

1. Matthew 27 - the account of the crucifixion:
 - A. All 4 Gospels relate the main outline of Christ's legal trial before Pilate (the trial before the Sanhedrin was illegal); all 4 also tell us about Joseph of Arimathea
 - B. Mark and Matthew closely parallel each other - crown of thorns; Simon of Cyrene; cry of dereliction; rending of the Temple veil
2. Details only found in Matthew's account:
 - A. The role Pilate's wife attempted to play:
 1. She was Claudia Procula, the granddaughter of Augustus Caesar - a well-connected lady
 2. God revealed Himself to her in a dream, as we have seen Him do in other parts of Scripture with "outsiders"; dreams from God never contradict His written Word
 3. She knew Jesus to be innocent of the charges brought against Him
 4. Pilate was a pragmatist - he weighed what was expedient against what he knew to be true, and chose expediency; we have choices like that to make in our lives, too
 - B. Judas' tremendous sense of remorse
 1. Judas was greedy (to the point of thievery)
 2. He was under the control of Satan when he betrayed Jesus.
 3. There is a difference between remorse and repentance.
 4. The 30 pieces of silver that Judas was paid was a fulfillment of prophecy (Zechariah 11:12, 13 and Jeremiah 19:1-13; 32:6-9).
 - C. The special efforts made by the Jews and the Romans to secure the grave of Jesus
 1. They knew the prophecy about the resurrection in 3 days.
 2. They were afraid His body would be stolen.
 3. The Roman guards' fear of death if they failed to guard the tomb, and the sentence of death on anyone who broke a Roman seal only help prove the resurrection - just the opposite effect of what they were trying to do.

1. The curious differences in the Gospel accounts of the resurrection, as in the fact that Matthew mentions one angel; Luke mentions two - this is an explainable “difference”, not a discrepancy.
2. The resurrection: (from Jesus 2000, A Major Investigation into History’s Most Intriguing Figure, pp. 175-177):
 - A. “Jesus’ resurrection was an act of God...Jesus rose to everlasting life in a radically transformed body.”
 - B. “Jesus’ resurrection confirms His personal claim to divinity...”
 - C. “Jesus’ resurrection completes the work of the cross...the work of the cross is completed by the resurrection, which broke the power of sin, death and hell...”
 - D. “Jesus’ resurrection makes it possible for us to enjoy a personal relationship with Him...Jesus is not dead...”
 - E. “Jesus’ resurrection shows that He holds the key to eternal life...the grave is not the end.”
 - F. “Jesus’ resurrection promises physical and psychological healing for mankind.”
 - G. “Jesus’ resurrection is the guarantee that He will personally return in glory...It is an energizing truth full of significance for our lives.”
3. Even in Matthew’s day, the “apologetic” battle about Jesus was raging:
 - A. The tomb was empty - a pretty important bit of evidence
 1. This rules out 5 “explanations” that have been attempted through the years
 - a. The women went to the wrong tomb - Christ’s enemies could have then just produced the body from the right tomb. They did not.
 - b. Christ was buried in an unknown location - but everyone knew He was buried in the tomb given by Joseph of Arimathea.
 - c. It is all just a legend - but the disciples became different people and early church was birthed because of the resurrection.
 - d. It was a “spiritual”, not a physical resurrection - but both friends and foes alike acknowledged that the tomb was empty.
 2. The empty tomb itself demands an explanation.
 - a. The decisive evidence for Matthew is the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus.
 - 1) Jesus appeared to the women.
 - 2) He appeared to the disciples.
 - 3) They backed up the testimony that they had seen Him and been with Him after the crucifixion and resurrection with their very lives.
4. The Book of Matthew ends with “The Great Commission”: “All authority on heaven and in earth has been given unto Me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”
 - A. The main verb in this commission is “make disciples”.
 1. By going: (Mark - “Go into all the world and preach the Gospel...”)
 2. By baptizing: The order is always “hear, believe, be baptized”
 3. By teaching: “all the things I (Jesus) have commanded you.” It is not just content for the mind - it involves the will.
 - B. This commission is based upon the authority of Christ. It is empowered by His presence. We live to make Him known.

1. Today we returned to the Old Testament, the Book of Isaiah. Matthew quoted from this book extensively, linking the prophecies found in it to the life and ministry of Jesus.
2. Isaiah served His God during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah - all kings of the Southern Kingdom of Judah, and this was the time of the ascendancy of Assyria. Ahaz was pro-Assyrian; Hezekiah was pro-Egypt. Isaiah told them to trust God alone.
3. The Book of Isaiah has 2 major divisions
 - A. Chapters 1-39: the events happening during Isaiah's lifetime
 - B. Chapters 40-66 - Future events during and after the time of the Babylonian captivity
 1. Some believe that these 2 parts were written by 2 different authors because they have difficulty with accepting supernatural revelation by God to a prophet.
 2. No manuscript of Isaiah has ever been uncovered that does not contain all 66 chapters.
4. The first 5 chapters are an introduction to the whole book and have the theme of "servanthood."
 - A. Chapter 1 - Israel has not been acting very much like a servant of God (Isaiah 1:3).
 - B. "They have forsaken the 'Holy One of Israel'" (Isaiah 1:4). This is the name by which Isaiah most often refers to God - it is found in both sections of the book, and rarely anywhere else in Scripture.
5. Isaiah 1 and the Book of James place emphasis on identifying true religion with the acts of righteousness that flow out of a right relationship with God. God is not pleased when we go through the motions of worship without having lives that match our words.
6. Isaiah 1:18: "'Come now, let us reason together,' says the Lord. 'Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be white as snow'..." Is this a gracious invitation from God to repent, with the promise to forgive, or a rhetorical statement filled with ironic sarcasm?
7. Toward the end of Chapter 1, God pronounced the judgment that will come upon Judah:
 - A. The political climate of the Near Eastern world of Isaiah's day has little to do with what is about to happen to Judah...It has everything to do with a covenant people who have forgotten how to live righteously.
 - B. The coming judgment is not simply punitive in nature...God's purpose is redemptive. (See Hebrews 12)
 - C. Right from the outset, God is talking about restoration. "I will restore...you will be called the city of righteousness..." - and in our human situations today, the goal of discipline must always be restoration.
8. In Chapter 2, Isaiah looks far into the future, "In the last days"...
 - A. Some have related this to the church age in which we now live.
 - B. Others relate this to the coming millennial age.
 1. Only the Messiah will be able to bring about the kind of peace Isaiah 2:4 is talking about.
 2. Only the Lord will be exalted "in that day".
9. Isaiah 2:22 sums up the theme of the whole Book of Isaiah: "Stop trusting in man, who has but a breath in his nostrils. Of what account is he?" Who do you trust?

1. “God has called all people, but particularly His own people, to lay down their self-exaltation and be dependent upon Him, to become evidence of His character and deliverance in order that the whole world might know Him as He is and thus be delivered from their own destruction” (John Oswalt, in his commentary on Isaiah, p. 54).
2. Chapters 1-5 set out the problem: Israel is anything but a servant of God, but Israel is declared to be God’s agent of light and blessing to the world. How can “this” Israel become “that” Israel?
3. The prophecy in Chapter 3 is not the “end time” prophecy of Chapter 2. Chapter 3’s fulfillment occurred when the Babylonians took all the present and potential leaders (like Daniel) into captivity.
4. The people of Judah had enjoyed prosperity under the reign of Uzziah and they were addicted to their material possessions. The description of the women of the day is used as an example of this. This kind of affluence brings with it certain sins, like the plundering of the poor.
5. Six “woes” are pronounced against:
 - A. The acquisition of “more”
 - B. Pleasure-seeking
 - C. Cynics who challenge and mock God
 - D. Calling evil good, and good evil
 - E. Self-sufficient pride
 - F. Being drunk with wine and full of injustice
6. A note of encouragement in Isaiah 3:10: “Tell the righteous it will be well with them, for they will enjoy the fruit of their deeds.” The woes are applicable to our culture, but so is the promise of God given here applicable to us.
7. Chapter - The Song of the Vineyard:
 - A. The image of the vineyard and its owner is foundational to so many other passages.
 - B. Israel is the vineyard planted by God...Jesus told the Parable of the Vineyard, which we have read already in the Gospels (see Luke 20:9-19). In light of the rotten fruit yielded in “the vineyard Israel” (Isaiah 5), Jesus’ meaning was very clear.
 - C. John 15: “I am the vine and you are the branches. My Father is the vine dresser...”
8. Chapter 4:2-6 - an oracle of redemption: “In that day the Branch of the Lord will be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land will be the pride and glory of the survivors in Israel...the Lord will create over all of Mt. Zion and over those who assemble there a cloud of smoke by day and a glow of flaming fire by night...”

*Cloud and fire - an obvious reference to the pillar of cloud and fire we saw in the Book of Exodus. Look for more references and allusions to the Book of Exodus in the Book of Isaiah...they are there.
9. “God wants faithful servants. He will make Israel into a faithful servant. That is the goal. It will be accomplished. Israel is an unfaithful servant and judgment must come first. But how will it occur, this marvelous transformation?” Tomorrow’s reading, Isaiah 6, may well provide us with the answer to that question.

1. Isaiah 6, one of those “great chapters of the Bible”, relates for us the call of Isaiah. Isaiah was most likely a prince, the son of Amoz, who was, according to Jewish tradition, the brother of King Amaziah, who was the father of King Uzziah. Isaiah was well-educated and well-connected.
2. Chapter 6, though it probably occurred chronologically before Chapters 1-5, “fits” here:
 - A. God is looking for a faithful servant.
 - B. Israel is destined to be that servant, but at this point is anything but that.
 - C. It can only become that if it has a purifying encounter with the Holy One of Israel.
3. Like Hosea, Isaiah’s life was an acted-out parable for the people of Israel to see.
 - A. His purifying encounter with God was demonstrating to Israel what she needed if she would ever become the faithful servant of God.
 - B. We, being a lot like Israel, need a purifying encounter with the Holy One of Israel.
4. From The Holiness of God, by R.C. Sproul:
 - A. Men are not allowed to see the face of God. God allowed Moses a glimpse of His “hindquarters” and the glory that then shone on Moses’ face terrified the people of Israel as he came down from the mountain after that encounter. He had to cover it with a veil.
 - B. The final goal of every Christian is to look into His holy face. Before that can ever happen, we must be purified. Jesus said that “the pure in heart will see God”. Our hearts are impure, so the problem is not with our eyes, it is with our hearts. In heaven, we will be totally pure and able to look at God.
 - C. The seraphs in Isaiah’s vision were created angels, not sinful men, but they still covered their eyes to shield them from directly gazing at God’s majestic presence.
 - D. The covering of the seraph’s feet symbolizes “creatureliness”.
 - E. “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts...” Three times repetition is a literary device common in Hebrew literature; it is a form of emphasis. It signifies importance. Repeating something twice means “this is important”, but repeating something 3 times means it superlatively important. And this is the only attribute of God repeated 3 times.
 - F. Isaiah’s response to his vision: “Woe is me, I am a man of unclean lips.” Seeing God made him pronounce a judgment against himself! “I am undone!” I am unraveling at the seams, personally disintegrating.
 - G. Isaiah was a man of integrity, but when he caught a glimpse of God, he was “undone”.
 1. Isaiah was groveling on the floor, trying to find a place to hide.
 2. The holy God is also the God of grace, who took immediate steps to cleanse him and restore his soul. “In this divine act of cleansing, Isaiah experienced a forgiveness that went beyond the purification of his lips. He was cleansed throughout, forgiven to the core, but not without the awful pain of repentance...His sin was taken away; his dignity remained intact. His guilt was removed, but his humanity was not insulted...”
6. God wants faithful servants and we cannot be those kinds of servants until we have had an encounter with the Holy One of Israel and been changed.