallowness of our faith. But...those who are His will come to Him.
  - d. He is also reminding them that He is a gracious and merciful God: they need not, indeed, they cannot, earn the right to return to the LORD, they need only to return just as they are and He will provide all that they need.
2. God likes to use questions to get His people thinking. What is He trying to communicate to them with the question of verse 2?
  - a. God through His prophet causes men by this question to see the vanity of rejecting the free gift of salvation and seeking to obtain it by their own efforts.
  - b. In fact, He makes it clear that all the toil toward that end is futile.... This labor will not satisfy. Think the curse of Genesis 3 ...nothing man can do since the Fall will bring ultimate satisfaction.
  - c. He is also communicating with urgency what is true because of His love for His people...so they /we won't be confused for long.
3. How does he continue to communicate this urgency in verse 3-7? Why?
  - a. *"Listen diligently to me..."= Listen! Listen to me; or Behold! Behold to me; or Harken! Harken to me!* He doesn't want His children to miss the point. This word...which ever you chose...means "to shut out all other voices and listen in obedience to God." If we would but listen well to God's Word and do what He says we would have peace just like the children in 54:13.
  - b. Vs. 3 supports this point. *"Incline your ear and come unto me, hear, that your soul may live."* The "new" covenant is coming...the fulfillment of His promise to David will be coming soon...so hear me and do as I command. Jesus said, *"Come to me all who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you.... For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."*
  - c. Vs. 4- *"Behold..."* this One who is coming will proclaim my word to all who are my...
  - d. Vs. 5- *"Behold..."* – even the Gentiles (goiim) will flock to the Word and it will then go out to all the nations.
  - e. Vs. 6- *"Seek the LORD while He may be found: call upon Him while He is near..."*- time is "short"...this One is coming soon.

- (1) The LORD makes a gracious offer that requires a response; there is the need to respond to the LORD's call (note Romans 10:13, *"Whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."*)
  - (2) There is also a note of urgency that is always evident in the Older and Newer Testaments...not that our salvation can be missed, but that we should seek it out as soon as possible. In Hebrews 3:15 we are exhorted, *"Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts."* We don't affect our salvation but God is communicating the urgency about always being His and following Him.
4. What encouragement does the LORD provide for those who fear the Lord will not receive them because their sins are too great in Isaiah 55:7-9?
- a. Verse 7b gives the assurance that when we approach Christ with faith and repentance we are greeted with mercy and pardon.
  - b. As verses 8-9 indicate, that assurance is grounded in the very character of God: our LORD is moved with compassion towards a contrite sinner, against such a one the LORD does not harbor a desire for vengeance and retribution (note Ezekiel 33:11 and Luke 15:10).
5. What is being communicated by the comparison given in verses 10-11?
- a. Just as the rain falls... as God ordained it to... and waters the land the Word of God comes and accomplishes what it had been pre- determined to do... and this will be accomplished sometime in the future.
  - b. The power of the Word of God is absolute and will accomplish all that it set out to do...
  - c. God spoke and all creation came into being by the power of His Word...
  - d. God breathed into man giving Him life...
  - e. God breathed out Scripture in the same way by the power of His Word
  - f. All things that He has ordained shall come to pass by the power of His Word.
  - g. God's Word will not return to Him in vain...in other words the Word of God is totally efficacious in accomplishing God's purpose of having His law satisfied and the salvation of His people, and condemning the wicked.
6. Now what do we see in verses 12-13?
- a. *"We shall go out in joy..."*- just like the Exodus from Egypt and the Exodus from Babylon God's people will go out in an Exodus from the controlling power of our sin.
  - b. *"...and be led forth in peace..."* -Since sin no longer controls us we experience the peace of God from the Prince of Peace who leads us out of the wilderness by His Spirit. The Spirit is at the head of the procession for the Wedding in getting the Bride and then at the Wedding Feast where the union is confirmed.
  - c. *"...and singing ...and clapping..."* All creation, no longer under a curse will rejoice with us at the glorious day of our wedding.
  - d. Vs. 13 makes it abundantly clear that all things will be made brand new...what once caused pain and dissatisfaction brings delight.
  - e. What is the "new sign" of the "new" covenant according to this text? Salvation is the sign of the "new" covenant....taking the place of the sign of the rainbow as the sign of the covenant but taking away from the reason the rainbow

existed in the first place...reminding us of God's steadfast love and His promise keeping nature. Note: Just a reminder...the rainbow doesn't disappear as a reminder to God to keep His promise...a greater sign has taken its place...and the rainbow, well it sits above God's throne...Rev. 4:3.

- f. **Why is this important to us today?** As the permanent sign of the covenant we know that our salvation is permanent...it cannot be taken from us in any way...by anyone...not even God Himself because he would be going against His very nature and promise. This sign will never be cut off!

**Next Time: Isaiah 56-57**

**Bible Study  
The Book of Isaiah  
March 12, 2014**

**A. Prayer**

**B. Continuing Chapter 57.**

1. **Let's look for one more moment at 57:3:10. What does this section tell us about the evil that these people are involved in specifically? What are some equivalents for today?**
  - a. We have sexual lust heightened...we live in an oversexed society today...from TV ads to pornography it is everywhere...because it causes people to pay attention...in other words it works...but it leads to larger indiscretions which can ultimately destroy a family and a person....just so they can continue to get that high. It is interesting to me that we (as we should) hold pedophiles to such a standard under the law and yet we endorse at a very early age homosexuality among our children...even bringing alternative lifestyle into our schools ...how does that make sense?
  - b. Next we have such a low view of ourselves and we have hypersexual needs that now we need to sacrifice...or not protect our children...from the 55 million children that have been aborted... to the lack of safety for our children...and the fact that we are even now proclaiming that singleness or at least childlessness leads to greater happiness we are saying that children are an inconvenience...is it any wonder that people are going after them in schools and in dark alleys... we say that deviant behavior is okay by not opposing it and we wonder why it is our children who suffer?
  - c. Next, church becomes irrelevant...oh ,some still go... and go through the motions because they have a sense of guilt or they need to be forgiven for the moment or they are trying to hide their behavior...and the church does nothing as far as disciplining or attempting to hold their members accountable...after all there are bills to pay.
  - d. Verse 8 is interesting to be sure as to how far these people of God have fallen...though we might not think too much of it at least at first... *"Behind the door and the doorpost you have set up your memorial..."* What was supposed to be in the



**doorposts of all the houses of God's children? The Word of God! ...on the outside... so as you come in you see it and on the inside... as you go out so that you are reminded of whose you are and how you should honor Him in the world. Instead, these folks are setting up their idols in this place to cover up the Word of God...today we put up lots of platitudes to ...quotes by people we like...funny sayings...conventional wisdom of the day... we put them up on Facebook...on our refrigerators...on our mirrors ...and we are reminded about these things rather than the Word of God. Doesn't seem like a big deal...but we are purposefully separating ourselves from God's Word and filling our minds with nonsense for the most part. And it must be a bad thing since God says... *"For, deserting me, you have uncovered your bed..."* ...we are exposed! We are more influenced by the culture than we are by His Word. With reference to the bed and other statements afterwards...God is directly linking this behavior with adulterous intercourse...it is not mere unfaithfulness ...but to be seen as actual adultery...for Israel and us by extension are being faithless toward our husband. By going after other things we are whoring ourselves out away from God. God doesn't shrink back from calling a spade a spade...in more than one place He calls His people a whore.**

- e. Do you see the pattern...? We don't want to give up our institutions...our inclinations...even our funny sayings... we just use them to for our own good...for our own pleasure. Everything we do is to be constantly evaluated and placed before the standard of God's word.

**2. After talking about these peoples sinful and heinous activities in verses 3-10 how else does he describe them in verses 11-13a?**

- a. In verse 11 the people are described as a nation that has lost all fear of God. The LORD sarcastically inquires, *"Whom did you dread and fear...?"* The point being made is that they are devoid of that holy fear of God that serves to restrain evil; having no fear of God before their eyes, they now plunge into every form of evil. The patience and longsuffering of God has been misinterpreted as acceptance of their sins, or indifference to their immoral conduct, or impotence on the part of God—*"Have I not held my peace even for a long time, and you do not fear me?"* Having lost their fear of God, they have become emboldened in their sin (note Isaiah 3:9).
- b. Verse 12 states that the Lord now warns them (and us) that the day is coming when He will act. On that day, declares the Lord, *"I will declare/expose your righteousness and your deeds..."* In other words, the LORD will examine and evaluate the nation's claim to righteousness in the light of His own divine righteousness, and expose their *"righteousness"* as being in fact unrighteousness. The Lord goes on to testify, *"but they will not profit/benefit you."* Their works... which shall be exposed as works of sin, not works of righteousness... shall not speak in their defense; on the contrary, those works will testify against them and condemn them.
- c. In verse 13a, on that day when calamity occurs and the people cry out to Him...He will simply turn them back to their plethora of idols to seek comfort... dead and impotent idols which themselves shall be swept away by the wind of holy judgment....even a very breath would blow them away since they bare no weight of significance.

**3. What is the promise of verse 13b?**

- a. Think Matthew 5:5.
- b. Those who acknowledge their sin, return to the Lord, and take refuge in Him, shall possess the land (they shall be saved to gain a share in the Lord's everlasting inheritance).

4. **What is the command of verse 14? How about, “*Work out your salvation with fear and trembling.*”? Or better, “...let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith...”**
  - a. Before the foundations of the earth the Godhead determined to save His own through faith...a faith that comes through the Godhead to His own. By covenant the Godhead determined to do just as they have done.
  - b. From all eternity the Godhead had determined to save His own and had not this covenant already been in place at the very moment of the Fall the justice of God would have immediately kicked in and consumed all.
  - c. With this reality in mind we must still seek to work out our salvation with fear and trembling...not so we can be assured of our faith but so God will be honored...His holiness demands that we do all things that will honor him which included us being intentional in fighting the sin that seeks to tempt us.
  - d. And while we must seek to intentionally fight against the sin that is always seeking us...God has already guaranteed that on the day all obstacles will be removed because of the work of His son fulfilling the requirements of the covenant on our behalf.
5. **How is God described in verse 15?**
  - a. Infinite, omnipotent, omnipresent, majestic, incomprehensible, exalted.
  - b. “For thus...” is a word or phrase that basically says, “you need not hesitate to trust in this promise of God’s final blessing toward His people, for the High and Holy One has made the promise and He will not...He cannot ...not keep His promise.
  - c. Our God is One who condescends to those who are contrite...the One who is concerned that nothing be in the way of His children coming to Him...no obstacles to stand in the way.
6. **What does being contrite mean?**
  - a. Honestly acknowledging our sin...being open and unguarded...when anything is held back it is not true contrition.
  - b. Openly expressing regret for actions not minimizing, rationalizing, or ignoring them.
  - c. A spirit of brokenness and humility.
  - d. A recognition and unhesitant acceptance of consequences.
  - e. A contrite heart makes no demands and has no expectations for themselves.
7. **As we look at verses 16-19 is there any sign that man had anything to do with his salvation? In fact, what was man doing when God saved His people? In sin... “...he went on backsliding in the way of his own heart.” Remember Rom. 5:8!**
8. **Why does God make such a big deal about what will happen to the wicked after He talks about salvation in verses 20-21? He keeps the two groups of people distinct...His people will be lifted up and those who are not His people will have no peace...no rest!**
9. **How are we to look at God according to this Chapter?**
  - a. We are to fear God as it says in verse 11...the people no longer do.
  - b. We are to consider His holiness...

- (1) In all His ways He is to be lifted up...not idols.
- (2) He defines His own attributes of infinite, omniscient, merciful and gracious...
- (3) We are to want to see His holiness in His Word.
- (4) It is His holiness that is our standard...without a sense of His holiness no wonders we have such a low view of God and our faith is so shallow.
- (5) When we describe God in earthly terms we are taking His name in vain and we are lowering Him to our standards...thus denying His holiness.

#### 10. Why is God always so concerned with His own holiness?

#### C. Chapter 58

##### 1. What paradoxical situation is presented in Isaiah 58:1-2?

- a. Isaiah 58 confronts us with a paradoxical situation: the people of Israel are gathered together for worship, but the prophet of the Lord is commanded to rebuke them in the strongest terms (verse 1).
- b. God commands Isaiah to be so loud as to disrupt their worship "*Cry aloud= Cry from the throat.*" (to so yell from the top of ones voice.)...to be so loud that it the rebuke cannot be missed..."...do not hold back= do not spare anyone from what is said...disrupt what they are doing!)...this would have irritated them to no end. How dare he come and disrupt their worship of God! How dare he judge their worship! How dare he question their motives after all they are doing as God commanded them!
- c. He is so commanded to do this that if he doesn't then he will receive God wrath...anyone minister of God that fails to relay God's truth is not faithful to God.
- d. Verse 2 reveals the condition that is displeasing to the Lord and meets with His stern rebuke: there is the outward appearance of godliness, even accompanied by a deep display of interest in spiritual things, but all of this is divorced from a life of obedience.

**Bible Study**  
**The Book of Isaiah**  
**March 19, 2014**

- A. Prayer
- B. Review

1. After discussing chapter 57 in depth we are left with a question that I am sure is a crucial one for all of us to be able to answer. Why is God always so concerned with His own holiness?
2. What paradoxical situation is presented in Isaiah 58:1-2?
  - a. Isaiah 58 confronts us with a paradoxical situation: the people of Israel are gathered together for worship, but the prophet of the Lord is commanded to rebuke them in the strongest terms (verse 1).
  - b. God commands Isaiah to be so loud as to disrupt their worship "*Cry aloud= Cry from the throat.*" (to yell at the top of one's voice, with the purpose of disrupting whatever is going on.)...to be so loud that the rebuke cannot be missed...do not hold back= do not spare anyone from what is said...disrupt what they are doing!...this would have irritated them to no end. How dare he come and disrupt their worship of God! How dare he judge their worship! How dare he question their motives after all they are doing as God commanded them!
  - c. He is so commanded to do this that if he doesn't then he will receive God's wrath...anyone minister of God that fails to relay God's truth is not faithful to God.
  - d. Verse 2 reveals the condition that is displeasing to the Lord and meets with His stern rebuke: there is the outward appearance of godliness, even accompanied by a deep display of interest in spiritual things, but all of this is divorced from a life of obedience.

**C. Chapter 58 continued:**

1. What question do the bewildered people of Israel ask in Isaiah 58:3a? In verse 3a these bewildered worshipers raise the question, "Why is it that the Lord does not acknowledge our fasting (or our worship?)"... their act of humbling themselves? Perhaps in the face of the economic and military crisis they faced, there had gone out the call for a national day of fasting (similar to what is described in Judges 2:24-26). The nation has responded to the call for a national day of prayer and fasting, and have done so with earnestness. But there has been no response from God: no relief, no healing of their land, no dispersing of the enemy... Now the people wonder, Why not?
2. What is God's clear response in 3b-5?
  - a. Even as they engaged in sincere religious worship they were disregarding the commandments of God; they were doing as they pleased rather than what God commanded,
    - (1) One example being the unrighteous way in which they treated those who labored for them (verse 3b).
    - (2) They put on religious behavior to justify their non-religious acts. One of the problems with religion in general is that it is easily manipulated...especially when it comes to how we treat others. An outwardly pious people will think they are superior to those who aren't. They see everyone else as inferior so they mistreat those around them...think religious elite of Jesus' day...sincerely going to hell because of their behavior.
    - (3) They are rushing to do something because things are so bad...rather than seeking God in a truly repentant way...seeking Him to direct them...they in fact are doing this themselves...they haven't sought God as to what to do.
    - (4) Even as they sincerely engaged in acts of religious worship, they were at odds with one another. They were in conflict with one another; they were at enmity with one another and harbored bitterness towards one another; they bore grudges against one another and refused to be reconciled (verse 4a).

- b. The Lord makes clear that He does not consider the mere offering of the formalities of religious observance—no matter how sincerely they may be offered—as acceptable worship, if they are not accompanied by obedience in all areas of life (verse 5). Inner humility is of more import to God than religious observance or church traditions.
3. Which of the 10 commandments are they breaking in doing what they are doing? All of them...How? Turn to Exodus 20 and let's see!
4. So if what they are doing is not a fast; what do verses 6-7 tell us about what kind of fasting (i.e.; what kind of religion) is acceptable to God and pleasing to Him?
  - a. According to verse 6, true religion involves the practice of justice in our dealings with men. The picture presented in verse 6 is that of a man (or a class or race of people) being set free from the injustice that has held them captive. They had been enslaved by a system that oppressed them by denying them equal opportunities in the society.  
But the picture now portrays them as being released from the bondage by the practice of social justice.
  - b. According to verse 7, true religion involves the practice of mercy towards our fellow man and the practice of Sabbath observance once again...for at the end of verse 7 we read... *"and not hide yourselves from your own flesh"*...which is better translated as, *"...and not hide yourselves from the household of faith."*
  - c. How does the emphasis on justice, service and the practice of Sabbath observance help define for us fasting? Each of these requires sacrifice on our parts. Each of these bring rest to others and ourselves. How does this add to your understanding of fasting for today?
5. What do these first 7 verses tell us about the character and nature of our God?
  - a. They tell us that He is omniscient...He knows all things...nothing gets past Him. He knows what we are doing in the light and what we do in secret. Nothing is hidden from Him. All our attempts to hide our sinful behavior are in vain.
  - b. Also, He holds nothing back from His people...blessing and judgment/discipline...for He truly want what is best for us...so when we are doing something wrong even when we don't know we are doing something wrong He provides knowledge for us to know from His Word.
6. What are some of the benefits and blessings the Lord confers upon those who practice true faith as seen in Isaiah 58:8-14? Isaiah 58:8-14 lists at least 8 of the national and community blessings to be derived from true faith:
  - a. *"Then shall your light will break forth like the dawn"*—the favor of the Lord will shine upon the nation (or the community), lifting it to a position of honor and prominence;
  - b. *"your healing shall spring up speedily"*—just as wounded flesh is restored to health, so will that nation and/or community be restored to wholeness, that is to say, it will experience the life and blessing of moral and spiritual soundness;
  - c. *"...your righteousness shall go before you, and the glory of Yahweh shall be your rearguard"*—the nation and/or community will benefit from the invincible strength of righteousness and the guardian presence of the Lord (note Deuteronomy 11:8a,25).

- d. Verse 9 presents one of the personal benefits to be derived from the practice of true religion: *“Then you shall call and Yahweh will answer”*—there will be communion and fellowship with Christ and with God His Father (note John 14:23).
- e. By taking away the yoke we have placed on ourselves, stop blaming others for our own sins, and stop speaking slanderous unfaithful things towards God and His children, but rather meets the needs of others our light will rise in the darkness, our gloom will be gone.
- f. Yahweh will guide us continually and He will satisfy us in all things and we will be blessed and productive...that is fruitful for His glory.
- g. Verse 12 tells us that at that time we will be totally restored to the LORD...Jesus of course has done this for His own.
- h. Verse 13 and 14 tells us what happens when we honor correctly the Sabbath of the LORD...so God is not against ritual...but He is against ritual that is for our benefit...thankfully He defines worship in both the OT and the NT. We are not at liberty to make it up on our own. For it is only in doing things God’s way that we will be blessed to the fullest.

#### **D. Chapter 59**

1. What question is the Lord answering in Isaiah 59:1-2? What answer does He give?
  - a. Another answer to their inquiry of 58:3. The people of Israel wondered why the Lord did not answer their prayers, why He did not come to their rescue. The Lord now gives His answer to their perplexing questions.
  - b. The Lord informs Israel that the reason He has not answered their prayers is not due to any lack of ability on His part.
  - c. On the contrary, it is because of the sinful conduct of His people.
2. So according to these 2 verses why is on-going repentance...a penitential spirit... crucial for the children of God?
  - a. Our on-going sinful behavior causes us to be separated from God...what does that mean?
  - b. Our on-going sinful behavior makes it so God does not hear us...what does that mean?
  - c. This is why Luther spoke so adamantly about a penitential spirit...on-going repentance in our lives...keeping a short list of our sins speaks to that desire on our part not to be out of sorts with our God. This short list mentality is why many denominations and churches through the years have held the Lord’s Supper every week. What is the upside of doing this? What could be the downside of doing this?
    - (1) If the church thinks that somehow by doing this they will gain favor from God...as if this is a means of forgiveness from God rather than a means of grace.
    - (2) Or if by doing it they place themselves in a place of being morally superior to those who don’t do this.
    - (3) Keeping and maintaining short list of sins so that our relationship is always at the forefront.
    - (4) Keeping before us the work of our Savior to appease God’s wrath and to save His people.
3. What does God communicate about the people in verses 3-8 that support His claim in verses 1-2 for not “hearing” the prayers of His people?
  - a. He gives specifics again in verses 3-8. (See Rom. 1:18-23.)

- b. But in verses 7-8 the prophet presents a general description of the society:
- (1) “...*their feet run to evil...*”—all moral restraints are broken, the people have given themselves over to evil conduct with a passion...one way this is seen is, “...*they are swift to shed innocent blood...*” i.e. abortion, euthanasia, infanticide...even the breakdown of sanctity of marriage and the biblical definition of family for the innocent are sacrificed for convenience...articles being written saying that a childless marriage makes for a better marriage...the lies of this world that continue to denigrate children...
  - (2) “...*their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity...*”—the society described here has degenerated to the level of that just prior to the universal flood (note Genesis 6:5- “*The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great upon the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*”). The consequence of such a life is now presented: “*desolation and destruction are in their highways*”—what lies ahead, what awaits them and what they will eventually encounter on this road of unrighteousness that they have chosen to travel is desolation and destruction.
  - (3) “*The way of peace they do not know...*”—true peace is only found in the Prince of Peace the one they have denied and forsaken for idols of the heart.
  - (4) “...*there is no justice in their paths...*”—since they only continually seek their own good they redefine what is right as the Bible says...redefine right as wrong and wrong as right...or here, “...*they have made their roads crooked...*” This is done to justify themselves and to reign superior over those who do not hold to the same beliefs they do....In fact all others are seen as a threat to their own defined freedom...what is right for me is right...
  - (5) “...*No one who treads on them...(the crooked roads) knows peace.*” Even in seeking to justify themselves they find no peace...and those who believe differently will have no peace.

4. What are the consequences for their sinful behavior in verses 9-11?

- a. Verses 9a speaks of the sought after justice being taken away
- b. 9b describe a people who are groping in the darkness of confusion and despair. They looked for the sun to rise, but it sets instead; rather than the anticipated illumination and redemption, there came increased confusion and isolation (verse 9b).
- c. They stumble about in the darkness of confusion, having no direction and without hope (verse 10a). What the people are experiencing is the very judgment of which the LORD warned in Deuteronomy 28:15 and 28. Because their sins have separated them from their God, He has withdrawn His divine light and has consigned them to grope in spiritual darkness and confusion.
- d. Verses 10b- describe a people who are powerless and helpless before the forces aligned against them. Their adversaries and oppressors were mighty, while they themselves had the power of a dead man.
- e. They testify, “*We all growl like bears, we moan and moan like doves,; we hope for justice, but it is far from us.*” As mentioned, “justice,” or, “judgment,” here is used in the sense of vindication and deliverance by the LORD their God; they looked for the LORD to come to their defense, but it did not happen—they are left to themselves and they are left powerless before the adversaries and oppressors aligned against them.

Next time: Isaiah 59-60

**Bible Study  
The Book of Isaiah  
March 26, 2014**

**A. Prayer**

**B. Review**

1. What are some of the elements of a fast, acceptable to God, that we saw last time that were new to your thinking? Justice, service, Sabbath attendance. ...Living a Christian life is a type of fast...because it takes continual sacrifice to live within a society as God prescribes.
2. In chapter 59:1-11, what were the highlights that God was communicating to his people that are still pertinent today?

**C. Let's turn back to Isaiah 59:9-11 for a minute.**

5. What are the consequences for the people's sinful behavior in verses 9-11?
  - f. Verses 9a speaks of the sought after justice being taken away
  - g. 9b describe a people who are groping in the darkness of confusion and despair. They looked for the sun to rise, but it sets instead; rather than the anticipated illumination and redemption, there came increased confusion and isolation (verse 9b).
  - h. They stumble about in the darkness of confusion, having no direction and without hope (verse 10a). What the people are experiencing is the very judgment of which the LORD warned in Deuteronomy 28:15 and 28. Because their sins have separated



them from their God, He has withdrawn His divine light and has consigned them to grope in spiritual darkness and confusion.

- i. Verses 10b- describe a people who are powerless and helpless before the forces aligned against them. Their adversaries and oppressors were mighty, while they themselves had the power of a dead man.
  - j. They testify, *"We all growl like bears, we moan and moan like doves,; we hope for justice, but it is far from us."* As mentioned, "justice," or, "judgment," here is used in the sense of vindication and deliverance by the LORD their God; they looked for the LORD to come to their defense, but it did not happen—they are left to themselves and they are left powerless before the adversaries and oppressors aligned against them.
6. What people group(s) are in mind with the use of the personal pronouns "we" and "us" in these verses?
- a. Isaiah seems to be talking about how all of this is affecting both the faithful and the unfaithful...believers and non- believers alike.
  - b. Even the faithful are wandering at this time because things are so bad and they don't see a way out. They are so influenced by the decadence of the culture that they have become affected....not only in their faith...by being attacked but in ways that cause them to be passive and accepting of society. If you can't beat them join them...and if you can't join them keep your mouth quiet...just get along.
  - c. And of course, he is talking about the unfaithful as well.
7. What do the faithful ones begin to recognize in verses 12-15? What transgressions have they done that their eyes now see? Think of what Isaiah has said already that they are guilty of from Chapter 40 through 58. Specific things pointed out by Isaiah up to this point.
- a. Not stepping up to take leadership when asked or called by God.
  - b. Thinking about overthrowing the God ordained government.
  - c. Passive behavior seen in simply turning away from such atrocities...paralyzed to do or say anything because of fear of being ostracized.
  - d. Not taking their God given role in society seriously.
  - e. Since they have not been authentic in their faith...they are not influential in any way...they are as dead men because they have done nothing that showed life, strength or courage.
8. What is God's response once again in verses 16-20? (Was there anyone who could fix these issues? Could the people just step up and change on their own? What does God say here about His own people?)
- a. Not only was no one willing to step up...the grammar makes it clear no one could step up and fill the gap on their own...no one but God Himself...
  - b. God's chosen servant who has been highlighted before... is the One He speaks of in verses 16b-20...the Redeemer.
9. With whom is God renewing His covenant in verses 21? Those He has redeemed, only. And what is He promising them again?
- a. First, by renewing His covenant He is promising not to reject His people forever...He is affirming His steadfast love for His elect...the children of the promise.
  - b. He promises the presence of His Spirit as well as His direction and guiding hand... *"My Spirit that is upon you..."* (You gotta love these continual occurrences talking

about the Spirit...There was a time that I was taught that the Spirit didn't really exist or wasn't influential in any way in the OT...but He is throughout...Isaiah could be called the prophet of the Holy Spirit...interesting another herald of God's Word that was called the Holy Spirit's minister...John Calvin!

- c. That the words He has placed in His people's mouth will not depart...they will renew, refresh and restore His people to a place of obedience again... when we are in a state of freedom in Christ.
- d. Our children will be blessed when we, as parents, walk in the LORD...
  - (1) Want great kids...walk in the way the LORD has prescribed...this does not guarantee salvation but it does ensure their being blessed and their being a blessing to us while they live in our household...
  - (2) As long as we follow God's ways and not try to make up our own along the way...Live by Duet. 6:4-9!...the generations will be blessed.

#### D. Isaiah 60

1. What command(s) does the Lord give to His people in verse 1 printed? How does this verse compliment the previous couple of verses of 59:20-21?
  - a. "Arise ...is a feminine imperative...which tells us who God is talking about...His Bride. The Bride that He has been talking about in the last verses of 59. This bride has been sitting in the ash and or dust for too long...it is time for her to get up off her "duff" and make her presence known. The command to rise and shine is accompanied by the strength to fulfill the command...Christ has risen and His light is the life of men. These commands always include the power to carry them out...it is never suggested in the Bible when we are commanded to do anything...like to the leper..."Be clean" that we can somehow do this on our own...it is assumed and sometimes clearly stated that it is by the power of God's word alone that we can fulfill the commands of God.
  - b. "...give light..."- she is called to shed forth the light she has been given... "*...for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.*" See Matt. 5:14-16 and John 1:1-9. Once again...having received the light of the LORD...His bride is to be a blessing ...light to the world. This is not something that we can do on our own...ever. It is done to us...we are passive in this...we receive it through the faith that God has given us through the finished work of Jesus Christ.
  - c. Gen. 12 commanded us to be a blessing...also said that by virtue of our presence when we reflect the LORD to the world that we will be a blessing to the world...the world is better off because of us.
  - d. So how is the church doing, today? Really? Give evidence for your answers.
2. When does (did) this light come upon them? What time frame does the prophet have in mind here? (Consider vs. 2 in your answer which has far reaching consequences.)
  - a. "*...your light is come, for the glory of the LORD has risen upon you*" ...a Hebrew prophetic perfect...which speaks of this as already having happened. Salvation is light, for it dispels the darkness of ignorance, sin and evil. Salvation is always a manifestation of God's glory.
  - b. The deliverance from the Babylonians... "*For, behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples...*"... The Babylonian Exile that is still coming...and then deliverance... "*...but the LORD will rise upon you, and His glory will be seen upon you.*"

- c. The coming, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus to deal with God's wrath and our sinfulness...See Isaiah 9: 2 for a direct reference that Isaiah would have expected God's people to remember...1<sup>st</sup>, when they are brought back from Exile but then, 2<sup>nd</sup>, when the LORD comes to save His own...
- d. Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came upon His people in power.
- e. Our own salvation...a light shines from Christ upon us and we are then required to be a light of God's grace to those around us...we are to be His witnesses to the uttermost parts of the earth...our very presence should inform others about who Christ is. We were created to glorify the Lord...the main way that is done is by reflecting Him and His radiance to the world around us.
- f. Is this what you wake up wanting to do every day? If we did how would that affect the world we live in, specifically?

**Next Time Isaiah 60-61**

**Bible Study**  
**The Book of Isaiah**  
**April 2, 2014**

**A. Prayer**

**B. Review**

1. What major doctrine(s) is/are displayed in Isaiah 59:20-21?
  - a. Trinity...Godhead is clearly displayed.
  - b. Promise keeper...
2. What all is being communicated and commanded in verse 1? *"Arise, shine, for your light has come, the glory of the LORD has risen upon you."*
  - e. "Arise ...is a feminine imperative...which tells us who God is talking about...His Bride. The Bride that He has been talking about in the last verses of 59. This bride has been sitting in the ash and or dust for too long...
  - f. This command and this word are reminiscent of what the king does when he gives someone a special mission to do...as when one is knight to protect the realm. He would say *"Arise."* And by saying that he is commissioning them to a particular service. In this case part of what God is saying is, it is time for His people to get up off their "duff" and make their presence known. But also and probably more importantly He is re-commissioning them to fulfill their original mandate...which is...
  - g. *"To Shine..."*...*"...give light..."*- she is called to shed forth the light she has been given... *"...for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you."* See Matt. 5:14-16 and John 1:1-9. Once again...having received the light of the LORD...His bride is to be a blessing ...light to the world. This is not something that we can do on our own...ever. It is done to us...we are passive in this...we receive it through the faith that God has given us through the finished work of Jesus Christ.
  - h. The command to rise and shine is accompanied by the strength to fulfill the command...Christ has risen and His light is the life of men. These commands always include the power to carry them out...it is never suggested in the Bible when we are commanded to do anything...like to the leper... "Be clean" that we can somehow do this on our own...it is assumed and sometimes clearly stated that it is by the power of God's word alone that we can fulfill the commands of God.
  - i. *"...your light is come, for the glory of the LORD has risen upon you"* ...a Hebrew prophetic perfect...which speaks of this as already having happened. Salvation is light, for it dispels the darkness of ignorance, sin and evil. Salvation is always a manifestation of God's glory.
  - j. Gen. 12 commanded us to be a blessing...also said that by virtue of our presence when we reflect the LORD to the world that we will be a blessing to the world...the world is better off because of us.

**C. Isaiah 60 continued:**

3. According to Isaiah 60:3, what is the result of the Lord shining upon His people and causing them to share in His divine light?
  - a. *"And nations will come to your light"*—Gentile peoples are converted to God through the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ (note Isaiah 42:6-7; 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10).

- b. Furthermore, *“kings will come to the brightness of your rising”*—a reference to the powers and the rulers of the world submitting to the Lord and His Christ—and to His people as they are united to their Savior and share in His glory. Think the Magi who represented their Kings...
  - c. In short a fulfillment of prophecy...of His covenant promises.
- 4. What kind of scene is being described in verse 4? When was this prophecy fulfilled in Israel's history? What will be the ultimate fulfillment of this prophecy?
  - a. The 1<sup>st</sup> thing vs. 4 is describing is a great re-gathering of God's people, a great “homecoming,” a joyful “family reunion.” Like when they come back from the exile to rebuild the temple and the walls around Jerusalem. ...so with this in mind, Jerusalem is commanded to lift up her eyes, look around, and see what the Lord is doing and as Jerusalem responds to God's command, she sees a great re-gathering of her exiled sons and daughters as they are brought back home to their city and their land.
  - b. But the 2<sup>nd</sup> thing the prophet has in mind is the fact that just as surely as the Lord brought His people out of the Babylonian captivity and back home to Israel, so He will bring all His redeemed into His heavenly home and eternal kingdom.
  - c. See also 49:18 and 22 for comparison.
- 5. What blessing(s) are promised to Jerusalem (as the city represents God's people) in Isaiah 60:5-7? When will this prophecy have its ultimate fulfillment?
  - a. *“Jerusalem you shall see and you shall be radiant (shine with the LORD's light) with joy, your heart will thrill and exult (with happiness)”*
    - (1) Jerusalem shall beam with delight when she beholds the wealth of the world being brought to her (verse 5). The wealth of the nations (See also 60:11)= those who are God's from every nation tongue and tribe.
    - (2) Since this is written in an imperative form...she is being made to see... she is being made able to be radiant...there is something outside of her that has done this to her. Look at Numbers 624-27. With God's blessing the people of God shine...Matt. 5:14-16.
  - b. The merchant vessels are portrayed as sailing to her ports on the Mediterranean, filled with their cargo (verse 5b).
  - c. As she looks to the east, Jerusalem sees the caravans crossing the desert to bring her their treasures; the camels are loaded down with gold and frankincense (verse 6a). Also, think Magi coming as a fulfillment of this prophecy in Christ's 1<sup>st</sup> Coming.
  - d. All the flocks of Kedar and the rams of Nebaioth are gathered to Jerusalem where they are offered up as a great and acceptable sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to the Lord (verse 7a).
  - e. *“...they shall come up with acceptance on my altar...”*- He considers us a worthy living sacrifice at this time...with the imputation of righteousness by Christ...light that is given to us...not light that we can get on our own. Think Rom. 12:1-2.
  - f. *“...and I will beautify my beautiful house.”* By the imputation of Christ's righteousness we are a beautiful Bride...made so by the father through the Son and the working of the Spirit. Nothing we could do on our own...Only God could beautify us....His people from every nation, tongue and tribe.
  - g. One last thing about this word translated “beautify and beautiful”...it is the same word in the Hebrew for other words in this chapter like glory, glorify and majestic.
  - h. What this passage is poetically portraying is the abundance of wealth/blessing that the Lord will finally bestow upon His people at the end of this present age, as well as

their expression of praise and thanksgiving to the Lord their God, and the acceptance of their person and worship by the Lord as they finally dwell with Him when heaven and earth are united in the renewed creation.

6. What is the main message being communicated in verses 8-12? How does this happen? Bring in the Gentiles...by God's grace they will come in...not because they are wanting to come in...they as well are happy in their bliss until God does His work of grace through His church as the means of salvation....His glory. See Rev. 21: 22-27 for fulfillment of this.
7. What are some of the blessings being communicated in verses 13-21?
  - a. *"The glory...or the beauty of Lebanon shall come to you...."* The trees of Lebanon will adore the temple and the city...which represents people coming into the fold of God's church...and these people will beautify it not make it ugly or hinder it in any way... Remember the Jews thought that only Jews fell under God's covenant...you could become a Jew but outside of that you weren't God's.
  - b. Their former oppressors will come seeking the forgiveness of God...think Paul...he wasn't looking to be saved...he was out persecuting Christians when God called him...a former oppressor and the Church was to accept him and give thanks for him.
  - c. Once God's people were forsaken and hated and now they/ we are majestic because we have Christ's righteousness.
  - d. Because of such overt blessings the Church will know that God is for her and with her.
  - e. Verses 18-21 speak clearly of what has been placed upon us again...Christ's righteousness...His light.
  - f. What is our chief end according to verse 21 and how will we do this?
8. Having made all the promises contained throughout this chapter, what word of assurance does the Lord give at the conclusion in verse 22?
  - a. The passage closes with these words: *"The least one shall become a clan (a thousand), the smallest one a mighty nation; I am (Yahweh) Yahweh: in its time I will hasten it."*
  - b. This is in reference to Judah who was the least becoming the greatest...Ephraim had been the largest under Joseph but over time it had been punished by the Lord and it has become the smallest because of its arrogance and unbelief...and Judah had replaced it in prominence among the tribes of Israel.
  - c. The point being made is that there is an appointed day for the fulfillment of all these things; and the Lord will see to it that nothing prevents the coming of that day. Indeed, the Lord is causing history to speed on to that great ending.

#### D. Isaiah 61

1. In Isaiah 61 "a mysterious messenger" suddenly appears, very abruptly and without introduction. What claim does he make in verse 1? In Isaiah 61 a messenger from the Lord suddenly appears and announces His divine calling: *"The Spirit of the Adonai Elohim is upon me."* Here is someone anointed and empowered by the Holy Spirit in order to carry out the divine calling entrusted to Him. See Also 59:20-21.

Next Time: Isaiah 61-62

**Bible Study**  
**The Book of Isaiah**  
**April 9, 2014**

**A. Prayer**

**B. Review**

1. What would you say is the overarching message of Chapter 60? What about some of it underlining themes?
  - a. The re-commissioning of His children...restoring them/us to our original glory so that we can bring glory to God the Father.
  - b. That God is doing all of this from His strong position and that we could do nothing on our own to affect this change.
2. What is the specific point(s) that God is making in Isaiah 60:22? Why is it still important to us today?

**C. Isaiah 61**

2. In Isaiah 61 “a mysterious messenger” suddenly appears, very abruptly and without introduction. What claim does he make in verse 1? In Isaiah 61 a messenger from the Lord suddenly appears and announces His divine calling: *“The Spirit of the Adonai Elohim is upon me.”* Here is someone anointed and empowered by the Holy Spirit in order to carry out the divine calling entrusted to Him. See Also 59:20-21.
3. What specific things does this mysterious stranger say he is called to do in verse 1-3?
  - a. To bring good news to the poor...
  - b. To bind up the broken hearted...
  - c. To proclaim liberty to the captives and open the prison to those who are bound...
  - d. To proclaim the year of the LORD’s favor...

- e. Note: In Luke 4 this is where Jesus stopped in His proclaiming of this section of scripture...
  - f. To proclaim the day of vengeance of our God...
  - g. To comfort all who mourn...
  - h. To grant to those who mourn in Zion that they may be called oaks of righteousness...
4. Who is this mysterious messenger whom we meet in Isaiah 61 and how do we know for sure? See Matt. 3:16; Luke 4:16-21. In the gospel of Luke our Lord Jesus reveals that the prophecy recorded in Isaiah 61 is referring to Him and His ministry as the Messiah, the servant of the Lord.
  5. How does Isaiah describe the results of the Messiah's redeeming work and the effect it has upon God's people? (See specifically Isaiah 61:3b)
    - a. *"oaks of righteousness"* a wonderful term...because we/they have been planted by God for one purpose ...interestingly...for His own beauty or in modern language...For His own Glory! These stately oaks of righteousness shall adorn the kingdom of God and shall be for His own glory—redeemed by Him, planted by Him, reflecting His glory by their fruit and in their stature. *"The chief end of God is to glorify Himself."* John Piper
    - b. With our God-given righteousness the redeemed will resemble mighty oaks. We will be planted by the LORD in His land, rooted into the life of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.
    - c. Just so we are clear...We are given this righteousness...it is not something we go and find for ourselves...and then we are planted by the LORD for one purpose...it is not one we need to discover...for it is a singular purpose...to glorify God!
    - d. God uses His people to bring restoration...we are the means He uses to bring His salvation to others in this life.
    - e. The oak or terebinth trees were extremely common in those days and they were known by all on sight...so will be the righteous of God.
  6. How is this righteousness to be displayed in God's people according to verses 4-7? Make this make sense for today! God's people are set apart...this is good in our closeness to God but because of this the world hates us because they hate Christ.
  7. What is God further communicating to His people and to the world in verses 8 and 9?
  8. What causes Isaiah to rejoice in the LORD in Isaiah 61:10?
    - a. Isaiah explains that the LORD has wrapped around him a robe of righteousness, thereby enabling him to stand before the Holy One and be accepted. Previously, when Isaiah saw the LORD in His majesty and heard the seraphim proclaim His holiness, Isaiah trembled with fear, for he was acutely aware of his sinful condition (Isaiah 6:1-5). But now he can rejoice because the Lord has placed upon him the robe of righteousness. As believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, let us rejoice in the fact that the Lord has clothed us with His own perfect righteousness.
    - b. In other words...we have been given a new status and a new nature in Christ Jesus. Not something we were looking for...God gave it to us out of His nature and His on-going desire to glorify Himself.
  9. What assurance does the LORD give us in Isaiah 61:11?



- a. The LORD gives us the assurance that He will cause His righteousness to triumph. Just as the sprouts spring up out of the soil, so shall the Lord cause righteousness to spring up before all nations.
- b. As Christians, when we consider the present state of the world we may become discouraged, even to the point of despair, due to the prevalence and apparent dominance of evil. Such was the case with Isaiah himself (note Isaiah 24:16b). But as Christians we can be encouraged and rejoice when we consider the final destiny God has appointed for His renewed creation as it is defined for us in Isaiah 61.
- c. What Isaiah speaks of here is the same thing the apostle Peter presents in 2 Peter 3:13, *“But according to His promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells...the home of righteousness.”*
- d. Since everyone knows the earth cannot on its own bring forth sprouts...or a garden cannot cause what is sown in it to sprout up...it is the LORD of glory that does these things...for nothing does without God’s direct guidance.... And so just like He directs these simple plants so also the Lord God causes righteousness and praise to sprout up.

#### **D. Isaiah 62**

##### **1. What pledge does the Lord make in Isaiah 62:1?**

- a. The LORD pledges that for Zion’s sake He will not keep silent and for Jerusalem’s sake He will not remain quiet.
- b. The LORD pledges that He will neither hold His peace nor rest until He has accomplished His purpose, namely, to cause the righteousness of His people and His kingdom to shine forth like the rising sun at dawn.
- c. Note: The LORD’s promise that His people’s righteousness shall shine out like the sun at dawn is not referring to any inherent personal righteousness that His people possess in themselves; it is referring to the divine righteousness they possess by faith in Christ (see Philippians 3:9).
- d. What is anticipated here in Isaiah 62:1 is the day when the divine righteousness of Christ shall radiate from our lives with the brilliance of the noonday sun and like a blazing lantern illuminating a pitch dark cave. This will finally occur on the day the Lord brings forth His kingdom in all of its glory. A historical irony is when Nero literally lit up the Christians he had placed on stakes ...making them human torches...the martyrs he made that day lit the way for the expansion of God’s kingdom.
- e. His church is no longer the people they were...they have a new nature and soon new names in the following verses.

##### **2. What other promises of God found in vs. 2-5 should inspire and motivate us to live the way God prescribes for us to live?**

- a. Because our righteousness shines brightly our salvation as a burning torch ...the nations shall see our righteousness and all the kings our glory...which is Christ’s glory. So the question is; “How well is the church doing? Do we shine so brightly that people see our righteousness? Is the light we shine at the same time a comfort to those who are God’s and an irritation to those who aren’t? Are we living up to our new name?”
- b. In verse 2 the Lord promises that His people shall be identified by a new name; the old names, “Forsaken ” shall be put away according to verse 4. And a new name given : “Hephzibah—my delight is in her’ ... for Yahweh will take delight in

you...” This is the very name by which the Father addresses His beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ (note Matthew 3:17).

- c. He also changes the name of the land from “Desolate” to “Married”...see also vs. 4 again. **Why does He do this? What is He communicating in doing this?**
  - d. In verse 3 the Lord promises that we shall be a crown of beauty in His hand—here is the blessing of being totally possessed by God; being held in the Lord’s hand as His precious jewel and treasured possession. At the same time, here is the blessing of being a royal honor and glory to the Lord of glory Himself—a crown of glory and a royal diadem for the Lord.
  - e. Vs. 5...our Elohim rejoices over us because of the work of His hands upon us.
3. **Just so we are clear...what doctrine(s) are in mind here in this text?**
- a. The Doctrine of Man
  - b. Regeneration
  - c. Justification
  - d. Adoption
  - e. Bride of Christ

**Next Time: Isaiah 62-63**

**Bible Study**  
**The Book of Isaiah**  
**April 16, 2014**

- A. Prayer**
- B. Review**

- 1. What would you say is the overarching message of chapters 61?**
- 2. What are some of the specific promises that God makes in chapter 62: 2-5? How are they pertinent to us today?**
  - f. Because our righteousness shines brightly our salvation as a burning torch ...the nations shall see our righteousness and all the kings our glory...which is Christ's glory. So the question is; "How well is the church doing? Do we shine so brightly that people see our righteousness? Is the light we shine at the same time a comfort to those who are God's and an irritation to those who aren't? Are we living up to our new name?"**
  - g. In verse 2 the Lord promises that His people shall be identified by a new name; the old names, "Forsaken " shall be put away according to verse 4. And a new name given : "'Hephzibah—my delight is in her' ... for Yahweh will take delight in you..." This is the very name by which the Father addresses His beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ (note Matthew 3:17).**
  - h. He also changes the name of the land from "Desolate" to "Married"...see also vs. 4 again. Why does He do this? What is He communicating in doing this?**
  - i. In verse 3 the Lord promises that we shall be a crown of beauty in His hand—here is the blessing of being totally possessed by God; being held in the Lord's hand as His precious jewel and treasured possession. At the same time, here is the blessing of being a royal honor and glory to the Lord of glory Himself—a crown of glory and a royal diadem for the Lord.**
  - j. Vs. 5...our Elohim rejoices over us because of the work of His hands upon us.**
- 3. Let's think about this aspect of shining our light for a minute in today's culture.**
  - a. What are His expectations of His people according to these first 5 verses?**
    - (1) That their light would shine...the light He has placed on them.**
    - (2) That they would reflect God and His standard to those around them...must know the Law to be able to live it out.**
    - (3) They must live up to the new name and title they have been given.**
    - (4) They must be actively seeking and doing God's law.**
  - b. Thinking of today: How do the latest "rash" of so-called Christian films and "Christian" books on dying, going to heaven and returning bringing a vision of God...cloud or dim the light spoken of here in this section? How can we know whether these are "real"? See Heb. 1:1-4.**
    - (1) They truly cloud the truth by:**
      - Not resting in the Word of God...**
      - By seeking extra revelation because everyone wants to know what heaven is like...without searching the only source material that is trustworthy...the Bible.**
      - We do not want to look it up for ourselves...because personal "experience" trumps the word of God which in the mind of most is so impersonal.**
    - (2) Books like this or movies like these take away the emphasis on the word and we must speak to that.**

- c. **How must we speak as children of the light? Here are a few ideas.**
  - (1) We must seek to understand why these people who call themselves Christians do not have assurance in God's word. What is the real problem...lack of faith...lack of assurance...bot?
  - (2) We must "confront" believers with the Word by asking questions about their "faith" and their assurance in the Word of God and why they "need" extra biblical assurances.
  - (3) We must be willing to "confront" fellow believers with the error of their ways not based on our opinions but with the only source of hope and comfort...the Bible.
  - (4) For the non-believer who is ALSO searching for truth we need to help them see the real truth...the real source of change and assurance...Jesus Christ. For "spirituality is built into every man woman and child as image bearers of God so they search but not in the right places our job...direct them to the right place and see what God does.

#### C. Continuing Chapter 62

##### 4. Now let's consider verses 6-9.

- a. **Who are the watchmen that are being spoken of here in vs. 6? Spiritual leaders, prophets, pastors and elders all who have been specific task in making the Word of God known.**
- b. **What are these men called upon to do in verses 7-9?**
  - (1) The Lord declares that these watchmen are never to hold their peace day or night. Their duty is to be found constantly crying out to God for the fulfillment of His promises to bring His kingdom to its full fruition.
  - (2) In verse 6b these watchmen are identified as "*Yahweh's palace recorders.*" The palace recorder, or "remembrancer", was an official position in the ancient Middle Eastern court whose responsibility was to remind the king of his appointments and commitments—the remembrancer was a type of royal secretary. These divinely appointed "palace recorders" are given the charge, "Take no rest, and give Him no rest, until He establishes Jerusalem and makes her the praise of all the earth."(vs. 7) The Lord's remembrancers are to take no rest and give the Lord no rest until He has fulfilled His promises and brought His kingdom to the earth in all of its eternal glory.
- c. **What is God promising to His church when He says "*makes it a praise in the earth?*"**
- d. **What are these watchmen told to proclaim in verses 8-9? Why? And again what relevance does it have for us today?**

##### 5. What all is going on in verses 10-12?

- a. The people are being called upon to prepare the way to enter the Church...to make it as easy as possible for people to see the LORD...to be that blessing the LORD commanded us to be. It seems sometime that we are more interested in making it hard for people to see the LORD...whether it is by the restriction we place on people...how they look, what types of lifestyles they are involved in...we are to call all people to repentance and into the presence of the living LORD...the call is

**universal and irrespective of all things that define humans...for there is one thing that defines us all and that is we are made in the image of God.**

- b. In verse 11 the Lord publicly proclaims in the hearing of all the nations that His kingdom shall surely come. The Lord shall personally come to redeem His people and bestow upon them the eternal rewards that His Son has merited for them and that they have “earned” by their faithfulness to Him—a faithfulness enabled by His grace. The Lord has gone on public record, He has publicly committed Himself, (and He has put it in writing in the Bible), and for His own honor He will certainly fulfill His promise: His kingdom will surely come.**
- c. In verse 12, we see God placing His seal of approval on all who are His...See also Isaiah 4:3; I Peter 2:9-10, Rev. 22:12-17**

**Bible Study**  
**The Book of Isaiah**  
**May 21, 2014**

**A. Prayer**

**B. Review**

1. What would you say is the overarching message of chapters 64?
2. What is God expecting of these people even though the immediate “fate” has been established? Why?
  - a. Repentance and obedience...will bring the blessings He has promised ...in time.
  - b. His word is always true and while they need to suffer the consequences of their sin because God is a just judge...they already know that there is a light at the end of the tunnel. God’s grace had been clearly expressed and those who are His will experience those blessings as they seek out of gratitude and God’s grace to be repentant and obedient....this becomes evident in that after a while the Israelites are subsumed into Babylonian culture and are allowed to live in a way that pleases God. See Daniel...their life is not as bad as it could have been.

**C. Isaiah 65 ...(Let’s be very detailed.)**

1. Consider the questions God puts forward in 64:12. Last week we answered these questions with a yes and a no. Things won’t be as bad as they could be but there are still consequences that will come because of our disobedience and our lack of repentance....this is regarding the Church today. Our lack of repentance on a daily basis reflects the idea that we DO in fact think we are “good.” That what we do is not so bad. And this lack of regular repentance leads to a lack of obedience on our part. But this is speaking first to the people of Israel...Jesus said in John 9:39 *“For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.”* And why shouldn’t it seem appropriate for Christ to speak this way which mirrored the words of the prophets? The rejection of the Jews and the calling of the gentiles is an on-going theme in the OT and this same theme are found in the NT as well. (See Acts 10:39-43, 13:40-41; Rom. 9, 10, 11 as well as Rom. 16:25-27)
2. Now having considered these questions again, now read 65:1-2a. How do these 2 verses actually answer these questions for the immediate and long term understanding of the questions in 64:12?
  - a. By way of an answer, God declares that He will indeed come in grace, but first to a people who had not sought Him...the Gentiles. They were not looking and would not be looking is the idea here. They had been chosen before the foundations of the earth to become God’s treasure...His peculiar people...His chosen ones replacing the people of Israel...
  - b. Verse 2 tells us why He will show such grace to the Gentiles because His people have sinned and broken covenant with Him.
  - c. See Paul’s explanation of these 2 verses in Rom. 10:20-21.
  - d. Verse 2 makes it abundantly clear that God declares that the chosen people have been rebellious (See 63:10) ...no hope of being completely saved as a nation of people...as a political nation.
  - e. Isaiah is boldly proclaiming something here that would be an affront to the sensibilities of these people who thought themselves God’s people because of their

being chosen and given the law...no matter that they never lived up to or kept the Law.

- f. See Jesus' own words in Matt. 21:43...compare Duet. 32:5,6,21.
  - g. God reached out His hand over and over again to these people and they broke His covenant over and over again as a people/nation they were corrupt...there always was a remnant.
3. Now consider the description of these people in verses 2b-7...think indictment, if you will. How does God describe these people...*"the people or a people"* (which refers to the Israelites) to whom He has continually revealed Himself? (Be specific using the text in your answer...for these are specific charges.) The world will now see why they have been rejected...
- a. They provoke Him to His face continually... they were willful, doing their own thing their own way for their own glory.... *"for every imagination of the heart is only evil."* (Gen. 6:5; see also Jer. 17:9) They stubbornly walked in the way that is appealing to them and appears to them to be wise and profitable.
  - b. They constantly provoke Him with their idolatry which was quite elaborate in it focus...even evolving into necromancy or consulting the dead that is why they were those *"...who sit in tombs, and spent the night in secret places..."*
  - c. They will not listen to the Word of God...violating the ceremonial, civil and dietary laws of God.... *"...who eat pigs flesh and broth of tainted meat (abominable things...probably things offered to idols) is in their vessels..."*
  - d. They would speak about themselves as if they were better than all peoples...after all they were the people of God...though they did not act like it...they were not the blessing to the nations that God had commanded them to be...they were hypocritical and disobedient and everyone saw it which made their claim to be holier than now a real shame upon them...for they were fools in the eyes of the nations.
  - e. The iniquities of their fathers set the pace for their own...and these will come against them...think 2nd Commandment and its warnings...Ex. 20:4-6.
4. Now look at verses 8-10. With all of this condemnation and rejection by God of "the people" is this the end? Support your answer and tell what it means. (For a NT explanation of this text turn to Rom. 11:1-5.)
- a. God will indeed not spare the wicked nation, but will save the remnant...those who are part of Israel who are part of His Church...people from every nation, tribe and tongue also include a remnant from among the Jews who will see the light and the Messiah as the Son of God and receive God's grace like the Gentiles.
  - b. You have to love the imagery...you pull off a cluster of grapes...many are good some are bad...or maybe many are bad but some are good...Do you throw the whole thing away?...What He is saying here is that you don't throw the whole thing away but only the good will be preserved in the wine. The wicked will ultimately be punished but the remnant will be saved and used to make the good wine and they will be a blessing.
  - c. Vs. 9 even speaks of those from among Jacob and even Judah who will be counted among the children of the promise...the Messiah will come from Judah.
  - d. This also tells us that the nation we know as Israel is not needed to fulfill God's promises. For this talks not only about bringing Jews into the land but also Gentiles ...so this is speaking about the Church and those made up of the church of which some will be from the Jews as well.

- e. Since the nation is unimportant in the grand scheme of things... in fact the nation has been condemned by God...Sharon and the valley of Achor...both of which were very green and lush...symbolize the pastures Jesus provides for His elect that are talked about in Ps. 23 and in John 10:9.
5. In verses 11-16 how does the LORD describe the respective fate and rewards of those whom He identifies as *“my servants”* in distinction from those whom He has identified as *“a rebellious people?”*
- a. The rebellious are those who bow down to the Syrian gods called Fortune and Destiny...and to those He has a ready sword...God says, *“I will destine you...or number you to the sword...”*
    - (1) He has predestined the wicked...the actual number of the wicked who will perish...no more or no less than what He has chosen.
    - (2) No one will be able to resist their own death...their own judgment...they will be made to bow down onto the sword.
  - b. His rebellious people chose not to follow Him...not to listen to His voice...and did what was evil in the eyes of God...this was a purposeful and willful behavior...the sign of their evil nature. They were destined to stumble and fall.
  - c. God’s servants shall eat...shall drink...shall rejoice...shall sing with gladness...while the rebellious shall be hungry...thirsty...put to shame...cry out in pain of the heart.
  - d. Vs. 15 seems to say that the name Israel...Jewish nation will be used as a curse and done away with... For sure He seems to be saying that the Jews are to be cut off from the land because of their sinfulness and they are to never again be a political nation again...and they are being replaced by God with the name for His chosen people...Christian... Church. With this in mind can there actually be a future expectation that God would raise this nation up again? Interesting some of the curses of old went like this...the Jews heard these often... “You are as cruel as a Jew.” Or “God make you as miserable as a Jew.”...not wanting any to fall under the curse of the Jews by God.
  - e. The name of God’s chosen were to be a blessing again just as He commanded in Gen 12: 1-3.
  - f. Vs. 16 seems to imply that those of the elect...the chosen... will swear by God’s name... all that we do will be in His name... the God of truth or the God of Amen!
  - g. Vs. 16 also speaks of the former distresses upon Israel as being forgotten...in other words, this is a strong impression of their complete removal...they are no longer on God’s radar...never to be replaced. ...as they are hidden from before His eyes. These distresses are the results of the nation’s sins.
6. In verse 17-25 we come to know why the former things aren’t remembered any more. What is God promising here for His own? (See Rev. 7:15-17, Rev. 21) In fact this passage explains why there will be no need for a new Temple to be rebuilt or the nations of Israel to exist...those things have been replaced and they are products of the Old Covenant symbolisms. This passage explains Rev. 21 well...or maybe Rev. 21 explains this passage.
7. As you look again at these verses what other images from other places in Scripture do you see? See if you can find them and give a verse to support what you find.



8. The Bible doesn't spend a lot of time telling us what heaven will be like (it gives us enough information to know that it will be a glorious wait while we are there...if, in fact, we even register that life because of the timelessness that will be encountered there.) but it does tell us a lot about what life will be like in Christ's kingdom...new heaven and new earth. What should that tell us especially with the whole life after death books being promoted today? How does this information here in these 2 books give us more information when talking about such heretical works?

**Bible Study**  
**The Book of Isaiah**  
**May 28, 2014**

**A. Prayer**

**B. Review**

1. What would you say is the overarching message of chapters 65? Some might say that this chapter more than any other deals with the transference of God's grace from Israel to the Church...but perhaps a better explanation would be the rejection of Israel as a nation and the exaltation of the Children of the Covenant/Promise. Rejection of Israel because of their sin and the elevation of the people of God that have existed since Adam and Eve were forgiven by God and become the first members of God's universal Church. God's wrath against Israel's sin became full...now it is the Church's time to carry God's torch, if you will. This text speaks of a change in the guard...Israel will no longer represent the chosen of God...the Church...the true children of Abraham...the children of the promise go forward in that position.
2. What were some of the distinction that God made between "my servants" and "this rebellious people" in this chapter?

**C. Chapter 66...the end of this book!**

1. God through Isaiah has just dropped a bombshell on these folks. They thought they were "all that and a bag of chips"...and God through the prophet has just told them that they are of no importance ...in fact; their name will be a curse in the world because of their sinfulness and their hardheartedness toward God. Think back with me a minute to Isaiah 6:8-13. What do you suppose would be the response of these people that had just heard these words from Isaiah? And why were their hearts hard in the first place?

2. In verse 1-2 what is God reminding these people...the rebellious and His servants? Now look to Acts 7:48-51 and what point does Stephen make that is pertinent to all that the prophet has been saying for the last few chapters?
  - a. The people...the rebellious...were putting their trust in the wrong things...they were no longer the people of God..."Lo-Ammi= Not my People". They were stiff-necked, uncircumcised in the heart and the ears and they resisted the Holy Spirit.
  - b. Both peoples needed to be reminded... of His great majesty: heaven is His throne, the earth is His footstool, He has made the whole creation with His own hands. He had no need or desired no help from anyone else...in fact, His creation couldn't help.
  - c. What is the specific definition he gives in vs 2 for His servants? What do they look like? What defines them? He has a specific definition of His servants, *"He who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my Word."* – broken by sin...repentant of sin...a righteous fear of God....by the power of His Word.
  
3. According to 66:1-2 how are we to build lives that are worthy of the Lord?
  - a. First we must be aware of God's majesty and exalted nature...so much so that we know we can't do it on our own. See Ps. 127:1.
  - b. 2<sup>nd</sup>...we must understand what is of utmost important to Him...His glory and our ability to enjoy Him forever. How do we do this? Deut. 6:5.
  - c. 3<sup>rd</sup>...we must yield ourselves to Him...and rely on the work of the Spirit (Ezek. 36:25-27).
  - d. 4<sup>th</sup> He defines what He expects of this "new temple"- *"He who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my Word."* How is this accomplished?
    - (1) The Lord is not impressed by any temple or cathedral that men may build for Him; but He does look with favor upon the man whom He describes as "he who is humble and who has a contrite spirit." The reference here is to the man who is aware of his spiritual need, is humble before the Lord his God, and exhibits sorrow for sin and a repentant spirit.
    - (2) The man upon whom the Lord looks with favor is further described as the one "who trembles at my word." Holy fear is a right and proper response for a man to make to the Person of God; as the prophet Jeremiah testifies, *"There is none like you, O LORD; you are great, and your name is great in might. Who would not fear you, O King of the nations? For this is your due; for among all the wise ones of the nations and in all their kingdoms. There is none like you."* (Jeremiah 10:6-7).
  
4. In verses 3 and 4, what kind of worship is being described? (Note the Lord's comments about the people who are offering this worship) How does the Lord regard such "worship"?
  - a. Verse 3 is describing worship that merely consists of the offering of the prescribed acts of religious devotion without the offering of a life of devotion to the Lord.
  - b. As verse 3a indicates, the Lord has no respect for those who only offer Him the mere formalities of worship. Worship may be offered to the Lord in strict accordance with the guidelines of Scripture, but if the worshiper lacks the qualities outlined in verse 2, his worship is considered by the Lord to be in the same class as idolatry.
  - c. Idolatry is the worst form of sin in this case...taking the things of God and worshiping them brings them down to the level of the defamed and disgraced.
  - d. Vs. 4 speaks to what God will do with such people who offer sacrifice without the heart of sacrifice and devotion as well as defining why they act the way they do:

- (1) They do not listen to His Word/Law...when He spoke they weren't listening...so they didn't answer correctly...they often answered to blame Him for His harshness and being slow to act.
    - (2) They did only what was evil (think right) in their own eyes. (See Judges 21:25)...which is always evil in God's eyes. We don't consider the depth of our own sinfulness when we seek to redefine the things that God has given us as gifts.
  - e. Why is this happening? What was God's role in this? (See Isaiah 6 again as a reminder)
5. In verses 5-6 the Lord turns from those whose worship merely consists of religious formalities and idolatry to once again address those who are truly devoted to Him. What assurance does He give them? Why does He find it necessary to offer such assurance?
- a. To those who are devoted to Him, the LORD gives the assurance that there shall be a day of justice in which His servants shall be vindicated and those who have persecuted them shall receive their just compensation of divine retribution.
  - b. The devout presently suffer persecution at the hands of their countrymen: they are hated, they are ostracized; they are mocked for their devotion to the Lord and their continued confidence in His promises. (Think also in the times of the Jesus, times of the Apostles and for the first 300 years or so before Constantine made Christianity the "world" religion.)
  - c. But there is coming a great reversal: those who presently engage in mocking the Lord and His servants shall themselves be put to shame.
  - d. Vs. 6 seems to be speaking of the day when Jerusalem falls...Babylon renders the voice of the LORD as recompense for their sinfulness.
6. Now let's look at verses 7-14.
- a. What we have in verses 7-11 is a specific picture talking about at least two specific historical events. What is being talked about here?
    - (1) 1<sup>st</sup>, we are talking about the return from Babylon and how "easy" and without any conflict it was...without the pain and struggle of childbirth...that this couldn't have happened so easily if God had not been engineering the whole event...
    - (2) The birth of the Church was totally without human effort or intervention at all. ...and occurred with relative ease...Acts 2:41, 47.
    - (3) There is great rejoicing over what God has done...vss. 9-11.
    - (4) There is great rejoicing with God's people ...the new Jerusalem...there has been a great reversal of the curse.
    - (5) What specifically would we describe as the mother's milk of the LORD today (see verse 11) and where do we receive it?
      - The proper proclamation and receiving of the Word.
      - Receiving the sacraments.
      - Prayer.
      - Church discipline.
      - Living in and by the Spirit of God's leading.
      - And it is received from the Church...Mother Jerusalem, if you will.
      - In one of his sermon from Galatians (1557/58) John Calvin said this about the church, *...I shall start, then, with the Church, into whose bosom God is pleased to gather his children, not only that they may be nourished*

*by her help and ministry so long as they are infants and children, but also that they may be guided by her motherly care until they mature and at last reach to the goal of faith. For what God has joined together, it is not lawful to put asunder [Mark 10: 9], so that, for those to whom he is Father the Church may also be Mother...But because it is now our intention to discuss the visible Church, let us learn even from the simple title "mother", how useful, indeed how necessary, it is that we should know her. For there is no other way to enter into life unless this mother conceive us in her womb, give us birth, nourish us at her breast, and lastly, unless she keep us under her care and guidance until, putting off mortal flesh."*

**b. What is God promising in verses 12-14 to these who are humble and contrite and receive the milk that He has promised to give through His church?**

- He also gives us cause and hearts to do so...to rejoice in Him.
- We will not be able to do this on our own. His elective purposes are in play here. *"I will extend peace to her...to His Church..."* His elect don't come looking for it as the NT tells us clear ...we are dead until God makes us alive in Christ.
- *"I will comfort you..."* ... There is something special concerning a mother's love and comfort...so special that he compares it with His own so that they will understand the level of love and comfort He is talking about.
- *"...and the hand of the LORD will be known to His servants..."* ...we will know the LORD...we can be assured of our salvation and we can know through the LORD's work in our heart that He will deal with His enemies.
- Isaiah gives a specific list: growth, peace, glory, comfort, justice....
- And all of this is made known through His Church.

**7. What do we see in verses 15-17? Why?**

- a. A warning is issued against the rebellious again... the fall of Jerusalem is eminent (vs. 15.) (See Rom. 11:7-8)
- b. The judgment about to fall upon Jerusalem is a type of the final universal judgment that shall take place at the end of history (vs. 16.)
- c. It is specifically stated that the LORD's indignation and judgment is directed against the idolaters...all those who give their worship and the devotion of their lives to anything other than to the LORD their God, refusing to give Him the place of supreme pre-eminence in their lives (vs. 17).

**8. Verses 18-21 speak of a great gathering before the Lord. How is that gathering described? What do you think is the fulfillment of this prophecy?**

- a. The Lord has set a date for all the world to stand before Him: to behold His glory and to be confronted with the truth that He alone is God (verse 18).
- b. Verse 19 indicates that prior to that appointed day the Lord will "work a miracle among them," and will send to the nations "those who are delivered from my judgment," and they shall declare the Lord's glory among the nations. In the light of New Testament revelation, this appears to be a reference to the day of Pentecost at which time Jews, (who had been dispersed among the nations,) being gathered

together in Jerusalem at the time of the Passover, heard the gospel and carried the good news of salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ back with them to the distant reaches of the Gentile world.

- c. Verses 20-21 appear to be a reference (couched in Old Testament terminology) to the in-gathering of all the Lord's redeemed (believing Jew and believing Gentile alike) by means of the universal preaching of the gospel—and they shall all serve the Lord in the same capacity that was once reserved for only the Levites of the Old Testament nation of Israel.
9. Such an interesting way to end this prophecy...or is it? (remember Is. 6!) What all is God describing in verses 22-24? How would it be a comfort to these people who are about to go into exile? How is it a comfort to us today?
- a. The redeemed of the LORD and their offspring (their believing children) shall remain before the LORD forever (vs. 22.)
  - b. Again using terminology familiar to the Old Testament people of God, the LORD indicates that all flesh (both the saved and the damned) shall acknowledge that He is God (vs. 23.)
  - c. Vs. 24 also gives us an interesting picture... *“And they (the redeemed) shall go out and look upon the dead bodies of the men who rebelled against me...”*
10. Why at this stage does God command us to look upon such death and destruction in verse 24?
- a. 1<sup>st</sup>, the statement has a double meaning as so much of Scripture does...the immediate and the future... the immediate meaning may be this: When God's people go out from worshiping God they/ we are to be struck by the lostness...the deadness of the world and the reality that we were once dead in our iniquities and sins ourselves. We should see them as lost and it should cause us to grieve the way when a loved one causes us to grieve when they die. God's Word makes it abundantly clear that we are to proclaim the Word as it is the life blood that people need. God does the saving...but we are to make the offer so sincere that they believe that we do in fact love them and are concerned for their lost condition. We can't save anyone but we are to be grieved by all the lost ones.
  - b. 2<sup>nd</sup>, I think it is because we will judge with Him...Matt. 19:28; I Cor. 6:2;...so we need to see those that stand accused that we will judge alongside of God the supreme judge.
  - c. 3<sup>rd</sup>, so we can rest assured they are all dealt with...
  - d. 4<sup>th</sup>, there is no need to protect our sensibilities like there was for Noah...we will fully grasp what is going on here as the LORD is glorified in His justice.
  - e. 5<sup>th</sup>, it will cause us to praise all the more with the knowledge that we were plucked out of this by God's grace.
  - f. This passage, along with many in the NT spoken by Jesus and the Apostles, make it clear that the suffering is perpetual and eternal...there is no thoughts of “annihilationism” in the Scriptures. In the same way the redeemed will rejoice forever in God's presence...so the unrepentant will wail and moan forever in torment and agony... *“For their worm shall not die. Their fire shall not be quenched. And they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh.”* (see Also Mark 9:48) *“Their worm”* and *“Their fire”* makes it clear that it belongs to them as is their due.

