

Series: Isaiah

Title: The Word of the Watchman

Text: Isaiah 21: 1-12

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In the days of the apostles, cities were warned of approaching danger by a watchman. The Lord describes his preachers as watchmen.

Ezekiel 3:17: Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.

In our text today, we find Isaiah fulfilling the job of a faithful watchman.

Isaiah 21: 6: For thus hath the Lord said unto me, Go, set a watchman, let him declare what he seeth.

Proposition: We will take two prophecies, both of which make mention of the watchman. Notice three things that the watchman does in this passage. First, the watchman sees. Secondly, the watchman cries aloud to warn the people of who is coming. Thirdly, the watchman gives a charge to those who inquire of him.

I. THE WATCHMAN SEES A GRIEVOUS VISION.

Isaiah 21: 1: The burden of the desert of the sea. As whirlwinds in the south pass through; so it cometh from the desert, from a terrible land. 2: A grievous vision is declared unto me; the treacherous dealer dealeth treacherously, and the spoiler spoileth.

We know Babylon represents false religion. She deals treacherously toward all.

Revelation 17: 5: And upon her forehead *was* a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. 6: And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus:

In Babylon's dealings with Judah we get a good picture of how false religion operates.

First, under the rule of Nebuchadnezzar, Babylon captured Jerusalem and took the sanctified vessels of the Lord.

2 Chronicles 36: 18: And all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king, and of his princes; all *these* he brought to Babylon.

When the serpent beguiled Eve and Adam sinned in the garden, the sanctified vessels--God's elect--were taken captive. Since the fall, sinful, naturally religious men have been alluring the Lord's people, his sanctified vessels. Many of us know what it was like to be taken in by Babylon and have experienced the power of God in delivering us from her captivity.

Secondly, Babylon took the Lord's people like a fisherman takes fish. That is right, Babylon is described as fishers of men. But there is a difference, they sacrifice to their false god and to their methods.

Habakukah 1: 15: They take up all of them with the angle, they catch them in their net, and gather them in their drag: therefore they rejoice and are glad. 16: Therefore they sacrifice unto their net, and burn incense unto their drag; because by them their portion *is* fat, and their meat plenteous. 17: Shall they therefore empty their net, and not spare continually to slay the nations?

Thirdly, Babylon shows no mercy only a heavy yoke on the Lord's people.

Isaiah 46: 6: I was wroth with my people, I have polluted mine inheritance, and given them into thine hand: thou didst shew them no mercy; upon the ancient hast thou very heavily laid thy yoke.

Will worship, works religion is a heavy yoke, there is never any rest, only fear. This world will offer no rest, riches are uncertain, they bring only worry and turmoil. Christ Jesus the Lord is the only rest, the only refuge, the only sanctuary for sinners.

Fourthly, Babylon's rulers, and her servants, feast with no fear of God or of future judgment.

Isaiah 21: 5: Prepare the table, watch in the watchtower, eat, drink:

Eat, drink and be merry -that is the motto of the world and of this world's religion.

Isaiah 56: 10: His watchmen *are* blind: they are all ignorant, they *are* all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. 11: Yea, *they are* greedy dogs *which* can never have enough, and they *are* shepherds *that* cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter. 12: Come ye, *say they*, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and to morrow shall be as this day, *and* much more abundant.

Now give your attention and see what the watchman sees.

Isaiah 21: 2: A grievous vision is declared unto me; the treacherous dealer dealeth treacherously, and the spoiler spoileth. Go up, O Elam: besiege, O Media; all the sighing thereof have I made to cease.

In this case, Isaiah gives the account from the viewpoint of one in Babylon the night Babylon fell. He is in great pain. God raised up Persia (Elam) and the Medes (Media) to destroy Babylon.

Isaiah 21: 3: Therefore are my loins filled with pain: pangs have taken hold upon me, as the pangs of a woman that travaileth: I was bowed down at the hearing of it; I was dismayed at the seeing of it. 4: My heart panted, fearfulness affrighted me: the night of my pleasure hath he turned into fear unto me.

Babylon was in ease right up till the end.

Daniel 5: 1: Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand. 2: Belshazzar, whiles he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which *was* in Jerusalem; that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein. 3: Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which *was* at Jerusalem; and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them. 4: They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone. 5: In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. 6: Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another...[so he called for Daniel and Daniel spoke of how God dealt with Belshazzar's Father] 22: And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this; 23: But hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the God in whose hand thy breath *is*, and whose *are* all thy ways, hast thou not glorified: 24: Then was the part of the hand sent

from him; and this writing was written. 25: And this *is* the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. 26: This *is* the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. 27: TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. 28: PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians....

The LORD of hosts gave the charge to his servants, Darius the Mede and Cyrus the Persian, to destroy Babylon...**5:...arise, ye princes, and anoint the shield.**

Daniel 5: 30: In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain.

As the Lord's watchman for you, this is what I see: we live in a world where all that matters to most is pleasure.

2 Timothy 3: 1: This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. 2: For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3: Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, 4: Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; 5: Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. 6: For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, 7: Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Are you in Babylon? Living in ease? Feasting, making merry, with no fear of judgment to come? Unless God show us mercy, the handwriting is on the wall.

II. THE WATCHMAN DECLARES WHO IS COMING

Isaiah 21: 6: For thus hath the Lord said unto me, Go, set a watchman, let him declare what he seeth. 7: And he saw a chariot *with* a couple of horsemen, a chariot of asses, *and* a chariot of camels; and he hearkened diligently with much heed: 8: And he cried, A lion: My lord, I stand continually upon the watchtower in the daytime, and I am set in my ward whole nights: 9: And, behold, here cometh a chariot of men, *with* a couple of horsemen. And he answered and said, Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground. 10: O my threshing, and the corn of my floor: that which I have heard of the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, have I declared unto you.

In King Cyrus the Persian, we see a type of Christ the Lion of the tribe of Judah.

- Isaiah 45: 28-46: 1-4
- Ezra 1: 1: Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and *put it* also in writing, saying, 2: Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which *is* in Judah... 7 Also Cyrus the king brought forth the vessels of the house of the LORD, which Nebuchadnezzar had brought forth out of Jerusalem, and had put them in the house of his gods... 11: All the vessels of gold and of silver *were* five thousand and four hundred. All *these* did Sheshbazzar bring up with *them* of the captivity that were brought up from Babylon unto Jerusalem.

The Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God's anointed. He is our King and our Shepherd. HE is the Captain of our warfare. Christ Jesus came into the midst of Babylon and with his own blood he purged his people of their sins. He satisfied God. When he rose from the dead he brought all the sanctified vessels into the Lord's house.

The LORD God of heaven and earth has given Christ Jesus all the kingdoms of the earth. His fan is in his hand, he is threshing out the sons of his floor. He is building the house of the Lord;

Psalm 127:1 <<A Song of degrees for Solomon.>> Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.

He does so by coming into the hearts of his elect through the Holy Spirit like a thief in the night. In Wisdom and Power, he conquers Babylon in the hearts of his people. He breaks our idols before us.

And he is coming again in the last day. Like, Cyrus came into Babylon in the midst of their feast, so he is coming as a thief in the night.

I Thessalonians 5: 2...the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. 3: For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

Then shall every believer shout for good: Babylon is fallen! Babylon is fallen!

III. THE WATCHMAN GIVES A CHARGE TO THOSE WHO INQUIRE.

Here the vision changes. But we are still focusing our attention on the message of the watchman.

Isaiah 21: 11: The burden of Dumah. He calleth to me out of Seir, Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?

Oh, that we could find a sinner. Oh, that someone would cry out for a heart made willing to heed the words of our God. Are you that sinner this morning? Has your night of pleasure been turned into fear within you? Heed the charge of the watchman!

Isaiah 21: 12: The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night:

You may be afraid in this night of affliction. You tremble and are afraid, but when morning comes you feel at ease, again. But the night of unrest shall soon return. It is not enough to inquire simply because you are afraid then go back to your life of ease at first light. You will have no peace. The night of fear is coming at days end.

But...if ye will enquire,

First, enquire ye. Truly enquire. Enquire with the urgency of one who has seen the sin that you are and needs reconciliation. Enquire, ask, seek, knock in faith. Secondly, **return--**repent, turn from all your vain trust, of all your vain wisdom, turn from self, to God. Thirdly, **come--**right where you are, in the heart made new by the Spirit of God, if he has made you willing, come to Christ, believe on him. And always be enquiring. Always be repenting from this Babylon below to your heavenly Father above. Always be coming to Christ.

I Peter 2: 2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: 3: If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. 4: To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious,

Isaiah 26: 3: Thou wilt keep *him* in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. 4: Trust ye in the LORD forever:

I Thessalonians 5: 6: Therefore let us not sleep, as *do* others; but let us watch and be sober. 7: For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. 8: But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. 9: For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, 10: Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.