

Pentwater Bible Church

Isaiah Message 90
November 8, 2020



Mordecai's Triumph by Pieter Lastman Cir 1617

Daniel E. Woodhead – Pastor Teacher

Pentwater Bible Church

The Book of Isaiah

Message Ninety

THE BLESSINGS OF GOD

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GOD'S GLORY

Isaiah 40:9–17

⁹O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion, get thee up on a high mountain; O thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold, your God! ¹⁰Behold, the Lord Jehovah will come as a mighty one, and his arm will rule for him: Behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. ¹¹He will feed his flock like a shepherd, he will gather the lambs in his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and will gently lead those that have their young.

¹²Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? ¹³Who hath directed the Spirit of Jehovah, or being his counsellor hath taught him? ¹⁴With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of justice, and taught him knowledge, and showed to him the way of understanding? ¹⁵Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are accounted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. ¹⁶And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt-offering. ¹⁷All the nations are as nothing before him; they are accounted by him as less than nothing, and vanity (ASV, 1901).

THE ANNOUNCEMENT

Isaiah 40:9

⁹O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion, get thee up on a high mountain; O thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold, your God (ASV, 1901)!

At the time that this was written by the prophet Isaiah he realized that it was him and other prophets that brought the news of God to the people. Even though Isaiah was the prophet to Judah but it was customary to use some chosen women to proclaim the good news when applicable. They would assemble together, and celebrate it with songs, dances, and rejoicings. There are several Scriptural examples of the Lord using women to announce some good news. Moses' sister Miriam and the chorus of women were celebrating the good news of the Lord's deliverance of Israel from Pharaoh and his army at the Exodus.

Exodus 15:20, 21

²⁰And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. ²¹And Miriam answered them, Sing, ye to Jehovah, for he hath triumphed gloriously; The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea (ASV, 1901).

Women also made their announcement after the victory of David over Goliath, ‘*all the women came out of the cities of Israel singing and dancing to meet Saul*’ (1 Samuel 18:7). Then, those women who announce victory, as in Psalm 68:11 “*The Lord giveth the word the women that publish the tidings are a great host.* However, at the Lord’s first appearance in the body of Jesus it was John the Baptist who made the announcement, but the angels gave women the first information of the Lord’s resurrection and they then announced His resurrection to the apostles and all the rest of the people (Luke 24:9). Here the Lord is telling the ladies to go to a high mountain to proclaim the good news He is about to make. The ladies are commanded to take themselves up on a high mountain which is in accordance to the ancient practice of addressing an assembly from the top of a mountain so as to project their voices for the maximum effect.

Isaiah 52:7–10

⁷How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth ⁸The voice of thy watchmen! they lift up the voice, together do they sing; for they shall see eye to eye, when Jehovah returneth to Zion. ⁹Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem; for Jehovah hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem. ¹⁰Jehovah hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God (ASV, 1901).

The command to *be not afraid* will be repeated often in the next chapters as God makes His future blessings to Israel and the world known. Israel and Jerusalem, here are called Zion collectively, did not need to fear that God has cast her off, nor that His Word will fail. She is to take the position of a prophet, declaring God’s activity when that activity is still far in the future. The prophet declares that they must have confidence that God will not fail her or the world. He will come once first to declare the Kingdom and bring salvation to the world and then to return to establish the Kingdom here on earth.

THE PROMISE OF THE LORD’S RETURN

Isaiah 40:10-11

¹⁰Behold, the Lord Jehovah will come as a mighty one, and his arm will rule for him: Behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. ¹¹He will feed his flock like a shepherd, he will gather the lambs in his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and will gently lead those that have their young.

Both advents are referenced here. One that the Lord comes *like a shepherd* and the other describing the Messianic kingdom rule He will bring as *a mighty one, and his arm will rule for him*.

The *arm* is a symbol of strength, because it is by them our activities are accomplished. Frequently it is said of God, ‘*Thou hast a mighty arm*’ (Psalm 89:13), and, ‘*His holy arm hath gotten him the victory*’ (Psalm 98:1; Exodus 6:6). The illustration is taken from the act of stretching out the arm to fight in battle, where the *arm* is the effective instrument in subduing an enemy in hand to hand combat.

The Lord God here is said to come *with a strong hand*, or with great power. For example, He fulfilled the law, took the penalty for divine justice, atoned for sin, fought with many evil enemies both celestial and earthly, underwent the death of the cross, bore the curse of the law, and the wrath of God the Father, and all in order to obtain eternal redemption for His people. *And his arm shall rule for him*; or he shall have sufficient power of Himself to do the work He comes to do. His own arm or power gave us salvation in Him and for His people. When He establishes the Messianic Kingdom, He will rule with a strong arm and a rod of iron. The Lord Jesus will be both King of Israel and the king of the world. Under His absolute authority He will rule with a “rod of iron.” The “rod of iron” that will characterize the rule of the government in the Kingdom will be implemented through various spheres and positions of authority. It is the arm and hand that holds the rod.

Isaiah 63:5–6

⁵And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my wrath, it upheld me. ⁶And I trod down the peoples in mine anger, and made them drunk in my wrath, and I poured out their lifeblood on the earth (ASV, 1901).

THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Jesus declared Himself to be the Good Shepherd:

John 10:11-15; 27

¹¹ I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. ¹² But he that is a hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. ¹³ The hireling fleeth, because he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep. ¹⁴ I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. ¹⁵ As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.

²⁷My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me (KJV):

It is not happenstance that Jesus declared Himself “*the good shepherd*”. The shepherd is a person who took complete care of a flock of sheep. He had to locate grass and water for the sheep, and protect them from predators (Amos 3:12). He had to search out those that strayed from the flock

(Ezekiel 34:8; Matthew 18:12), lead the flock out of the sheepfold each day, and to return them safely at the end of the day (John 10:2–4).

The in both Testaments, the model of the shepherd and his sheep is seen as a metaphor of important leadership. The imagery of the shepherd and the flock is richly developed in Psalm 23, Ezekiel 34, and John 10. In the Old Testament, God is the Shepherd of Israel (Genesis 49:24; Psalm 23:1; 80:1; Is 40:11). God also has prophesied that His appointed servant, David the Prince, will be the lead shepherd in the Messianic Kingdom over the Jews (Ezekiel 34:11–16, 23–24). In the New Testament, it is Jesus who is the Good Shepherd who willingly gives His life for the sheep (Matthew 18:10–14; Mark 6:34; John 10; Hebrews 13:20).

Those who keep sheep know that the flock is entirely dependent upon the management capabilities of the shepherd. If the shepherd is hired just to watchover the sheep, the likelihood of the sheep knowing him and following him is uncertain. If the master is true, caring and genuinely devoted to the sheep, they will know it and follow him. Jesus is the owner of our lives. He bought us with a high price (I Corinthians 6:20). This concept is epitomized just as David said in Psalm 23 “*The Lord is my Shepherd -- I shall not want.*” King David, was a shepherd when he composed Psalm 23, and this Psalm looks at life from the standpoint of a sheep when he wrote, “*He [the Good Shepherd] leadeth me beside the still waters.*” In other words, He alone knows where the still, quiet, deep, clean, pure water is to be found that alone can satisfy His sheep, and keep them fit and strong. In our Jesus only can we find repose and joy as He leads us by “*the still waters*”, or peace. We must totally surrender our lives over to Him. Why? Because He is the Shepherd to whom no trouble is too great as He cares for His flock. He is available twenty-four hours a day to see that we are properly provided for in every detail. Above all, He is very jealous of His name, which He called Himself “The Good Shepherd.”

“Cast” is an old English shepherd’s term for a sheep that has turned over on its back, and cannot get up again by itself. A “cast” sheep is a very pathetic sight. Lying on its back, its feet in the air, it flays away frantically struggling to stand up without success. Sometimes it will bleat a little for help, but generally it lies there lashing about in frightened frustration. It just cannot right itself. The predators know that the “cast” sheep is easy prey. The sheep can die in a short time if they have wandered away from the flock. This is part of the drama depicted for us in the parable of the ninety and nine sheep with one astray in Luke 15:3-7. A stray sheep becomes the caring shepherd’s deep concern, as is his agonizing search, his longing to find the missing one, his delight in restoring it not, only by righting it to its feet, but also restoring it to himself and the flock as well. One of the great revelations of comfort we are given in the Bible is of Christ Himself as our Shepherd. He gives us the ability to restore our peace when we are “cast” sheep that are anxious and upset, and we must depend on Him:

Philippians 4:6–7

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus (ESV).

Sheep are creatures of habit and will follow the same trails until they soil their own ground with waste, and corrupt it with disease and parasites. The best safeguard that a shepherd has in handling his flock is to keep them moving, or leave them grazing on the same ground for too long. The shepherd must keep the sheep moving through the paths he has selected for them. This is what David had in mind when he spoke of being led in “*paths of righteousness*”. Following a precise plan of operation is the secret for healthy flocks and healthy lands. We need to keep moving through life, and not stay in the same ruts of discomfort too long. God has a plan for us, and wants us to grow in sanctification throughout our lives. We are not to stand still and not grow. He wants us to continually become more Christ like. Although situations change, and some not for the better, we must trust Him, respond through prayer, and let Him lead us into better pastures and paths.

The shepherd knows from past experience that predators like coyotes, bears, wolves or cougars can hide, and from their vantage point, prey on the flock. The ever-present predators are kept from the sheep by the shepherd. The land can also be threatening with rock slides, mud or snow avalanches, and a dozen other natural disasters that would destroy or injure his sheep. But in spite of these hazards, the shepherds also know that it is still best to guide his flock to the high country. He spares himself no pain, trouble, or time to keep an eye out for any danger that might develop. Our Shepherd Jesus knows all of this when He leads us through the valleys with Himself. He knows where we can find strength, sustenance, and gentle grazing despite every threat of disaster around us. He warns us of false teachers and other pitfalls (Matthew 7:15; 24:4–5). He lets us know what the future is in the long chronology of world events:

John 16:33

³³These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world (KJV).

The shepherd customarily only carries a “rod” and “staff”. The “rod” is an extension of the owner's own right arm, and is an instrument of protection both for himself and his sheep when they are in danger. It is used both as a defense and a deterrent against anything that would attack. It also stands as a symbol of his strength, his power, his authority. Interestingly, the word “rod” is also a slang term for hand-guns carried by cowboys, and other western range men, and this term is exactly how David used it in Psalm 23. His other tool, the “staff”, is of special comfort to the shepherd himself. During the long nightly watches over his sheep, he leans on it for support and strength. It becomes to him a great comfort and help in his responsibilities. The “staff” is also used for guiding sheep.

When we find ourselves in a difficult situation God protects us. We pray to Him and He reveals the remedy of our situation to us. Many of our situations are brought on by our own stubborn, self-willed assertions that we think are unsolvable. However, by His tender care He draws near to us in prayer and supplication to relieve us of our pain, agony and discomfort. My Shepherd is alert to every approaching disaster that threatens His people. He has been through the storms of suffering before. He bore our sorrows, and is acquainted with our grief. And now no matter what storms of life that we face, His very life and strength and vitality is given to us. He wants nothing but the genuine best for us, not what the world says is best, but what He knows is best for us.

If we allow God to control our lives and leave the management to Him “*goodness and mercy shall follow us.*” King David realized that only by doing what God wants us to do in our lives can we see the fruit of all that He has for us. It is His “*goodness and mercy*” which enables us to receive the most blessings He has for us when we admit that we cannot live without Him, or handle situations alone.

THE UNIQUENESS AND MAJESTY OF GOD

Isaiah 40:12:17

¹²Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? ¹³Who hath directed the Spirit of Jehovah, or being his counsellor hath taught him? ¹⁴With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of justice, and taught him knowledge, and showed to him the way of understanding? ¹⁵Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are accounted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. ¹⁶And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt-offering. ¹⁷All the nations are as nothing before him; they are accounted by him as less than nothing, and vanity (ASV, 1901).

This begins a long section describing the attributes of God and how there is none like Him. Here Isaiah describes the power, wisdom, and all-sufficiency of God, which is also of Christ who is God the Second Person of The Trinity. Jesus being the Creator who made all things (John 1:3) *who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand*; the waters of the seas, for which He has made and the dimensions are exactly known to Him. The vast bodies of water are no more to His immensity in His hands than so much water as a man can hold in the hollow of his hand. *And meted out heaven with the span*; which he has stretched out as a curtain, (Isaiah 40:22) and the measure of which is but one hand’s breadth with Him. This comparison is no more to Him than stretching out a carpet or canopy and is easily measured by Him as a piece of cloth is by a man with the span of his hand. Isaiah says that no one but God could determine the measure of the earth’s soil and determine the weight of the mountains as He formed them (Psalm 65:6). The prophet Amos also makes the same declaration to affirm the Creator and His work.

Amos 4:13

¹³For, lo, he that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind, and declareth unto man what is his thought; that maketh the morning darkness, and treadeth upon the high places of the earth—Jehovah, the God of hosts, is his name (ASV, 1901).

There is none like Him as Isaiah says in asking rhetorically;

*¹³Who hath directed the Spirit of Jehovah, or being his counsellor hath taught him?
¹⁴With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of justice, and taught him knowledge, and showed to him the way of understanding?*

The answer is already known which is nobody.

Isaiah says that all the nations of the world, in comparison to God, in His infinite and immense Being, are as a drop of water that dribbles out of a bucket, or falls from it, when water is poured by it, or is left in it, when all the water has been poured out of it. The earth and all of its contents are nothing in comparison to the Lord.

Mankind may think that in his prideful view of himself that he is supremely important. This is referencing the sacrificial system of the Mosaic Law God has required of him. However, with the sacrifices and burnt offerings, he may suppose God is getting some satisfaction. But, the prophet says, even if man were to burn all Lebanon as firewood on God's altar, and offer there all the (clean) beasts of the entire world, still God would be put under no obligation to accept him (Isaiah 1:11–17).

All nations before him are as nothing, He sees them as if they were nonentities, and were not real beings in comparison of Him, who is the Being of beings, the author of all beings which exist in all nations; who are all in his sight, and He views only as grasshoppers in comparison, as He mentions in verse 22. They are all as nothing: and they are counted to him as less than nothing, and vanity; if there is or could be such a thing less than nothing, this is what they are to Him.

Next message: THE GLORY OF GOD CONTINUED

E-mail: Pentwaterbiblechurch@scofieldinstitute.org Call: 877-706-2479

INTERCESSORY PRAYER FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS

PRAYER POINT ONE: Expose and hold accountable those who practice the seven things God hates and He says are detestable to Him: According to Proverbs 6:16-17, There are six things the LORD hates, seven that are detestable to Him: 1. haughty eyes 2. a lying tongue 3. hands that shed innocent blood 4. a heart that devises wicked plans 5. feet that are quick to rush into evil 6. a false witness who pours out lies 7. a person who stirs up conflict in the community. Heavenly Father, we humbly ask that in the battleground states of Pennsylvania, Michigan, Wisconsin, Georgia, North Carolina, Arizona, and Nevada, please silence every lying tongue and convict the hearts of those who devise wicked plans intended to invalidate and nullify the expressed will of the voters. Stop those who would be quick to rush into evil. Expose and silence every false witness who utters lies and operates in deceit. Thwart the efforts of every person who attempts to stir conflict within their community."

PRAYER POINT TWO: Expose all wickedness intended to steal, kill and destroy the electoral process in these battleground states. Heavenly Father, we humbly ask that in the battleground states of Pennsylvania, Michigan, Wisconsin, Georgia, North Carolina, Arizona, and Nevada that you "reveal deep and hidden things. You know what lies in darkness. Light dwells with You." (Daniel 2:22) Please bring to light and expose every lie, deceit, deception, misrepresentation and illegal act intended to "steal, kill and destroy" the electoral process and the expressed will of the citizens and these states. (John 10:10).

PRAYER POINT THREE: Frustrate those who seek to steal, kill, and destroy electoral integrity and authentic, accurate vote counts in these battleground states. Heavenly Father, please "Frustrate the plotting of the shrewd so that their hands cannot perform their enterprise or attain success." May no weapon formed intended to steal, kill and destroy the authentic, accurate vote count and expressed will of the people in the battleground states of Pennsylvania, Michigan, Wisconsin, Georgia, North Carolina, Arizona, and Nevada be allowed to prosper." (Isaiah 54:17).

PRAYER POINT FOUR: Frustrate and thwart the plans of those who attempt to sabotage the state's election laws and subvert the expressed will of the people. Heavenly Father, please "Capture the wise by their own shrewdness and quickly thwart the advice of the cunning" (Job 5:12) whose intention is to sabotage and subvert state and federal election law and the expressed will of the people in the battleground states of Pennsylvania, Michigan, Wisconsin, Georgia, North Carolina, Arizona, and Nevada. "Hold them guilty O LORD, by their own devices let them fall." (Psalm 5:10)

PRAYER POINT FIVE: Psalm 5 for protection and favor for President Trump: Heavenly Father, please "Give ear to President Trump's words, O LORD, consider President Trump's groaning. Heed the sound of his cry for help, His King and His God. For to You does he pray. In the morning O LORD, you will hear his voice; in the morning he will order his prayer to you and eagerly watch. For you are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness; no evil dwells with You; You hate all who do iniquity. Destroy those who speak falsehood. You abhor the man of

bloodshed and deceit. But as for President Trump, by Your abundant lovingkindness, he will enter Your house. At your holy temple he will bow in reverence for you. Lord, please lead President Trump in Your righteousness because of his foes. Make his way straight before him. There is nothing reliable in what they say; their throat is an open grave; they flatter with their tongue. Hold them guilty, O God, by their own devices let them fall! In the multitude of their transgressions thrust them out for they are rebellious against You. But let President Trump take refuge in You and be glad. Let him ever sing for joy. May you shelter him. May he who loves Your name exult in You. Bless President Trump, O LORD. Surround him with favor as with a shield. Heavenly Father, please give supernatural wisdom, strength and discernment to the President and his advisors regarding how to navigate the road ahead. In the Mighty Name of Jesus! Amen.