

Let's Worship God

22nd-27th January 2024

Isaiah



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Monday - Isaiah 21:1-5 - The Desert of the Sea

Why do we have all these prophecies about and upon all these heathen lands? Didn't God only pay attention to His people? No. For even in Old Testament times, all nations were to submit to Him. Those who did not were not ignored. They were judged.

The wilderness of the sea or the desert of the sea - who in the world is that? This is Babylon (v.9). It would be the greatest and most powerful country in all the earth for a while. Much of the area around it was wilderness or desert. But just like Egypt there was this area of very fertile land where all the people were along the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. The ocean came a lot closer to Babylon than it does now. But even now at the south end, it's very marshy, it's very swampy, there's much salt water lying around.

There's already been prophecy against Babylon in chapters 13 and 14. Why does God speak of her again? God will do something huge to Judah, and He's going to do it through Babylon. He will have the city of David destroyed. He will have the temple destroyed. He will send the people out of the land except for a very small remnant. Why? Because of their sin. What shall happen in a later day through Babylon is of such great magnitude that God must continue to give His people hope for the future beyond the destruction and exile which will come. We read here of the destruction of the destroyers. There needs to be assurance for the people of God that God will deliver. We see the Babylonians who'd plundered all lands, being plundered themselves. The effect of the Persian conquest would be hope for the Babylonian captives. You will remember, on the very night of the capture of Babylon, the king and his nobles were all partying. Babylon would be trusting in its walls, trusting in its own ability in the past, trusting in its weapons, trusting in its wealth, trusting in its wisdom. Surely all these would keep them from judgment. Surely they could relax. But we know from history what happened that very night. All collapsed suddenly and completely.

Questions

1. Why does God care about other nations?
2. What happened the night Babylon was destroyed?

Prayer Points

1. Pray that all nations would submit to Christ.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

“Go, set a watchman; let him announce what he sees.” Isaiah 21:6b

Praise: Psalm 119: Part 1 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

Isaiah

Tuesday - Isaiah 21:6-10 - Threshing the Wheat

God sets a watchman. Now this watchman is not on Babylon's walls. He is put in this place by God. He is one commissioned by God, watching and reporting back to God and to all those who were hearing and who would later be reading the Word of God, such as us. He is one specially commissioned to do this work. So this is exactly what he does. We read his vivid description here of the advance of the invading army. He's been looking steadfastly, as we see in verse 8. He's been there day and night. We see Babylon with all its terror, Babylon with all its idolatry, Babylon with all its defiance, defiance of Jehovah and His Messiah being brought down to the ground.

God has a word of comfort in verse 10. The grain mentioned here are the people of God. They are there because of the threshing that has gone on. Through the difficulty, through the affliction of the threshing, what comes forth? Why they are separated from the rest. All the chaff is gone. All the straw is gone. Pure, fine, beloved, treasured grain is what is left. The grain is freed from the chaff. The chaff has been beaten out by the threshing, swept away by the wind of discipline. All the difficulty, all the hardship of the destruction of their land, the removal of their property, their exile from their home would bring them to be purified. All would happen for the remnant's good. Such is the case for the church of Christ even today. The godly would certainly be delivered, and they were and they are. Christ would be exalted, and He was and He is. Through all the difficulty, through all the problems, through all the pain, through all the affliction God works, he brings it about according to His perfect and eternal and wise decree, and He does it to rid the earth of the chaff, to rid the earth of the straw, and to bring you, His precious grain, home safely to Him.

Questions

1. What happens to Babylon?
2. What was the purpose of what happened to the people of God?

Prayer Points

1. Give thanks that all things work together for good to those who love God.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

“Go, set a watchman; let him announce what he sees.” Isaiah 21:6b

Praise: Psalm 119: Part 2 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

Isaiah

Wednesday - Isaiah 21:11-17 - The Judgements of Nations

We look at two peoples today, two nations. The first is called Dumah. But from these other names here, particularly Seir, we see that this is the land of Edom. The people of Edom came from Jacob's older brother, Esau.

The watchman, at least in other places in Scripture, is a minister or elder in the church of Jesus Christ. The Lord has made elders to be watchmen, to mark what's going on, to give alarm when there is trouble, and to defend the people of God. We should ask of God's watchmen what's going on, just like these people did, to know how best to work for the kingdom. The people here, though, are only asking, how long will we have trouble? How long will this night continue? Their present distress, affliction, and trouble will end. It did happen that way. Trouble went away from the Edomites for a time, but they did not turn as a country, as a nation, as a people, to Jehovah. And so not only was the morning coming, but also the night. But not only is there a prediction here, there is also an exhortation (v.12): Inquire about your sin. Inquire how you might be rescued from it and its consequences. Inquire if there might be a deliverer, a rescuer, a saviour. Return from your evil ways. Come back to the God of your forefather.

In these last verses we have a prophecy on Arabia. The people come under God's judgment, and they must flee. Others must care for them (v. 14). In verses 16 and 17, all their glory and all the splendour of their land is ended. Their bowmen are nearly wiped out, and all of this happens quickly (v.16). It's not by luck, it's not by fate, it's not by accident. It's not by the hand of man. It is all done, once again, by King Jesus. God, even now, through His Mediatorial King, is working in and on the nations. The Arabians here flee to the forest, but they did not flee to their deliverer. Let's not repeat as individuals, as a society, the same foolishness. Let us flee to God in Jesus Christ. And may God in Jesus Christ use us as agents of change so that our own land and the lands of the world will not be under judgment, but will be under King Jesus and under His blessing.

Questions

1. Who does a watchman symbolise?
2. Where do people in our world tend to flee for help?

Prayer Points

1. Give thanks for your ministers and elders.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

“Go, set a watchman; let him announce what he sees.” Isaiah 21:6b

Praise: Psalm 119:Part 3- See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

Isaiah

Thursday - Isaiah 22:1-5 - The Valley of Vision

What is the valley of vision? This is speaking of the land of Judah and particularly of Jerusalem. The picture we have here is people rushing out of their houses, going up the stairway, up to the roof to look. It's not mere curiosity, either. It's distress. It's upset. This had been a city that was full of noise, all manner of things going on, busyness and rushing here and there to get business done. But suddenly there is fear and fright. God is talking about slain men. What has killed them? There's a war going on, but they weren't killed by other soldiers. They're dying of hunger or dying of disease. People are walled up in a besieged city. Famine and disease bring death, and the leaders aren't even leading. Why? As we see here in verse 3, they are frightened, and they escape or try to, but the enemy archers catch them.

Different commentators have different views about what this prophecy refers to. But I think Isaiah is seeing the destruction brought by the Babylonians when the Temple was burned, all the cities were knocked down, Jerusalem included, and the people were taken away. When Nebuchadnezzar came to attack, and the people were besieged and dying, the leaders did flee. They dug a hole in the wall at night, and took off, and were caught.

Isaiah is overwhelmed by this vision. The distress of God's people is just too much for him to handle. Often believers participate in the same difficult circumstances that unbelievers do. There were believers in Jerusalem in the destruction under Nebuchadnezzar, and they went through the same hard times. Is there any difference then for the people of God and for hypocrites and outright pagans? Well, yes, for those who are not believers or false believers, all that they receive, all the difficulty and hardship and affliction in a situation like this is less, far less than they deserve. And it's merely a little tiny taste of the wrath of God that they shall endure forever. It is not so for believers. When you go through affliction, it is discipline to make you more Christ-like. There's a vast difference in the intent and in the outcome. It feels the same at the time, but it's very, very different.

Questions

1. What is the valley of vision?
2. What are the two different purposes in affliction?

Prayer Points

1. Pray that affliction in your life would make you more like Christ.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

“Go, set a watchman; let him announce what he sees.” Isaiah 21:6b

Praise: Psalm 119:Part 4 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

Isaiah

Friday - Isaiah 22:6-14 - Trusting in Themselves

We see in this terrible siege that the invading army was strong, very strong. In verses 6-7, Elam bore the quiver, and Kir uncovered the shield. These are Persians in the employ of the Babylonians.

We go on to read in verses 8-11 about one of the problems at the Valley of Vision. When the people saw that war was coming upon them, they made preparations. They got weapons from the House of the Forest which was the armoury. They made a reservoir, so they would have water in a siege. Does God condemn them for doing any of this? No. As we read in verse 11, they left off one thing, and the most important thing of all: they did not look to their Maker. We first look to God. We first cry out to Him when we are in trouble. We first look to Him for deliverance. And only then do we use those things which God has already given us to help us. But there was no looking to God at all. No looking to his King, the Lord Jesus Christ. No, they went on depending in their own strength, depending in their own might, depending in their own presumption, depending on all sorts of things. What a dangerous course for the people of God to take!

In verse 12 God is calling for them to listen to His Word, to listen to His warnings, to believe them, to believe on Jesus Christ, and to turn around from their wickedness and repent. But they refused. Instead, in verse 13, they continue in their sin and continue in their revelry. Here we have a people who are called the people of God. They think they are the special ones in all the earth. But despite all of it, the wisdom of Solomon, the strength and ability, the power, and whatever else they had, God brought them to destruction. We see God's great anger here. Sinners were cut off. But that was not all, because the Godly were preserved. The Godly were delivered from the wicked around them. Some years later, the Godly were restored to the land. Destruction came, and hardship came. But out of it, much good, much blessing, much glory.

Questions

1. What were the people trusting in?
2. What did God call them to do?

Prayer Points

1. Pray that we would look to God first in all things.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

“Go, set a watchman; let him announce what he sees.” Isaiah 21:6b

Praise: Psalm 119:Part 5- See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

Isaiah

Saturday - Isaiah 22:15-25 - Under New Management

When we look at the power and the might of these different nations whom God has said He would destroy - to many people this would seem to be unbelievable. The first part of chapter 22 speaks of something happening 150 years in the future. It would be tempting not to trust that God would do such a thing. Well, in these verses God is providing a prophecy of something that would happen immediately. It would be something very obvious to all people of God living in the land of God. And it has to do with this man Shebna.

Shebna is a foreigner. How do we know that? Because this is not a Hebrew name. He's a rather high government official. Shebna is over all the house of Hezekiah, a heathen man, an ungodly man, managing everything for a godly king. This should not be. He's ambitious. God sends Isaiah right to him while he is building his tomb in amongst the tombs of the kings. Isaiah says to him, what do you think you're doing? What right do you have to be here? He was presumptuous and proud. He was where he didn't belong.

Shebna is completely deposed from office. He's cast forth from the land in banishment, back to wherever his homeland is. He's getting literally thrown away. Why did this happen? Well, because first, he's not truly part of the people of God. He's a proud heathen. We see as well in verse 18 of our text that he badly administered things. He was looking out for himself, looking out for his own name, looking out for his own power, looking to line his own pockets. The picture here in the last verse is of a peg in the wall that holds things up, failing - and everything crashes to the ground. That is exactly what happened with Shebna.

In contrast to him, we have Eliakim. He truly is of the covenant people of God. He is called by God 'my servant'. Being raised to power, he receives great authority. He shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah, a magistrate, a political leader, a civil ruler who cares for the people and looks after their needs, and does not think about how he will become grand, how he will become powerful, how he will become rich. He will be fastened as a peg in a secure place, no longer a place that can fall. This change of course is brought about by the Lord Jesus Christ, and it is a change brought in grace.

Question

1. What was Shebna like?
2. What was Eliakim like?

Prayer Points

1. Pray for the preaching and hearing of God's Word tomorrow.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

“Go, set a watchman; let him announce what he sees.” Isaiah 21:6b

Praise: Psalm 119:Part 6 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

The goal of Let's Worship God is to encourage and help you in your worship of God each day.

**God tells us that
Ezra read from
the book of the Law
day after day
and that
the people of God
were filled with joy!**

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