

ISAIAH

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Isaiah chapter 27 as we continue our study through the Word of God. Keep in mind that Isaiah chapter 24 through 27 deals with the Tribulation Period on into the Kingdom Age. As we concluded last time we read in Isaiah 26:20-21, **“Come, my people, enter your chambers, And shut your doors behind you; Hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment, Until the indignation is past. For behold, the Lord comes out of His place To punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; The earth will also disclose her blood, And will no more cover her slain.”**

The Lord is telling His people, the Jews to hide themselves while He pours out His wrath upon an apostate world. You can read of this in the New Testament as well. In Matthew 24:15-20 we see Jesus warn them to flee to the mountains for safety. And in Revelation 12:6 we see the Jews fleeing for safety during the Great Tribulation where God will protect them for 3½ years.

That is where we are going to pick up our study this evening as the Lord comes back and puts down the wicked, saves His people and restores the land. With that said, let’s begin reading in Isaiah chapter 27 starting in verse 1 and let’s see what the Lord has for us this evening as we study through His Word.

ISAIAH 27**VERSE 1**

1. Notice that Isaiah is speaking of the day that the Lord will pour out His wrath upon this earth, the wicked of this world, the proud of this world and I believe it is speaking of His Second Coming. In Revelation 19:11-16 we are told, **“Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.”**

We also see this played out for us in Isaiah 63:3-6, **“I have trodden the winepress alone, And from the peoples no one was with Me. For I have trodden them in My anger, And trampled them in My fury; Their blood is sprinkled upon My garments, And I have stained all My robes. For the day of vengeance is in My heart, And the year of My redeemed has come. I looked, but there was no one to help, And I wondered That there was no one to uphold; Therefore My own arm brought salvation for Me; And My own fury, it sustained Me. I have trodden down the peoples in My anger, Made them drunk in My fury, And brought down their strength to the earth.”**

Make no mistake about it, at the end of the seven year Tribulation Period the Lord is coming back “**. . . with His severe sword, great and strong . . .**”

2. Now notice who He is going to punish, it is, “**. . . Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan that twisted serpent . . .**” Who is this Leviathan? Leviathan is referred to in passages like Job 3:8, Job 41, Psalm 74:14, and Psalm 104:26. These passages reinforce the idea of Leviathan as a mighty serpent-like creature who connected with the sea that resists God and will be crushed by the LORD.

And yet there are those teachers who say that Leviathan is nothing more than an ancient myth that the nations near Israel believed in and the writer is just using that as an illustration. That he is not a real creature. Grogan wrote, “The language used draws on mythology; but this need cause us no serious problem. Writers, whether of Scripture or otherwise, frequently use illustrative material, drawing that material from a wide variety of sources: nature, history, mythology, or literature. The use of mythology here simply shows that Isaiah and his readers knew the mythological stories, not that they believed them. If a modern historian referred to a fierce and aggressive nation as ‘a great dragon,’ would his readers assume he believed in the objective existence of such creatures? Surely not!” He goes on to say, “The term as used here is normally linked with the Ugaritic Lotan, the chaos monster destroyed by Baal in the Canaanite creation myth . . . the term may be applied figuratively to monstrous enemies of Israel and of God.”

Why does this person not believe in the literal Leviathan here? Because he does not believe the Scriptures I guess. As I have said, there are several places that speak of this creature who lived during the time of Job and probably longer, we don’t know.

And the point that Isaiah is making is that just as this literal serpent lived in the sea there is another creature who is Satan and he has been called a serpent in the Scripture. We saw in the Garden of Eden that he manifested himself as a serpent before Eve and he twists and flees like a coiling snake ready to strike its victims!

And if you are still having a hard time with this then listen to what is said in Revelation chapter 12. We are told, **“And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. . . . And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. . . . Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male Child. But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent. So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood. But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.”** Revelation 12:3, 7-9, 13-17.

And the judgment that we see here in Isaiah 27:1 we also see in Revelation 20:1-2,

“Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years.”

And Satan’s final judgment will come at the end of the Millennial Reign of Christ as we are told in Revelation 20:10, **“The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.”**

3. What is this sea that is spoken of where this serpent lives? I believe it is just speaking of the sea of humanity as Satan has come to destroy, kill, and ruin people’s lives with his lies. You see, that is his natural language and in knowing that why do we not listen to the Lord, why do we fall for the Devil’s mind games and enticements? Let us be wise.

VERSES 2-6

1. We have now moved from the Tribulation Period and God coming back to judge this world and Satan himself to the Kingdom Age. And notice how God is watching over them. You see, this vineyard symbolizes Israel, God’s people. And God is speaking of the joy that will fill their hearts in the Kingdom Age.

Wolf reminds us, “Whereas the vineyard in chapter 5 was overrun by thorns, not a brier or thorn can be found in this vineyard.” You see, in Isaiah chapter 5 we saw how God did everything He could for them to produce abundant fruit in their lives, but they rejected Him, went into idolatry. Because of that God brought judgment upon them so they may turn from their evil ways and return to Him. And one day they will turn to their Messiah, Jesus!

I think that is the idea of verse 5 here in Isaiah chapter 27, “**Or let him take hold of My strength, That he may make peace with Me; And he shall make peace with Me.**” How can you take hold of God and make peace with Him? Only through Jesus Christ as Paul reminds us in Romans 5:1-2, “**Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.**” And we know from the Scriptures that the Jews will receive Jesus, they will call upon Him and I believe that is when the Lord returns, at the end of the Tribulation Period as the nation of Israel comes to that saving faith in Jesus!

2. In the last part of verse 6 we are told, “**. . . Israel shall blossom and bud, And fill the face of the world with fruit.**” Interestingly enough, the land of Israel was devastated by the Turks. It was left barren, most of the trees cut down, and there were many mosquito infested swamps throughout the land. It was really good for nothing and when the Zionist movement began in the 1890’s and Jews began to return to the land, the Arabs were more than happy to sell the land to the Jews because it was worthless to them. And the Arabs laughed all the way to the bank, thinking they ripped the Jews off. Now they want the land back, go figure!

The Jewish people then began to plant millions of trees, a process that continues even today. They drained the swamps. And today Israel is blossoming. Israel is the second largest exporter of fruits in the world and yet this nation is only the size of New Jersey!

Also, 12 new fruit and vegetables species have been developed in Israel. “Since the first half of the 20th century, Israeli agricultural wizards have been partnering with Mother Nature to bring new fruit and vegetable varieties to the global market, from vividly colored squash to seedless peppers.

Every year, Israel exports more than \$2 billion worth of produce - tomatoes are its fourth-largest commodity - and is among the world’s top developers of better-looking, better-tasting, disease-resistant and more nutritious varieties.” And yet this is nothing compared to the Kingdom Age!

VERSES 7-9

1. God has not been as hard on Israel in their chastening as He has been on other nations. These nations that God used against His people were only to go so far in their punishment and if they overstepped that, God punished them for it. And God is still dealing with Israel, they have not been stricken as the other nations, they are still in existence!

2. Now verse 8 seems a little confusing because we just read that the Lord was not as harsh on Israel as He was with other nations and yet, He drove them into captivity, why? Because of their idolatry, He drove them out of the land to purge them of their sin. In other words, He blew them away from their idolatry. That is not vengeance, that is not hate, that is God’s love for His people.

You see, the lesson they were to learn is to not worship false gods and the sign of their changed heart would be the removal of these stone and wooden images. And they did learn their lesson; they did not build the altars to Baal and-so-on.

VERSES 10-11

1. Because of their idolatry God sent the Babylonians upon the Southern Kingdom of Judah and they destroyed the land in 586 B. C. leaving it so barren that the wild animals were grazing in its cities. In Nehemiah 1:2-3 we see this report of what the land was like. We read, **“that Hanani one of my brethren came with men from Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews who had escaped, who had survived the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem. And they said to me, ‘The survivors who are left from the captivity in the province are there in great distress and reproach. The wall of Jerusalem is also broken down, and its gates are burned with fire.’”** This was around 90 years after Joshua and Zerubbabel led almost 50,000 Jews back from Babylon and the land was still a mess in Nehemiah’s day!

Yes, God did take a hard stance against them but He did so because He loved them and He was breaking the strength of a nation that was trusting in their strength and in false gods! He was breaking them of their pride with the intent of seeing them return to Him!

VERSES 12-13

1. This is looking beyond their return from the Babylonian captivity to the time when the Trumpets will be blown and God will gather His people, the Jews, from the world to worship Him as He sets up His Kingdom. It is as Matthew 24:31 says, “**And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.**” But not only the Jews but we also see the Gentile nations, Assyria and Egypt mention as they too will come to worship the true and living God, Jesus Christ in Jerusalem.

ISAIAH 28VERSES 1-4

1. Keep in mind that Ephraim was the dominant tribe in the Northern Kingdom of Israel and thus, many times the Northern Kingdom was spoken of as Ephraim. Also, the capitol of the Northern Kingdom of Israel was Samaria and it was a beautiful land. But notice what brought them down. It was their pride and drunkenness that brought them down. Now I think we can understand how pride can bring a people and nation down but why drunkenness?

I think people that are drunk are focused more on themselves and satisfying their fleshly desires, whatever that may be when they are drunk and thus, the Lord links the two together. And notice what pride and drunkenness do, they destroy the beauty of a person’s life and of a nation’s life!

And God was going to bring judgment upon them because of their pride, their drunkenness and He will use the Assyrians as His rod of judgment. And when the Assyrians came down upon the Northern Kingdom of Israel, they came in like a flood. And in 721 B. C. Shalmaneser King of Assyria took the Northern Kingdom of Israel into captivity.

VERSES 5-6

1. Now as you look at the history of the Northern Kingdom of Israel it is not good. They did not have one good King and yet, even in this wicked nation we see that God had His faithful remnant. We see this played out for us during the spiritual reforms of King Asa, who was King of the Southern Kingdom of Judah. In II Chronicles 15:9 we are told, **“Then he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and those who dwelt with them from Ephraim, Manasseh, and Simeon, for they came over to him in great numbers from Israel when they saw that the LORD his God was with him.”**

Because the Northern Kingdom was so dark, spiritually speaking, the faithful came down to Judah to worship the Lord and this was about 180 years before the Northern Kingdom went into captivity. God always has His faithful remnant, even when things look very dark. And I’m sure many more traveled south as this darkness flooded the Northern Kingdom of Israel.

And the picture here goes out into the Kingdom Age as He sits on the throne and establishes justice and righteousness in the land and when that happens here Isaiah tells us that the **“LORD of hosts will be For a crown of glory and a diadem of beauty To the remnant of His people.”**

VERSES 7-8

1. Now we have moved from the Northern Kingdom of Israel to the Southern Kingdom of Judah and we see the leadership in Judah and the priests drunk, erring in their visions and judgments. Thus, false prophecies were being given, their counsel was in error, their judgments were corrupt because the wine has clouded their minds. They no longer saw God clearly and thus, as they spoke they were not speaking for God. It is as Paul warned Timothy, **“Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron.”** I Timothy 4:1-2.

Make no mistake about it, drunkenness leads to this kind of degradation and disgrace as Isaiah says, **“For all tables are full of vomit and filth; No place is clean.”** Isaiah 28:8. We see that they not only error in their judgments but they stumble and fall and vomit and nothing around them is clean. Is this speaking of the physical results of drunkenness or spiritual drunkenness? I think both and they will both affect our lives in a negative way.

2. Let’s apply that to our day. First of all alcohol is a depressant and it allows us to do things we would not normally do because it depresses our self-control, our wisdom, our balance, our judgment! Paul said in Ephesians 5:18, **“And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit.”** Please understand that this is not a comparison. Being drunk with wine is not similar to being filled with the Holy Spirit and as you will see it nowhere says we are to be drunk with the Spirit but filled!

What is the result of being filled with the Spirit? All you have to do is read on in Ephesians chapter 5 as Paul says, **“speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another in the fear of God.”** Ephesians 5:21.

Notice, no staggering, no falling on the floor, no getting a designated driver because you are so drunk in the Spirit you can't drive. And I am amazed at what people will do to justify being drunk in the Spirit but as I look at the Scriptures God condemns drunkenness and He calls for us to be filled with His Spirit which then produces fruit in our lives not bizarre behavior!

The Holy Spirit does not depress us; He has the exact opposite effect. The Holy is a stimulant, and He moves every aspect of our being to better and more perfect performance. Of those who act silly or crazy claiming to be “drunk in the Holy Spirit,” the most charitable thing to say is that they are simply acting in their own flesh, because they *certainly* are not being led by the Holy Spirit of God!

Let me share this web page article called “Drunk Christians” and listen to what he had to say in support of being drunk in the Spirit. He wrote,

. . . It appears that being under the influence of the Spirit is an alternative to being under the influence of alcohol and produces some of the same characteristics - a buzz, a loss of self-consciousness, weakened muscle coordination, loudness, inebriation, freedom from propriety. A casual observer could confuse the two conditions - being drunk with alcohol and being drunk in the Spirit.

So, if you ever want to get drunk, why booze it up when you can get drunk on new wine - the Holy Spirit? Here are some advantages to getting drunk in the Spirit versus the more common way of drunkenness:

- There is no negative hangover to spiritual drunkenness.
- You won't do anything morally wrong while inebriated by the Spirit. And you won't feel guilty when you sober up.
- There is no law against driving under the influence of the Holy Spirit - no spiritual DUI.
- When you sober up, rather than feeling shame and guilt, you will be overwhelmed with an awesome sense of God's peace.
- Spiritual drunkenness is both contagious and life-changing. Here' an example: Last Sunday at The Salvation Army Berry Street in Nashville, a woman (I'll call N) shared this testimony:

N didn't want anything to do with God, but one day she saw a woman staggering in the street. She went over to help the woman and the woman was drunk in the Holy Spirit, praising Jesus and stumbling around.

N found out that the woman lived in an apartment building across the street and decided to help her get home. As N got the woman into the elevator, the Holy Spirit fell on N and she began to feel and act like she was drunk - she was overcome by the Presence of the Living God. N was never the same. From that moment on, she has had an undying passion to follow and obey Jesus. . . .

- <http://stevesimms.wordpress.com/2012/08/03/drunken-christians/>

Once again what is written in that article is not of God. God condemns that kind of activity here in Isaiah, both the physical drunkenness and the spiritual drunkenness that they are speaking of. And thus, this makes the idea of being “drunk in the Holy Spirit” especially unbiblical and offensive.

VERSES 9-10

1. I realize that people use verse 10 as a verse to describe some ministries that are teaching the Word of God but please understand that this was not a praise report on how Isaiah was doing or what was being taught.

Instead we see these priests and leaders mocking him for his simplistic ways that he taught and how he believed that the Scriptures were actually the Words of God. Sure, he can teach the little children but these were the intelligentsia of his day, and how in the world can this simple man, with his simple views of life, teach them? Sounds like today!

Wolf put it like this, “Verses 9 and 10 portray the sarcastic reaction these Judean leaders had to Isaiah’s words of rebuke. They were tired of Isaiah’s strictness and of his recurring application of God’s laws. The string of monosyllables in verse 10 may mean that the Judean leaders regarded Isaiah’s message as meaningless or as child’s play.”

2. Isaiah may not have been the most sophisticated person but he was a vessel from which God spoke through, and so am I, and so are you! The religious leaders during the time of the apostles also struggled with the way they apostles spoke because they did not go to Old Rabbi University, or Pious University, or whatever.

In acts 4:13, as Peter and John are arrested and brought before the Sanhedrin, Peter blasts them with the truth of God's Word and they responded like this, **“Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.”**

How did they get so smart? They spent time with Jesus and thus, as we spend time with Jesus and His Word He will teach us and what we learn is then not only applied to our own life but also it will touch the lives of others!

3. Let me show you what I mean. Some 19 or 20 years ago I was working in the suburbs of Chicago at Alexian Brothers Medical Center as a Registered Nurse in their open heart unit. And one day I was going up the stairs when one of the Brothers, kind of like a priest, stopped me. I wasn't sure what he wanted, I was kind of taken back at first because of the haste in which he came upon me. And he asked me if I would be interested in sharing at their Christmas service about what it means as a nurse that Jesus is the light.

Well he didn't have to ask me twice, I thought what an opportunity to share Christ with the people on Christmas! To his dismay he did not really give me any restrictions and thus, there I was in front of a large group of people who came for Christmas service at the hospital and I shared the Gospel message. I shared how Jesus is the light of the world and how He came into this world to save sinful man and how His light should be seen in us at work, wherever we go.

I don't think that is what he was expecting but the Gospel went forth. Afterwards Julie told me he was a little nervous as he sat behind me when I was sharing and he kept looking at his watch. You don't do that when I teach do you? One of the people afterwards said they never heard anything like that before, "It was better than the Pope!" I don't know if that was a complement or not.

The point being is that you draw close to Jesus because you never know when God is going to use you and sometimes it is not even something you are thinking about, traveling up the stairs and the invitation to share is given! And I understand that many times religious people won't understand you, how you can speak so boldly but may they see the reason for your speech, your boldness, ***THAT YOU HAVE BEEN WITH JESUS!***

VERSES 11-13

1. Notice what the Lord is saying here. They refused to listen to the simple truths of God spoken by Isaiah. They refused to repent and get right with God. Because of that God is going to bring judgment upon them by the hands of the Babylonians and they will hear the words they speak but because they don't understand the language they won't understand the words either! This was a sign of God's judgment upon them.

2. Here's the thing. God's Word goes out to all people, that is not really the issue. The main issue is what you do with God's Word! Let me show you what I mean. Here is one person in church and as the Word of God is being taught they are thinking, "Wow, God is speaking to me. Look at what He has shown me today that I can apply to my life!" That is great.

But the person you might be sitting right next to might be thinking, “Really, is that all there is? This is dumb. Why can’t the Bible have something that is at my level, something that will blow me away? This is so basic!” You see, same message but different responses to that message.

In Isaiah 55:11 we are told, “**So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.**” The only one that can stop what God wants to do in your life is *YOU!* Don’t get in the way of what God wants to do, be open to His Word and His Spirit!

Make no mistake about it; God’s Word is open to all and not just the well-educated. In fact, many times it is the well-educated, because of their pride, the message is too simple for them that they reject it and instead of being broken by the Rock, they are pulverized, crushed, eternally separated from Him or as Isaiah said, “**. . . That they might go and fall backward, and be broken And snared and caught.**” Isaiah 28:13.

VERSES 14-15

1. Notice that they had no fear in death; they were comfortable where they were at. They were not worried. You see, any refuge apart from God is a “**refuge of lies**” and that is what the leaders were doing. They made their alliances or covenants with other nations and they felt secure in what they did but death was coming. And in a sense, they had no fear in death, none at all.

“Nothing is going to hurt me” was their thinking!

2. People today try to cheat death by making alliances, placing their hope in all kinds of lies that won't save them. Only Christ can heal and restore a sinner back to God! But, as this tragic story shows us, Satan has made many feel that death is not to be feared apart from Christ but embraced.

Some 17 years ago now, back in 1996 the Los Angeles Times had an article about two young people. One of them was named Heidi; she was 15 years old and lived in Rancho Palos Verdes. She was a student at one of the finest public schools and she played soccer as a sophomore. She loved horses and was recently baptized into the Mormon Church.

Then there was Chris and he was 16 years old and a surfer from San Pedro. Chris was a very good student who got A's and B's, he took college prep courses and worked part time at a gas station. He played the guitar in a garage band and even though his grandfather said that he was a well-adjusted kid, Chris was deeply affected by the suicide of grunge singer Kurt Cobain. Chris even devoted a writing project to the subject of suicide after this event.

A friend of Chris' said, "He was kind of death-happy. Not sad, but more like, 'The other side is gonna be so much more fun.' More like, 'I can't wait to die.'"

Then, on March 16 Heidi swiped the keys to her mother's white Plymouth Horizon and she snuck out to meet Chris in San Pedro. Late that night they both hiked down a 100 foot rugged path, ducked through a hole in the chain-link fence and made their way to a narrow concrete spillway known as "the diving board."

They sat there on this ledge and as they sat there they placed a blue cigarette lighter and they arranged cigarette butts in an arrow pointing to the sea which was 150 feet below them.

They then jumped do their deaths!

Why did they do it? Because they both were deceived into thinking that death was their friend but in the end, as they crossed from this life into eternity they found out that death was not their friend apart from Christ. The ungodly *should* fear death because with death ends all opportunity for repentance and their eternal doom is sealed. Satan has a significant interest in making the wicked feel that death is their friend. May we share Christ with others so they don't enter into eternity apart from God.

3. In his sermon titled *Refuges of Lies and What Will Become Of Them*, Charles Spurgeon lists six lies that men try to take refuge in. Listen carefully to what he wrote.

- The lie that we are, or can be good enough.
- The lie that fate or predestination determines all, so there is nothing for us to do.
- The lie that places confidence in new, false teachings.
- The lie that religious profession is enough.
- The lie that one can have a saved soul and an unchanged life.
- The lie that trusts an old experience instead of an ongoing relationship.

Again, any shelter that is apart from Christ is a lie and it will send you to Hell. God is calling for people to take refuge in Him and not the lies of the Devil! That is what Isaiah is going to say next, the sure foundation that we can place our life upon and not the shaky or unstable foundation of this world!

VERSES 16-19

1. We don't have to guess who this foundation stone is because the Scriptures tell us it is Jesus.

Peter says in I Peter 2:6, **“Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, ‘Behold, I lay in Zion A chief cornerstone, elect, precious, And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame.’”**

You see, there are not thousands of foundation stones, there are not hundreds of foundation stones, there are not even two foundation stones, there is only one and that is Christ! Thus, whoever puts their trust; their hope in Him will not be ashamed!

2. Now if you reject the foundation stone, if you reject Jesus then the storms of judgment will come upon you and you will not escape. And please understand that this is not open for debate, it is just the truth, these are the facts and if you reject what God has said it does not change the truth of the matter, judgment will come upon you.

VERSES 20-22

1. Now I have not had this problem, it is not something that I have experienced in my life, **“For the bed is too short to stretch out on, And the covering so narrow that one cannot wrap himself in it.”** But that is another story. Don't laugh; some of you are just as vertically challenged as I am!

2. What is the point that is being made of this bed being too short and that he can't wrap the covers around himself? I think the idea here is that there is not going to be any rest, any warmth, any comfort for those who turn away from the Lord. Take a good look at this world and see if people are at rest, if they are comfortable, if they are warm and you will see that they are not. That is what they are looking for.

But, for Christians, for you and me we should be able to rest, we should be warmed; we should find the comfort of God in our lives. What happens many times is we go looking to the world and what we find doesn't fit us, it doesn't keep us warm and yet we continue to search and in doing so there is no comfort, there is no rest until we come back to the Lord!

3. Now in verse 21 we see Isaiah speak of this "**unusual act**" or this "**foreign act**", what is that about? Before we deal with that I think we need to talk about the first part of this verse that deals with the victories God had given to His people.

First of all we are told that a victory was given to Israel in the days of David at Mount Perazim back in II Samuel 5:20. Then Isaiah speaks of the great victory that God gave to Israel in the days of Joshua in the valley of Gibeon in Joshua 10:12. This was part of their history that they knew very well. God fought for His people and the warning here is that if the leaders do not repent and get right with God then they would find out that the Lord is not going to fight for them but against them. That is this "**unusual act**" or this "**foreign act**" that God is going to bring about and He will use the Babylonians to bring this judgment upon His people if they don't repent of their sin and return to the Lord.

Now Habakkuk had a hard time understanding how God could use a wicked nation like the Babylonians to bring judgment upon the people of God. In Habakkuk 1:13 we see Habakkuk say, **“You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, And cannot look on wickedness. Why do You look on those who deal treacherously, And hold Your tongue when the wicked devours A person more righteous than he?”** Habakkuk 1:13.

Habakkuk was first troubled that there was no judgment against Judah; God answered by telling him judgment was on the way. Now Habakkuk is troubled by the agent of judgment, the Babylonians - who were an even more wicked people than the people of Judah. And here's the thing. The reason God used a nation more wicked than Judah to bring Judgment upon Judah was they should have known better. The more you know the more you are accountable to what God wants you to do! You see, the rulers of Jerusalem had to realize the danger of mocking God with their **“deals with death”** and haughty words against God. Judgment would come if they did not repent!

4. As we get to verse 22 we are now moving from this judgment with the Babylonians into the far future, all the way into the Tribulation Period or that last 7 years of history before the Lord returns to set up His Kingdom on this earth and as Isaiah said, **“... A destruction [is] determined even upon the whole earth.”**

VERSES 23-29

1. As Isaiah chapter 28 concludes it does so with a poem that is relating the work of God to the work of a farmer and the point that is being made is that we need to listen to the voice of God, we need to pay attention to what He is saying to us so that we can respond to His voice. God knows what He is talking about and has what is best for our lives!

Look at how this is played out. First of all the farmer knows when to plow but that is not something that he is going to do all the time, there is a time to plow but then the plowing must stop so the farmer can level the ground and then eventually plant. And he not only plants but then he will harvest the crop and then he will thresh the crop! Why does he work like this, why does he use different tools and different things in his field? He does all of this to produce crops!

Now how does this relate to God in our own life? Like it or not, and we don't always like it, God will use different tools you might say at different times in our life and He will use them to produce fruit in our own lives just like the farmer!

Now I am sure there are times when we get frustrated, we begin to doubt what God is doing, we are in despair or hopelessness because we have taken our eyes off of God and we don't believe the work that He is doing is for good. Folk's, God's work in our lives is always for good, there is always a purpose, there is always a plan and the intention is to produce fruit and God knows what He is doing!

With the Southern Kingdom of Judah and really for us as well, Wolf put it like this, "He used the proper instrument and procedure at the proper time to accomplish His purposes among His stubborn people." You see, God works on our hearts, breaks up the hard ground so that our lives can be fruitful for Him.

2. Make no mistake about it God will do what it takes to cause us to listen to His voice. He wants to lead us gently by His eye and that means we have to be looking at Him. How do we do that? This is not complicated but it is hard because we need to place our lives on the altar of sacrifice, completely surrendered to Him and we do this by being in His Word and by surrendering to His Spirit's leading in our life.

Now we can refuse to surrender, we can refuse to listen but then the Lord will inflict pain in our life to cause us to move in the direction that is best for us. It is as Psalm 32:8-9 says, **“I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye. Do not be like the horse or like the mule, Which have no understanding, Which must be harnessed with bit and bridle, Else they will not come near you.”**

God wants to guide us and all we need to do is look to Him and trust in Him that the work He is doing in our lives will produce fruit. Don't fight Him just surrender to Him!

3. In closing this evening, let me leave you with these words regarding these last several verses of Isaiah chapter 28, as Herbert Vander Lugt says this regarding Isaiah's illustration. He wrote,

the way God deals with His children by citing three aspects of a farmer's work. First, he declares that the plowman doesn't continue breaking the ground indefinitely, but stops when it is ready for planting (v. 24). Likewise, our trials are brought to an end as soon as they have accomplished His purposes in our lives.

Then the prophet says that the farmer sows his seed with discernment, scattering the cumin but putting the wheat in rows (vv. 25, 26). This assures us that the Lord carefully selects the discipline especially suited to our particular need.

Finally, Isaiah portrays the laborer threshing his crop. With extreme care he beats out the dill with a light stick, and strikes the cumin with a heavier flail. For the wheat he employs a wheel just heavy enough to avoid crushing the grain (vv. 27, 28). Thus the Almighty uses the gentlest possible touch for our condition, never allowing an affliction to be greater than we can bear.

- Herbert Vander Lugt, Our Daily Bread, Radio Bible Class

Let us remember that our God is smart enough to know exactly how to work with each of us, what we need in our lives. He has just the right touch for us and all we need to do is trust in Him and follow Him all the days of our life!