

**ISAIAH**

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Isaiah chapter 31 as we continue our study through the Word of God. In our last study we saw God rebuke the Southern Kingdom of Judah for trusting in Egypt to deliver them from the Assyrians. You see, instead of trusting in the Lord they were trusting in man, and not only that but they were trusting in Egypt which is a type of the world. That is a powerful lesson for us to learn, that we need to keep our eyes upon the Lord, we need to look to Him to be the strength of our life and not to man or the world. Let me show you what I mean.

I am sure we all remember the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. In a memorial service for one of the men who led a revolt against the hijackers of the United flight 93 that crashed in a field in Pennsylvania, listen to how Lisa Beamer felt after the service, she was the wife of this man who died as that plane went down. She wrote,

I couldn't help but compare this service to the one in Cranbury the day before. Todd's memorial service had been so uplifting, so inspiring, because the emphasis had been on hope in the midst of crisis. On Monday, as I listened to the well-intentioned speakers, who were doing their best to comfort but with little if any direct reference to the power of God to sustain us, I felt I was sliding helplessly down a high mountain into a deep crevasse. As much as I appreciated the kindness of the wonderful people who tried to encourage us, that afternoon was actually one of the lowest points in my grieving. It wasn't the people, or even the place. Instead, it struck me how hopeless the world is when God is factored out of the equation.

- "Let's Roll," World, August 17, 2002, p. 26

Why do we think that the world has the answers to life's problems instead of the God who created us? It makes no sense and yet we, like the Southern Kingdom of Judah run to the world for help, for answers, for this and for that and we don't find the help that we truly need. You see, our help comes from the Lord!

Listen to what the Lord said to them, how He rebuked them for not looking to Him but going to the world for help in the midst of a crisis in the nation. In Isaiah 30:1-3 we are told, **“Woe to the rebellious children,’ says the Lord, ‘Who take counsel, but not of Me, And who devise plans, but not of My Spirit, That they may add sin to sin; Who walk to go down to Egypt, And have not asked My advice, To strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, And to trust in the shadow of Egypt! Therefore the strength of Pharaoh Shall be your shame, And trust in the shadow of Egypt Shall be your humiliation.”**

Our hope, our focus, our life needs to be in the Lord and not in this world. The world may have answers but those answers will put you in bondage, they will not give you the victory that you are looking for, they will not give you the hope or help you truly need. I realize that is hard for some to understand but God wants us to look to Him because He has what is best for our life. He has those answers and He gives to us that hope that we need in life and even in death. If we don't factor God into the equation you might say, we are going to be empty. But when we do factor God into the equation, into our life we find that He is our hope and thus, we can face anything!

As we move into Isaiah chapter 31 this evening the Lord is going to continue to rebuke the Southern Kingdom of Judah for going down to Egypt for help against the Assyrians instead of turning to the Lord. With that said, let's begin reading in Isaiah chapter 31 starting in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word.

**ISAIAH 31****VERSES 1-3**

1. I understand that some may not agree with this rebuke, “Why not trust in the world or in others?” is their response! The reason is simple, because God tells us not to and if we do we will not win. In fact, back in Deuteronomy 17:16 God instructs His people that when they enter the Promise Land they are not to go down to Egypt for help, which symbolizes the world. They were not to trust in the strength of Egypt’s military might, their chariots. And yet that is exactly what the Southern Kingdom of Judah is doing.

God wanted them to look up to see the salvation He would bring. You see, the strength of any nation is not found in its military might, but its faith in the Lord! But they decided to trust in man instead of God, defeating the enemy with horses rather than by the Spirit of God. And God is telling them that not only will Egypt fail but so will Judah in this alliance that they made with each other. You see, God will allow us to come to the end of ourselves so that we no longer will look to self for help, or the world for help, but will turn to Him. It is not that God can’t or won’t use people to help us, but He wants us to go to Him first so that He can direct us. If we don’t, we will fail!

Remember what the Psalmist said, **“Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; But we will remember the name of the Lord our God.”** Psalm 20:7. And the key is as simple as this. **“Now the Egyptians are men, and not God . . .”** Isaiah 31:3. Let’s not make this complicated. Are you going to trust in the strength of man or in the strength of Almighty God, the creator of heaven and earth? It sounds so simple until our backs are up against the wall and we turn to the world for help instead of turning to the Lord! Like the Southern Kingdom of Judah, our strength comes from the Lord and not from man and even when the enemy has us outnumbered, we don’t need more military might, we just need to turn to the Lord and He will give us the victory in the battle we are in!

#### VERSES 4-5

1. Now the Lord gives to us this picture of how He is watching over His people. The first picture is that of a lion standing over its prey, it won’t be moved by anyone. The shepherds may try to scare it away but the lion is not going to move. And thus, the point is that the Lord will not be moved, He will watch over His people, He will watch over Jerusalem. Man is moved at times but God is not!

2. The second picture is that of a bird flying over its nest, protecting the young that are there. Again we see a picture of protection and that is what the Lord wants the Southern Kingdom of Judah to see, that He is watching over His people and His land and He is not going to be moved! The Lord will stand up and fight for His holy city; He will deliver it and preserve it.

3. What can the Southern Kingdom of Judah do? We don't have to guess because the Lord will show them and us on how to get back on track. You see, they needed to look to the Lord to be the strength of their life!

#### VERSES 6-9

1. Isaiah is speaking of repentance, of turning back towards God since they were moving away from God and trusting in the strength of man. Notice what they were trusting in, “**. . . idols of silver and his idols of gold – sin, which your own hands have made for yourselves.**” Isaiah 30:7. Now you may be thinking that you would never do that, you don't have any idols. Really, you see, whatever you are putting your trust in apart from God is your idol. Do you trust in your job, the stock market, the government, this or that? If that is where your trust is at what will happen when those things are taken away or don't do what you want them to do? You see, you will be in trouble, there is no hope there. Our hope has to be in God for He is unchanging and what He gives to us is exactly what we need, maybe not what we want but what we do need!

And here is the wonderful thing about our God. He continues to call us to trust in Him and when we do, when we repent and return to Him the result is that we throw away the idols, we remove them from our lives because our trust is in the Lord! Our faith or what God has done inwardly is manifested outwardly, in the things we do and the things we say. We are living out our faith, we are resting in the One who loves us so and thus, we have great hope!

We see this in Acts 19:18-20 as Paul was sharing the Gospel message in Ephesus and we are told, **“And many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds. Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and it totaled fifty thousand pieces of silver. So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.”**

True repentance is manifested in our lives by turning away from the idols, the practices we did in the past and turning to the Lord! It is as Spurgeon wrote, “You will have enough temptation in your own mind without going after these things. Is there any habit, any practice, that you have got that defiles your soul? If Christ loves you, and you come and trust in him, you will make short work of it. Have done with it, and have done with it forever.” An important lesson for us to learn, you can’t turn to the Lord and still hold onto the world! The world is pulling you in one direction and the Lord is leading you in another direction.

2. The tragedy for the Southern Kingdom of Judah is that they returned to these idols, they turned away from the Lord, even though at this time they did repent but that was short-lived. And God did deliver them from the Assyrians, but like I said, they fell back into idolatry and by 586 B. C. the Southern Kingdom of Judah was taken into captivity by the Babylonians for their idolatry and their refusal to repent and get right with God.

Interestingly enough, Dr. Shilo found in his digs in this area that the rock layers from this period of time were burned. Why is that important? Because it shows us that the city of Jerusalem was burned, it was something that the Babylonians did. In fact, the city was leveled, the walls destroyed, the Temple destroyed and the people taken captive.

As Dr. Shilo continued looking at this period of time in his digs he found in the homes of the people thousands of idols that the people of God had. And the Scriptures speak of this very thing, the idolatry that permeated the land. In Ezekiel 16:23-25 we are told, **“Then it was so, after all your wickedness – ‘Woe, woe to you!’ says the Lord God - that you also built for yourself a shrine, and made a high place for yourself in every street. You built your high places at the head of every road, and made your beauty to be abhorred. You offered yourself to everyone who passed by, and multiplied your acts of harlotry.”**

Because of that and their refusal to turn back to the Lord, judgment came upon them and in their captivity their hearts were changed. You see, when they returned home they never again worshipped in the groves, nor did they worship the god Baal or Molech. Yes today many Jews are not seeking the Lord and thus, this will ultimately be fulfilled in the Kingdom Age as they receive their Messiah, Jesus Christ!

3. Now as you look at Isaiah 31:8-9 you see that the Assyrians are going to fall by the hand of God and not by the sword of man. And that is exactly what happened. As the Assyrians surrounded Jerusalem, threatening to take the city, Hezekiah brought this burden before the Lord.

In II Chronicles 32:7-8 listen to what Hezekiah did as the Assyrians were threatening to destroy Jerusalem, **“Be strong and courageous; do not be afraid nor dismayed before the king of Assyria, nor before all the multitude that is with him; for there are more with us than with him. With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the Lord our God, to help us and to fight our battles.’ And the people were strengthened by the words of Hezekiah king of Judah.”**

As Hezekiah shares the Word of God with the people they are strengthened and their eyes are taken off of the enemy and placed back on the Lord. And as the threats from the enemy intensified we are told, **“Now because of this King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah, the son of Amoz, prayed and cried out to heaven.”** II Chronicles 32:20. And that night the angel of the Lord came and destroyed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers, causing Sennacherib and those remaining to flee back to Nineveh, causing them to fear the Lord. And as Sennacherib went into worship his god, his own sons killed him.

And obviously this caused the Assyrians to fear the God of Israel instead of mocking the true and living God as they were before the judgment fell. Listen to how bold they were before this judgment, **“Has any of the gods of the nations at all delivered its land from the hand of the king of Assyria? Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim and Hena and Ivah? Indeed, have they delivered Samaria from my hand? Who among all the gods of the lands have delivered their countries from my hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem from my hand?”** II Kings 18:33-35. They quickly found out that the true and living God stands alone! May we understand that fact, that our God stands alone and thus, we need not be afraid we need to just look to Him!

And it not only brought fear among the Assyrians but it also caused the people of God to worship the Lord.



4. I think the Lord is also giving us a picture here of the last days. You see, I believe that this Assyrian King is symbolic of the Antichrist. And yes the Antichrist has an army of soldiers who are also in rebellion towards God. What is their outcome? In the end they will be defeated and what will this usher in? It will usher in the Kingdom Age where Jesus Christ is ruling and reigning for 1,000 years! Guess what? That is what Isaiah chapter 32 is all about, the true King ruling and reigning in the Kingdom Age. Let's read on and see what the Lord has for us.

### ISAIAH 32

#### VERSE 1

1. Now I do think there is that near-term fulfillment of this prophecy and then the long-term and complete fulfillment of this prophecy. First of all I think that the King spoken of here ruling in righteousness is none other than Hezekiah. We are told that “**. . . he did what was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father David had done. . . . He trusted in the Lord God of Israel, so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor who were before him. For he held fast to the Lord; he did not depart from following Him, but kept His commandments, which the Lord had commanded Moses.**” II Kings 18:3, 5-6.

2. But I think that this is ultimately looking on ahead to the King of kings and Lord of lords, Jesus Christ. We are told in Jeremiah 23:5-6 regarding the coming of the Messiah and His reign, **“Behold, the days are coming,’ says the Lord, ‘That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A King shall reign and prosper, And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell safely; Now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.’”**

Now who are the princes that will rule with justice spoken of in this verse here in Isaiah chapter 32? I think this is speaking of believers, you and me. We are told in I Peter 2:9, **“But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”** In Revelation 5:10 we are told, **“And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth.”** And in Revelation 20:6 we are told, **“Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.”**

So what we see here in the near fulfillment is Hezekiah but looking on ahead we have a picture of the Kingdom Age where we see Jesus as King and we are with Him ruling in justice.

#### VERSES 2-4

1. Yes there was spiritual renewal in the days of Hezekiah and they were like refreshing waters to the people. You see, as the people turned to the Lord their eyes were open to see the things of God, their ears were opened to hear the things of God. And we even see that today as the eyes of people are open to the things of God and they can hear the voice of God as they read the Word of God!

But there is coming a day when the Lord Himself will rule and reign and righteousness will flow throughout the land. The land will not only be healed but so too will the people. The blind shall see. The deaf shall hear. The lame shall walk and-so-on. There will be that physical healing as well as a spiritual healing.

#### VERSES 5-8

1. What we see here in the Kingdom Age is that the light of Christ will expose evil and it will be dealt with immediately. It is as Poole wrote, “Wickedness shall be discovered and punished wheresoever it is, and virtue shall be manifested and rewarded, and all things shall be managed with sincerity and simplicity.”

2. I am sure I don't have to tell you this because you have already experienced it probably many times in your life. People today are very good at deceiving others. Let me share this example with you. Some 20 plus years ago I bought a car at this dealership and the dealer who sold it to me assured me, he promised me it was in good condition. It was checked by their auto mechanics and it was very safe to drive, it met their standards to sell.

The reason it was so important to me is that my wife would be driving this car and our children would also be riding in this car. And he looked like an honest man but like they say, looks can be deceiving! So we bought the car and it was making some noise when we were going over 40 mph so we thought we would get it checked, maybe there needed to be some minor repairs!

The mechanic we took it to said that the car was unsafe to drive at any speed and because of the liability in fixing the problem, they wouldn't even touch it. It had to be towed! You see, the frame underneath was so badly rusted that the car could have broken down the middle. And thus, no one wanted to touch it!

So I went back to the dealer and they didn't want anything to do with me or the problem they sold me. When I was looking for a car I was like the dealers son. But now, when there was this problem it was like I had the plague and he avoided me, did not make eye contact with me, did not even want to talk with me.

In the Kingdom Age everything will be open and if someone acts deceptively the Lord will deal with that person immediately. And we, as His representatives, will watch over various areas of the Kingdom and we also will deal with unrighteous behavior. You see, there will be no violence; there will not be the unrighteousness we see today. And if anyone gets out of line, they will be dealt with. I don't know about you but I do long for that day!

#### VERSES 9-11

1. Notice that the women in Judah are not prepared for the righteous King to come. I guess self-confidence and complacency affected their lives just as it does ours. You see, things seemed to be going well. They made an alliance with Egypt and that gave them false hope. And now even the women were affected by this attitude.

But Isaiah is calling for them to wake-up, mourn and pray for judgment is coming in just over a years' time. And in just over a year the Assyrians surrounded Jerusalem and cut off their food supply. But that is not what they wanted to hear. They wanted to have their ears tickled with lies the false prophets were telling them. The only problem was they were living in a fantasy world and judgment was coming no matter what they believed.

2. What about us? Are we prepared for the Lord's return? We should be. I think it is easy to just go on with life and not even think about the days we are living in. We make alliances with this group or that group and we think we are okay but we forgot about the Lord. We are confident and complacent and that is a dangerous place to be. You see, the Lord is coming back regardless if we are ready or not!

#### VERSES 12-15

1. Why is there all this mourning going on? Why are they beating their breasts? Because of the devastation that has come upon their lives. God brought His judgment upon them because they refused to hear Him and He was trying to get their attention. This is a shock to them, not because they weren't told but because they refused to listen to what God was saying to them through the prophets.

Remember what God said Isaiah 30:9-11, "**That this is a rebellious people, Lying children, Children who will not hear the law of the LORD; Who say to the seers, 'Do not see,' And to the prophets, 'Do not prophesy to us right things; Speak to us smooth things, prophecy deceits. Get out of the way, Turn aside from the path, Cause the Holy One of Israel To cease from before us.'**"

And there is that near fulfillment that we see played out as the Assyrians came into the land of Judah in 701 B. C. but they were never able to capture the city of Jerusalem. Then we can go a little farther down the road to 606 B. C. when the Babylonians came down upon the Southern Kingdom of Judah with their final assault occurring in 586 B. C. with the destruction of Jerusalem and the captivity of the Southern Kingdom.

But I again think this is played out looking at the Tribulation Period and how the judgment of God is poured out and many will be humbled and turn to the Lord as God pours out His Spirit. Specifically here it is speaking of the Jewish people but as we look at the totality of the Scriptures many Gentiles are saved as well!

You see, when the Holy Spirit is poured out, what was barren and desolate before is now full of life and fruitfulness. True fruitfulness comes from the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. And thus, not only will the people be healed, but so will the land, as the deserts blossom forth.

#### VERSES 16-20

1. Let's look at this first in our own lives. When God's Spirit is poured out in our lives, when we have surrendered to the Holy Spirit's control in our life, then we are going to produce the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. There will be that unconditional love that flows from us and that love is manifested in many different ways. Paul says this love will be seen with joy in our lives, peace in our lives, longsuffering flowing from our lives, kindness extended to others, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. (Galatians 5:22-23). If you are lacking that in your life then you need to humble yourself before the Lord and surrender your will to His!

2. Now let's look on ahead to the Kingdom Age and what a glorious day that will be. Think about it, justice will fill the land, righteousness will flow. No more "America's Most Wanted." No more locking your doors, fearing walking at night and-so-on. Peace will fill the land. But that day will not happen until Messiah comes!

And Isaiah concludes the chapter by looking at this peaceful picture, "**Blessed are you who sow beside all waters, Who send out freely the feet of the ox and the donkey.**" Isaiah 32:20. There is peace when we are resting in the Lord, walking in His righteousness and apart from Him there is no peace!

### **ISAIAH 33**

#### **VERSE 1**

1. Here we see God pronouncing judgment upon Sennacherib and the Assyrians who were a very brutal people. And God's warning is not just for the Assyrians but for any people or nation who come against His people, the Jews, "If you come against them I am going to come against you!" And guess what, they won't win this fight!

#### **VERSES 2-4**

1. Our Lord is always teaching us lessons of faith, learning to trust in Him more and in ourselves less. Keep in mind that initially Hezekiah looked to the Assyrians for help and he did this by paying tribute money to them, but that was not enough. They then looked to Egypt for help, but that did not work. And now Hezekiah and the nation are waiting upon the Lord to deliver them from this situation.

Notice the humility, notice how they are turning back to the only one who can truly deliver them from this situation, the Lord! And God did bring down 185,000 Assyrian soldiers in one night, leaving the spoils for Judah to go and pick up as we have already seen. No longer would they look to the arm of man for help but they will look to the Lord! May we learn that lesson! God wants us look to Him, to trust in Him, to place our entire life in His hands. You see, if we can't do that then we are saying that we truly don't trust Him and we need to help Him out! God does not need our help but we truly need His!

#### VERSES 5-6

1. When you place God in the center of your life you will find that justice and righteousness, you will find that wisdom and knowledge and that will bring stability in your life because the Lord is the strength of your salvation. Now what does the Lord treasure? The Lord treasures us as we honor Him, we fear Him, we give Him the glory and the honor that is due! When we don't put God in the center of our life then we don't experience these things and our life is really a mess, there is no stability! May we honor the Lord with our lives!

#### VERSES 7-9

1. This seems to be speaking of the time that Judah had made a deal with Assyria not to attack and to prevent them from attacking Judah paid tribute money, three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold, (II Kings 18:13-16). But that wasn't enough and they threatened Judah anyway. Thus, the ambassadors who had made this deal were weeping because they saw no hope. And the people were terrified because no one was able to stop the Assyrians from coming.



2. That seemed like a hopeless situation for the Southern Kingdom of Judah but they forgot one thing and it was big. They forgot the Lord! Now what about us? What about when we are defeated, hopeless, downcast, broken? What are we missing in that picture? We too are missing the Lord. If you think I am being too simplistic or not realistic, let's read on and see what transpires in this situation because what happened in Judah can also happen in our own lives!

### VERSES 10-13

1. Let's try something out here, see how this sounds. "Now Joe will rise up, now Joe will be exalted, now Joe will lift himself up!" How does that sound? I know, not good but try it with your name and it does not sound any better! Now I know that when I read that to you that you thought it was ridiculous and it was. But hear me out on this one. Isn't that exactly what we do when we take God out of the picture? Of course it is and it doesn't work!

2. What I also want you to see here is that the Southern Kingdom of Judah is in trouble. Everything that they tried to do on their own to protect themselves from the Assyrian invasion has failed. It looks bad! And the next thing we read, "**Now I will rise,' says the LORD . . .**"

Why does God wait that long? Because God was waiting until they got out of His way or we get out of His way so He can work. He waits until we come to the end of ourselves and then He can work because we have no place else to turn except to Him!

Remember what Jesus said in Matthew 9:12-13, “**... ‘Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. But go and learn what this means: “I desire mercy and not sacrifice.” For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.’**” In other words, you are not going to turn to the Lord until you see your need for Him. If you think that you can do it on your own you will try and when there is no hope, when there is nothing else you can do, then many times people will turn to the Lord as we see here with the Southern Kingdom of Judah. Don’t wait that long, God wants to help, He wants to direct our lives, look to Him and not to yourself or anyone or anything else!

3. Now when God defeated the Assyrians it opened their eyes to God and the same is true in our own lives. When God gives us the victory it not only affects our own lives but those around us. What do I mean by that? Let’s read on and you will see the results of our surrender to God and how that affects those around us!

#### VERSES 14-19

1. This is interesting to me. Instead of fearing God they feared the Assyrians. Instead of fearing God they boasted about their sin. They forgot that God is holy and He is a consuming fire that is going to judge the wicked. And thus, when God showed Himself strong the sinners, the hypocrites were terrified because they realized they couldn’t stand before a holy and righteous God in their condition.

Remember when Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead because they lied to the Holy Spirit. This couple sold some land and they wanted to give some to the church you might say. Well the problem here is that Ananias said that he gave all the money he received when he sold this property and yet he didn't. He lied to the Holy Spirit. He did not to give all of it away; he kept a portion for himself. Now hear me out on this. He did not have to give it all away or any of it away, that was not the problem. The problem is that he lied!

So the Lord struck him dead. Well, as they were carrying his body out and were burying him his wife came in and she too lied about this transaction and she was struck dead. It is out of that we read in Acts 5:11-14, **“So great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things. And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon’s Porch. Yet none of the rest dared join them, but the people esteemed them highly. And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women.”**

That is probably an understatement! I bet great fear came upon them and each individual examined his heart to make sure it was right with God. In other words, it deterred them from sinning. Yes some came to know the Lord, but those that refused to change, those that refused to repent of their sins, they stayed away. They were terrified of God's power, but refused to surrender to His love. It is as Paul said in Hebrews 12:29, **“For our God is a consuming fire.”**

Now here's the thing and this is tough. I thought God was a God of love, peace, grace, mercy, forgiveness? If that is true, which it is, then why is He a consuming fire? Because you can't approach God any way you want, only through Christ. Thus, if you stand before God in your own righteousness, which are like filthy rags, you will be consumed in His fire of judgment! You don't have to be, but if you reject Him you will! If you don't approach Him in Christ, His fire will consume you! Those are choices every person will make, to approach God by their works or by His Grace. As we place our faith in Jesus Christ His blood will cleanse us from all unrighteousness! And as people see God work in our lives they see that God is living and thus, they have a choice to make!

2. Now as you look at verses 15-17 of Isaiah chapter 33 you see that Isaiah is going to answer the question, "Who may dwell with God?" We touched on that already but look at what Isaiah is saying. You have to walk righteously, speak uprightly, despise the gain of the oppressors and-so-on. Sounds like a works theology in regards to dwelling with God.

Please understand what is being said here, and this is important, it is not their actions that make them righteous but their relationship with the Lord and out of that relationship we see these actions. Their faith was real, it was alive! It is as James said, "**Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, 'You have faith, and I have works.' Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.**" James 2:17-18.

It is only by the shed blood of Christ that we can have our fellowship with God the Father restored. It was never by works and it will never be by works even though some like to see it that way. Let me show you what I mean. Jack Kelley from Grace Thru Faith wrote this response to how people are saved during different periods of time. He wrote,

By comparing God's relationship with the Church with His relationship with other groups we can see that the Church is unique. We are the only group that's saved by grace through faith alone (**Ephes. 2:8-9**). Paul said God has given us a righteousness apart from the Law that comes through our faith in Jesus Christ (**Romans 3:21-22**).

This was not true before the Church, nor will it be true afterward. In **Rev. 14:12** we can see that tribulation believers will have to obey God's commandments and remain faithful to Jesus. This is very similar to the way it was in the Old Testament. The difference is before the Church, people had to believe in a coming Redeemer, whereas after the Church they will have to believe in the Redeemer who already came.

- [http://gracethrufaith.com/ask-a-bible-teacher/righteousness-past-present-future/?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+Gracethrufaith+%28GraceThruFaith%29](http://gracethrufaith.com/ask-a-bible-teacher/righteousness-past-present-future/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+Gracethrufaith+%28GraceThruFaith%29)

So it is only the Church, according to Jack Kelley, who are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. Prior to the Church Age, the Old Testament times you might say and on then into the Tribulation Period, people are saved by good works?

Let me ask you this question. If we are saved by the Law or I should say the Old Testament saints and the Tribulation saints, how much of the Law do they have to keep? All of it and if they stumble in just one portion they are guilty of breaking it all! And the Old Testament saints were looking ahead to the coming Messiah but they were not saved by works, not at all!

Paul tells us in Galatians 2:16, **“knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.”** Let me ask you this. Are the Old Testament saints made of flesh? Are the Tribulation saints made of flesh? Of course they are and thus, **“... by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.”** I think that is pretty clear!

Also, in Romans 3:19-20 Paul tells us, **“Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.”** What does the Law do for us? It makes us guilty before God, it does not save us or again as Paul said, **“Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight.”** How many of those that are born of the flesh will be justified by the Law! ***NONE!***

Also, if that is not enough, listen very carefully to what Paul said in Romans 4:1-5, **“What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? ‘Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.’ Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness.”**

Now if Abraham was not justified by works then how was he justified? Paul tells us by faith in God, he believed and that was accounted to him for righteousness. That word “**accounted**” is LOGIZOMAI (log-id’-zom’-ahee) in the Greek and it is a legal term speaking of crediting something into someone’s account. Here we see God credit into the account of Abraham righteousness that is based upon faith and not works. In other words, Abraham was declared righteous by God before the Law was established; it was still over 430 years down the road!

How could that be that Abraham was saved by faith and not by works? First of all, here in Romans chapter 4 verse 3 Paul quotes out of Genesis 15:6, so the Scriptures testify that it is of faith and not of works, it is not a New Testament idea. But what did Abraham believe in? The promises of God he believed in and even more specifically, the coming of the Messiah, the coming of Jesus.

Think of it like this, for Paul’s point is basically, “If I work for you, put in my 8 hours of work, you are legally obligated to pay me my wages; you owe me for the work I did.” Some cults believe this works relationship, a works salvation by going door-to-door or on their mission work. If that were true then God would owe you salvation, He would be a debtor to you, but that is not that case, God is a debtor to no man!

People are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone and not of works, lest anyone should boast about keeping the Law, working your way into heaven and succeeding. Think about it, only Jesus kept the Law of God perfectly and it is that kind of righteousness that God will accept. Anything less misses the mark! That is why we need the righteousness of Christ imputed into our lives by faith and that has never changed and it will not change! That is the standard that God has set! I hope that clears that up for you.

3. As you look at verses 17 through 19 of Isaiah chapter 33 Isaiah is looking on ahead to the Kingdom Age. We will see the King; we will see His face, His beauty. Right now we see Him but not clearly, we see Him dimly but one day face-to-face as Paul tells us in I Corinthians 13:12. And that fear of the enemy that once filled your life will be taken away, the Lord is here!

#### VERSES 20-24

1. Obviously we don't see that today where Israel is at peace and there are rivers flowing there in Jerusalem. This is speaking of the Kingdom Age. Now some may ask, "Why will this be a time of peace?" And the answer is simple. We see here in Isaiah 33:22 that the Lord will be the Judge, He will be the Lawgiver and He will be the King!

2. Now as this chapter concludes Isaiah likens Jerusalem to a ship that almost sank and as you look out over their history you see that played out. But God sustained them. And the ultimate storm you might say is still ahead, it is during the Tribulation Period, but God is once again going to step in and deliver them. He will heal them physically and spiritually as He forgives their sins and that is only done through Jesus Christ. That means they will turn to Jesus!



3. As I close this evening let me leave you with these words from Raymond Ortlund. He looks at what Leviticus 16:20-22 says regarding the Day of Atonement and how that relates to Christ and what He has done for us. Leviticus 16:20-22 says, “**And when he has made an end of atoning for the Holy Place, the tabernacle of meeting, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat. Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and shall send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a suitable man. The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to an uninhabited land; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness.**” This is what Raymond Ortlund wrote regarding what is spoken of here in Isaiah,

All our happiness depends on this, because the only final crisis in our existence is our guilt before a holy God. Have your sins been forgiven? Has God borne them away? Or are you still denying them and thereby clinging to them and reinforcing their power over you? Two thousand years ago, on a cross outside of Jerusalem, there was a Goat who bore the guilt of others far away. God says that if we trust him to bear all our guilt away, it’s never coming back. And that startling sense of acceptance in Christ is how we become the trusting people we should be, the broken people we should be, and the renewed people we should be. That’s when nothing can hold us back from the newness of life, not even our own second-rate repentance.

- Raymond C. Ortlund, Jr., Isaiah, p. 194

Make no mistake about it, God is in control and He loves us so much that He died for our sins so we may live with Him, have that fellowship with Him restored. May you look to Him to be the strength of your life and not to man!