

1. Isaiah 24-27 has been called “Isaiah’s Apocalypse” because of its focus on the worldwide triumph of God.

2. The theme of the whole Book of Isaiah is “Who do you trust?”
 - A. Chapters 1-39, the first half of the book, provides the data for Israel to answer that question correctly.

 - B. Chapters 40-66 within that substantiate the great claim that God and God alone is trustworthy.

 - C. In today’s reading, the prophets rolls all of the nations together and pronounces God’s judgment on the whole earth.

3. Observations on chapters 24-27:
 - A. We are looking at a prophecy that will take place at the end of time, an all-inclusive judgment, the only exception being the righteous. It will be universal, as in the days of Noah.

 - B. The coming judgment will give way to the establishment of God’s righteous reign.
 1. Chapter 24 - Shouts of joy - “Glory to the righteous One...”

 2. Chapter 25 - The feast that God will prepare after the judgment - there are parallels in this passage with the Book of Revelation

 3. Chapter 26 - The remnant that has remained faithful to the Lord will somehow be sheltered and protected from the judgments engulfing the rest of humanity.

 4. God is not a “reactive” God; He is the initiator, not the respondent... “things planned long ago...”

 5. Chapter 26 - There is going to be a resurrection of the righteous dead when all these things happen at the end of time.
 - a. “It is worth living a righteous life - no matter what it costs - no matter how hard it is - even if, like Isaiah, it ends up costing us our very life! It is really worth everything, because one day - in the day of victory - we will rise. Do you feel the power of that truth...?”

 - b. “In that day” God’s promise to Abraham will be fulfilled - all the nations of the earth will experience the blessing that comes through Israel...the “new Israel”, the church of Jesus Christ with all the vast number of Jews who will be a part of it in the last days.

 6. Isaiah 26:3: “You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast because he trusts in you.” A promise for Israel in Isaiah’s day, and a promise for us.

1. The focus in Isaiah 28 and 29 is “on Judah’s choice to trust Him or not.”
2. Through the work of the prophets, God continually called His people to the reality of their responsibility as true moral agents to make choices. There are always consequences to the choices we make.
3. Isaiah 28-33 is one section of the book, with 3 parts to this section.
 - A. Chapters 28 and 29 paint the picture for us.
 - B. Chapters 30 and 31 tell us Judah’s proposed solution.
 - C. Chapters 32 and 33 reveal the true solution.
4. When the prophet says that the “wreath”, the pride of “Ephraim’s drunken kings, will be trampled and swallowed after the divinely sent hailstorm, he is talking about the capture of Samaria by the king of Assyria.
5. The message is received with mocking and ridicule by the people of Israel.
6. They felt God’s word to them had 2 flaws:
 - A. It was too directive.
 - B. It was too simplistic.
7. Isaiah’s response: ‘Learn to trust and obey God now, or be taught by the very painful instructor of experience.’
8. Isaiah uses the “very painful instructor of experience” - the experience of Israel (Ephraim) - to address the people of the Southern Kingdom of Judah.
9. “The covenant of death” - “Neither the lords of Egypt nor the gods of Canaan can protect the people of Judah.” By choosing to trust Egypt instead of God, they had chosen death.
10. God talks about the “cornerstone” He is laying in Zion. That cornerstone is Jesus Christ. (Get out a concordance and look up “cornerstone” and see what other passages have to say.)
11. Isaiah 28:2: “His alien task” is that this time He would be fighting not FOR, but AGAINST, Israel.
12. “Ariel” is used to refer to Jerusalem. It means “altar-hearth” and refers to the fact that Jerusalem prided itself on its religious observances, but its heart and practices were anything but godly, and God was displeased with them.
13. Isaiah 29 - the image of the potter and the clay. Romans 9 draws heavily on this passage.
14. Again, we see a passage ending on a note of hope. They will honor God and He will bless them - after the judgment.

1. The focus in Isaiah 30 and 31 is “Plan B” - trusting in Egypt to save them from Assyria.

2. Isaiah thinks that trusting Egypt is absurd; Judah is considering it:
 - A. It is amazing that Hezekiah, a godly king, is even considering trusting Egypt after seeing the mistake King Ahaz of Israel made in trusting Assyria.

 - B. Hezekiah was considering trusting Egypt, the very nation that had enslaved them, against God’s direct command to Moses, “You shall henceforth return no more that way.”

 - C. And Egypt is not even strong enough to be of help to them against Assyria. (The reference to “Rahab” - “the one who sits and does nothing”)

3. The value of having and using more than one translation of the Bible:
 - A. Each version has its strengths, and perhaps a few weaknesses

 - B. You see for yourself what choice the translators may have had to make between 2 different words, and get a fuller meaning

 - C. Some translations are word-for-word, and some more thought-for-thought.

 - D. The translations are reliable (except those done by cults that actually rewrite what the Bible says to suit their particular ideas).

4. Isaiah’s emphasis on the Spirit of God: He says that Hezekiah’s problem was that he had formed his alliances without dependence on the Spirit of the Lord.
 - A. One of the Holy Spirit’s chief functions is to provide guidance to the people of God.

 - B. Jesus said, “He (the Holy Spirit) will guide us into all truth”.

 - C. It is a wonderful reality for us to know that we can be led by the Spirit of God.

5. People 2700 years ago and people today have a similar response to God’s Word...”Tell us what we want to hear and don’t make us look too carefully at a holy God.”

1. We finished the 3-part section from Isaiah 27-33 today:
 - A. Chapters 28 & 29: Ephraim and Judah, led by foolish leaders, decide to trust someone other than God for protection.
 - B. Chapters 30 & 31: They decide to trust Egypt.
 - C. Chapters 32 & 33: The true solution

2. "Trusting God leads to justice, clarity, integrity and life." This thought moves through 4 stages:
 - A. 32:1-8 - The nature of true leadership and the effects stemming from it.
 - B. 32:9-20 - God's Spirit is the fundamental ingredient for true leadership.
 - C. 33:1-16 - Judah is helpless without divine intervention.
 - D. 33:17-24 - A day is envisioned when Jehovah rules over a land delivered from all her enemies.

3. Hymns that have come from these 2 chapters of Isaiah:
 - A. Chapter 32: "Beneath the Cross of Jesus"; "A Shelter in the Time of Storm"
 - B. Chapter 22: "I Shall see the King in His Beauty"
 - C. Isaiah is "the Gospel of the Old Testament" - it is easy to see Jesus as the obvious subject of great portions of this book.

4. The "Spirit of God" theme continued to be developed today:
 - A. The prophet looks ahead to a period of history when the Spirit will be poured out from on high, and righteousness will prosper.
 - B. It will definitely be like this during the millennial reign, but on a smaller scale it is also like this during revivals.
 - C. Not only does the Spirit of God guide and direct individuals (as we saw yesterday), but the Spirit can be poured out on the people of God in such a significant way that whole societies change - these are revivals.

5. Chapter 33 - It is the Lord, and the Lord alone, who can save Jerusalem. Egypt cannot. Jerusalem has no strength and is not ready for battle. but GOD WILL. (And we saw in our study of Hezekiah's life that HE DID.)

6. "No one living in Zion will say I am ill and the sins of those who live there will be forgiven." Isaiah is looking into the far future when the One True King will sit on the throne of Jerusalem and the key to His Kingdom will be the forgiveness of sin.

1. We finished the first half of the Book of Isaiah today. Chapters 1-39 make up the first division. We read 36-39 previously when we did the life and times of King Hezekiah.

2. The passage we read today begins on an ominous note and ends on a hopeful, rejoicing note.

A. It is possible that Chapters 34 and 35 are meant to apply to a number of scenarios:

1. The return of the Jews from their Babylonian captivity
2. The tribulation and millennial kingdoms
3. The advent of the Gospel and church age
4. The final introduction of a new heaven and new earth

B. The general consensus among Bible scholars, though, is that we are looking at end-time prophecies.

1. At the end of this age, God is going to bring judgment down on mankind. It is a frightening image:

- a. "The fury, the wrath of the eternal" - Isaiah, Ezekiel, Zephaniah
- b. "The jealousy of the Lord" - Ezekiel 38
- c. "The terror of the Lord" - Isaiah 2
- d. "The vengeance of God" - Psalm 94, Isaiah 35
- e. "The sieve of destruction" - Isaiah 30
- f. "The ravage of the Almighty" - Joel 1
- g. "The great carnage" Isaiah 34, 35
- h. "The threshing floor where sheaves are crushed" - Micah
- i. "The vat of God's wrath" - Isaiah 63, Revelation 14

2. "Stars of heaven" being dissolved and rolled up in the sky like a scroll - adds the sense of the unprecedented nature of these events.

3. Bottom line of all this apocalyptic teaching: "...someday, at the end of this age, the great day of the Lord will come, and when it does, God will bring justice (and that means judgment) down upon all the nations that have gone to war against Him."

3. God's people will not be touched when He pours out His wrath. "Strengthen the feeble hands, steady the knees that give way; say to those with fearful hearts, 'Be strong, do not fear; your God will come, He will come with vengeance; with divine retribution He will come to save you.'"

5. When Christ comes to judge the earth, He also comes to make your salvation complete. The two go together.

6. Three cameos of what life will be like after the return of Christ:

A. The desert will burst into bloom. Nature will see the glory of Christ. Romans 8 tells us that the curse that sin brought upon nature will be reversed.

B. Blind eyes will see, deaf ears will hear, lame legs will leap and mute tongues will shout for joy - no more illness; no more physical deformities

C. "The highway of holiness" will be prepared and populated by people who are characterized by personal holiness.

7. Man's struggle with nature, sickness and sin will be over. The effects of the Fall will be totally dealt with and eliminated. Then we will know what life, as God meant it to be, is all about!