

The Prophecy of Isaiah
Holding Fast to the Lord

This is the day we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. The bodily resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, three days and three nights after He was crucified and buried, is the foundation of our Christian faith.

Every sermon in the Acts of the Apostles has the resurrection as its theme.

When Jesus was confronted by the scribes and Pharisees and was asked for a sign, His answer was:

Matthew 12:38-42

³⁸ Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered him, saying, "Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you." ³⁹ But he answered them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. ⁴⁰ For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. ⁴¹ The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here. ⁴² The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.

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On more than one occasion Jesus told His disciples what was going to take place:

John 2:18-22

¹⁸ So the Jews said to him, "What sign do you show us for doing these things?" ¹⁹ Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." ²⁰ The Jews then said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?" ²¹ But he was speaking about the temple of his body. ²² When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

Matthew 20:17-19

¹⁷ And as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside, and on the way he said to them, ¹⁸ "See, we are going up to Jerusalem. And the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death ¹⁹ and deliver him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified, and he will be raised on the third day."

We are a few weeks away from the detailed prophecy made by Isaiah in Chapter 53 and we will postpone our comments on that chapter for now.

The point that I want to make is that everything that happened to Jesus in His arrest, trials, crucifixion, burial, and resurrection were all in the purpose of God the Father for the salvation of every soul given to God the Son from before the foundation of the world.

The message of Easter is that God is faithful and that Jesus died for sinners and that He came forth from the grave according to the Scriptures and He is reigning right now in heaven at the right hand of God and that He will come again as He promised!

The hinge of the Easter message to this section of Isaiah is on what do you place your hope and trust? Isaiah warned Judah not to place their trust in foreign alliances instead of the Lord; but they would not listen.

How many people in our time, especially on Easter Sunday, will hear the Gospel and go about their life as though Jesus did nothing?

Well, let's consider what Isaiah says to Judah and other peoples.

There are six "woes," a term that indicates the terror and anguish of an impending disaster. Isaiah directs five "woes" against Israel and Judah in 28 to 32 and a sixth "woe" against Assyria in 33. Isaiah is addressing the people of God who no longer trusted in Him as their God.

Woe to Israel

Isaiah 28:1-13

Israel is the northern kingdom with Samaria as its capital. Israel is also called Ephraim after the second son of Joseph. Samaria was built on a hill and was known for its beauty. The once followers of the One True God are now self-indulgent, pleasure-loving drunkards. [28:1]

Because of the moral and spiritual degeneracy of the Israelites, Isaiah pictures Samaria as a wilted and faded wreath of flowers. God will send "one who is mighty and strong" [Assyria] against Samaria. They will be devoured. [28:2-4]

The faded glory of Israel is contrasted with the return of Messiah. [28:5-6]

Eschatology determines whether this is a millennial kingdom or heaven on earth.

The leaders, priests and prophets, cannot manage because of drunkenness and the people suffer for it. [28:7-8]

As you would expect the message didn't take too well with the priests and prophets. They were indignant, insulted, that Isaiah would speak to them as though they were irresponsible children. [28:9-10]

Isaiah insists that if his message is ignored and mocked the Assyrians cannot be ignored. [28:11]

Isaiah is dismayed at how, although God had offered the people a resting place, they had refused it, thereby choosing defeat by Assyria. [28:12-13]

Woe to Judah

Isaiah 28:14-29

Isaiah's second woe is against Judah and Jerusalem. The prophet foresaw the crisis of 701 B.C. when Assyria would destroy dozens of towns in the southern kingdom.

Isaiah warns that because the leaders have trusted in their own plans they have made a "covenant with death." They had made an alliance with Egypt, even serving its gods of the underworld. [28:14-15]

There is only one sure foundation in which to trust. [28:16]

Jesus declared Himself to be that very cornerstone that the builders rejected.

Matthew 21:33-46

³³ "Hear another parable. There was a master of a house who planted a vineyard and put a fence around it and dug a winepress in it and built a tower and leased it to tenants, and went into another country. ³⁴ When the season for fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants to get his fruit. ³⁵ And the tenants took his servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. ³⁶ Again he sent other servants, more than the first. And they did the same to them. ³⁷ Finally he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' ³⁸ But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and have his inheritance.' ³⁹ And they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. ⁴⁰ When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?" ⁴¹ They said to him, "He will put those wretches to a miserable death and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons."

⁴² Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures:

"The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;
this was the Lord's doing,
and it is marvelous in our eyes?"

⁴³ Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits. ⁴⁴ And the one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him."

⁴⁵ When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they perceived that he was speaking about them. ⁴⁶ And although they were seeking to arrest him, they feared the crowds, because they held him to be a prophet.

Down in 28:22 Isaiah warns them not to make matters worse by mocking what God would do.

Isaiah then uses agricultural illustrations showing how God would judge Judah. The parable is in two parts and ends declaring God's wisdom and His judgment. The point was that God knows how to control Judah. God controls the seasons and the events of the world and His timing is perfect. [28:23-29]

Woe to Jerusalem

Isaiah 29:1-24

Continuing his prophecy about Judah, Isaiah narrows the focus to Jerusalem.

Ah, Ariel, Ariel, the city where David encamped! [29:1-3]

Ariel – the lion of God.

(1.) One of the chief men sent by Ezra to procure Levites for the sanctuary ([Ezra 8:16](#)). (2.) A symbolic name for Jerusalem ([Isa 29:1,2,7](#)) as "victorious under God,"

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They will call out in ghostly whispers as from the grave. [29:4]

So much for their "covenant with death."

By God's mercy and grace He will deliver them, although they will be humbled by the Assyrians. God will miraculously destroy a large part of the enemy's army in one night. [29:5-8]

2 Kings 19:32-37

³² "Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the king of Assyria: He shall not come into this city or shoot an arrow there, or come before it with a shield or cast up a siege mound against it. ³³ By the way that he came, by the same he shall return, and he shall not come into this city, declares the LORD. ³⁴ For I will defend this city to save it, for my own sake and for the sake of my servant David."

³⁵ And that night the angel of the LORD went out and struck down 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians. And when people arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies. ³⁶ Then Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and went home and lived at Nineveh. ³⁷ And as he was worshiping in the house of Nisroch his god, Adrammelech and Sharezer, his sons, struck him down with the sword and escaped into the land of Ararat. And Esarhaddon his son reigned in his place.

They were so spiritually numb they could not heed God's warning through His prophets. Instead, they claimed to be unable to read or understand Isaiah's declarations. [29:9-12]

Thus while rejecting God's Word through His prophet they continued with false religion [29:13-24]

Note verse 16, can the pot question the potter?

To the Stubborn Nation

Isaiah 30:1-33

God was displeased that the people looked to Egypt rather than to Him for their protection from Assyria. The Lord declared that the people would be disappointed and disgraced for trusting Egypt. Instead of welcoming the truth, they wanted to hear lies. [30:1-17]

Verses 18-26 is another prophecy that is either a millennial kingdom on earth or heaven on earth.

Verses 27-33 is a warning to the ungodly Assyrians.

To those Relying on Egypt

Isaiah 31:1 – 32:20

Again Isaiah pronounces calamity on those who looked to Egypt rather than to the Lord. [31:1-2]

Despite the might of the Egyptian army, it would be no match against the Assyrians. God will protect Jerusalem as a mother bird circling over her nest. [31:3-5]

Assyria would be routed, though not by human means. [31:6-9]

Chapter 32 is another picture of God's blessing of His people.

Eschatology?

Woe to Assyria

Isaiah 33:1-24

Chapter 33 is an extended sermon against Assyria. There is prayer and promises of deliverance. There is a call for righteous living in God's presence. God will use the Assyrians to conquer nations for a specific period of time and then He will bring about their downfall.

Verses 17-24 underscores God's victory over the Assyrians.

The application is for us to be careful not to put our trust in anything but God.

As a note, one of my very first sermons was from Isaiah 33:22.

For the LORD is our judge; the LORD is our lawgiver;
the LORD is our king; he will save us.

The message of the Bible in a verse.